

2022 GRNC-PVF Candidate Recommendations

(Listings include only districts with primary races)

Candidate recommendations versus evaluations: Below are recommendations for effective voting strategies by the Grass Roots North Carolina Political Victory Fund. Candidate *recommendations*, which are more limited than blanket “endorsements,” are not made in all races, only in races where a clear pro-gun candidate stands out or where strategic voting is necessary to keep anti-gun candidates out of office. Note that in most cases, even pro-gun candidates are not included unless they have a primary election challenger.

Recommendations differ from GRNC candidate evaluations. While the evaluations are intended to provide an objective measure of where candidates stand on Second Amendment issues, GRNC-PVF recommendations are analytical and therefore subject to interpretation. For a full explanation of GRNC’s objective star evaluations, go to: www.grnc.org/remember-in-november/grnc-candidate-evaluations-2022

Important notes:

- Candidates who lack voting records or other history on Second Amendment issues and who fail to return GRNC’s candidate survey automatically receive a 0-star evaluation** on the assumption that they are hiding their position from gun voters. Every election year, we receive complaints about ostensibly pro-gun candidates who receive zero star evaluations due to failure to return the survey. Each candidate is mailed a survey to the address he or she registered with the State Board of Elections. **If they fail to return the survey, we cannot help candidates who will not help themselves.**
- GRNC-PVF candidate recommendations generally are NOT blanket endorsements.** We have analyzed nearly 200 races across the state. Unless otherwise stipulated, GRNC does not evaluate candidates on issues other than support for the Second Amendment. A GRNC-PVF recommendation does NOT reflect the candidate’s stance on other issues, and it does not reflect likelihood of winning a given race. The recommendation is merely our estimate of which candidate in a given race is most pro-gun.
- GRNC-PVF candidate recommendations are not given in all races.** They are given only for races in which there are clear differences between the Second Amendment stances of candidates and are generally not provided for races in which a candidate is unopposed.
- Candidate evaluation listings:** After each candidate’s name, his or her voting record (if applicable) or survey score is placed in parentheses along with their GRNC star evaluation (e.g. ****). “NR” indicates the candidate refused to return GRNC’s survey. If the candidate lacks a voting record, he or she gets a 0-star evaluation on the presumption that they are hiding their position.
- Recommended candidates:** Recommended candidates’ names are printed in bold, upper case font (e.g. **JOE SMITH**).

Voter deadlines and instructions:

- April 22:** Deadline for voter registration or to update registration (e.g. for an address change). Note: If you are registered as “unaffiliated,” you may vote in either the Democrat or Republican primary election.
- April 28:** Primary election One Stop Early Voting begins.
- May 10 at 5:00 PM:** Last day to submit an absentee ballot request form.
- May 14 at 3:00 PM:** One Stop Early Voting ends.
- May 17, 2022, 6:30 AM – 7:30 PM:** Primary Election Day.

FEDERAL RACES

US SENATE (R)

To replace retiring Sen. Richard Burr, the clear standout for gun voters in the race is Rep. **TED BUDD** (GRNC ****). Not only was Budd a Life member of GRNC long before running for Congress, he is also a gun shop owner. More importantly, he has compiled the best record on Second Amendment issues of any legislator in the NC delegation to Congress, including a 100% pro-gun voting record and co-sponsorship of several pro-gun bills. Budd and Rep. Dan Bishop have the distinction of being the only members of the NC delegation to vote against the National Defense Authorization Act because it contained “red flag” gun confiscation for military members.

Revised 4/20/22 for late surveys

By contrast, opponent Pat McCrory (GRNC ***) is a RINO (“Republican in Name Only”) of the first order who has used a variety of false accusations to attack Budd. Worse, North Carolinians are still saddled with our Jim Crow era pistol purchase permit law – which urban sheriffs are using to obstruct handgun purchases – thanks to McCrory. In 2013, as governor, he threatened to veto omnibus pro-gun House Bill 937 unless the purchase permit repeal was removed from the bill.

Although some gun voters have supported Mark Walker in the race, he has no chance of winning the Republican nomination and acts principally as a spoiler by siphoning off votes needed by Budd to defeat McCrory. **In this race, GRNC-PVF strongly recommends you vote for TED BUDD.**

US HOUSE

Unfortunately, we are dealing with congressional districts imposed on us by the “special masters” which the Democrat-controlled NC Supreme Court selected to redraw districts after rejecting those drawn by the Republican-controlled legislature. Despite our Republican-leaning state, the “special masters” drew districts which, in normal election years, would yield 7 Democrats and 7 Republicans, effectively costing Republicans two seats. Given that NC picked up a congressional seat and that districts are new, the following analysis will also contain the partisan leaning of each district.

District 1 (R): In this Democrat-leaning (D+5) district, the Republican primary features 8 candidates, only three of which returned GRNC’s candidate survey: **SANDY ROBERSON** (100%, ****), **SANDY SMITH** (100%, ****), and **BILLY STRICKLAND** (100%, ****). Given identical survey scores and GRNC evaluations, GRNC-PVF can only recommend that you pick one of the three.

District 2: In this solidly Democrat (D+13) district, no Republican returned the GRNC survey. The seat is currently held by anti-gun Democrat Deborah Ross (0-star). GRNC-PVF has no recommendation in this district.

District 3 (R): In this solidly Republican (R+12) district, incumbent Greg Murphy (****) faces a field of four Republican challengers in which Brian Michael Friend and George J. Papastrat, returned the GRNC survey with scores of 93 and 91, respectively, giving both 4-star (****) evaluations. Because Murphy has dropped two gun votes in recent sessions of Congress, GRNC-PVF has no recommendation in the district.

District 4 (R): In what is the most Democrat district in NC (D+16), perennial anti-gun Democrat David Price retired, but with no less than 8 0-star Democrats vying to replace him, things in the district are not likely to improve. That said, in the race for the Republican nomination, both Courtney Geels (GRNC survey: 95%, ****) and Robert Thomas (GRNC survey: 98%, ****) received 4-star evaluations based on surveys. Accordingly, GRNC-PVF makes no recommendation in this race.

District 5 (R): In this solidly Republican (R+10) district, **GRNC-PVF recommends incumbent VIRGINIA FOXX** (****) over challenger Michael Ackerman (survey: NR, 0-star), but notes that Foxx has dropped gun votes in recent sessions of Congress and should be watched carefully.

District 6 (R): In this Democrat-leaning (D+6) district, 7 Republicans are vying for the nomination to face anti-gun incumbent Kathy Manning (0-star). Mary Ann Contogiannis, Lee Haywood, William (Bill) Schuch, and Laura Pichardo returned GRNC’s survey, scoring 100, 98, 91 and 73, respectively. On the basis of Haywood’s history of conservative political activism, **GRNC-PVF recommends LEE HAYWOOD.**

District 7 (R): In this R+5 district, incumbent David Rouzer (pro-gun votes: 93%, ****) faces Max Southworth-Beckwith (GRNC survey: 98%, ****). Based on Rouzer’s long history of pro-gun votes, **GRNC-PVF recommends DAVID ROUZER**, but cautions that Rouzer did drop one vote in the current session of Congress.

District 8 (R): In this solidly Republican (R+17) district, incumbent Dan Bishop (pro-gun votes: 96%, ****) does not face a primary challenger, but deserves kudos for voting against the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) because it contained “red flag”

gun confiscation measures for military personnel. Among the NC delegation, only Bishop and Rep. Ted Budd had the guts to vote against the NDAA.

District 9 (R): In the most neutral of Republican-leaning (R+3) districts drawn, incumbent Richard Hudson (pro-gun votes: 82%, ****) faces 3 challengers, including Mike Andriani (GRNC survey 100%, ****) and Francisco Rios (GRNC survey: 100%, ****). Given two 4-star challengers and the fact that Hudson has dropped two gun votes in recent sessions of Congress, GRNC-PVF has no recommendation in this primary.

District 10 (R): In NC's most Republican congressional district (R+19) Congressman Patrick McHenry (pro-gun votes: 92%, ****) faces four primary challengers. McHenry has been a friend of gun owners ever since his service in the NC House, including his effort to ensure passage of a clean concealed handgun reciprocity bill. Therefore, we are deeply concerned that Rep. McHenry recently dropped the NDAA vote described above. Owing to his long history of service to gun owners, **GRNC-PVF continues to recommend PATRICK MCHENRY**, but notes that with a primary featuring pro-gun Jeff Gregory (GRNC survey: 98%, GRNC ****), Congressman McHenry needs to focus on avoiding the inherently corrupting influences of incumbency.

District 11 (R): The Republican primary for this Republican-leaning (R+5) district is a slugfest featuring 7 Republican challengers to incumbent Republican Madison Cawthorn (pro-gun votes: 89%, ****). Cawthorn has made a series of gaffs, including being reprimanded by Republican leadership, which damage his legislative effectiveness. Combined with dropping the NDAA vote in his first term in office (he says he voted for it knowing the red flag language would be stripped in the Senate), gun voters in the district should consider replacing him. That replacement should NOT, however, be Wendy Marie-Limbaugh Nevez, whom leftist Democrat Moe Davis (defeated by Cawthorn in 2020) recruited and for whom he is recruiting Democrats to change registration to vote for her. Challengers Rod Honeycutt and Michele V. Woodhouse both scored 100 on GRNC's survey, earning 4-star evaluations, but the standout is Senator CHUCK EDWARDS (pro-gun votes: 100%, ****), who is not only a federally licensed gun dealer, but has a 100% voting record in the NC Senate and has helped GRNC pass pro-gun legislation through the legislature. **GRNC-PVF recommends CHUCK EDWARDS.**

District 12: In this D+14 Democrat district, none of the 3 Republican challengers completed GRNC's survey, giving all of them 0-star evaluations. But it doesn't really matter because none of them can defeat ensconced leftist Democrat Alma Adams (0-star).

District 13 (R): The race for this open seat in the most competitive "swing" (D+1) district in the state features no less than 8 Republicans, 5 of which refused to return GRNC's survey, earning them the lowest 0-star evaluation. The three 4-star Republicans are Renee Ellmers, DeVan Barbour, and Bo Hines. In previous service in the US House, Ellmers proved to be a disappointment. Trump has endorsed Hines, but some Johnston County Republicans object that he hasn't lived in the district. **GRNC-PVF has no recommendation in this race.**

District 14: In this new, Democrat-leaning (D+6) district, the only candidate to return the GRNC survey was Jonathan Simpson, who scored only 79, earning a poor 2-star (**) evaluation. **GRNC-PVF has no recommendation in this race.**

STATE RACES

NC JUDICIAL RACES

The redistricting debacle, in which activist Democrats on the NC Supreme Court invented reasons to reduce the number of conservatives NC sends to Washington, emphasizes why Second Amendment voters MUST vote in judicial elections. Two seats on the NC Supreme Court and four on the NC Court of Appeals will be on the ballot in the state's 2022 elections with majority control up for grabs in on each court. In particular, Republicans stand an excellent chance of reversing the 4-3 majority currently held by Democrats.

NC Supreme Court Seat 3: For this open seat, there are no primaries for either Republican or Democrat nominations. Court of Appeals Judge Richard Dietz will face Court of Appeals Judge Lucy Inman in November. Despite the lack of primaries, however, **GRNC-PVF strongly recommends Judge RICHARD DIETZ,**

who is a strong originalist and constitutionalist who respects the Second Amendment and has argued gun rights before the US Supreme Court.

NC Supreme Court Seat 5: The race for this seat features two Republicans vying for the nomination to challenge incumbent Democrat Justice Same Ervin IV. The Republicans are Trey Allen, who previously clerked for conservative Chief Justice Paul Newby, and Court of Appeals Judge April Wood. Either Allen or Wood would likely be good on the court. However, if Wood won the race for NC Supreme Court, leftist Democrat Governor Roy Cooper would appoint a Democrat to replace her on the Court of Appeals, potentially shifting control of the Appeals Court to Democrats. For this reason, **GRNC-PVF recommends TREY ALLEN** for the Republican nomination.

NC Court of Appeals Seat 9 (Stroud seat): Although GRNC-PVF has supported incumbent Republican Donna Stroud in past elections, she faces District Court Judge Beth Freshwater-Smith, who is a stronger constitutionalist and Second Amendment supporter, in the Republican primary. **GRNC-PVF recommends Judge BETH FRESHWATER-SMITH.**

NC Court of Appeals Seat 11 (Jackson seat): In 2020, Gov. Cooper appointed former NC House Rep. Darren Jackson (GRNC 0-star) to a vacant seat which is now up for re-election. Jackson is an anti-gun leftist with only a 7% pro-gun voting record in the House. Republicans Charlton Allen and District Court Judge Michael Stading are vying for the Republican nomination to challenge Jackson. Because Stading is a strong constitutionalist who respects the Second Amendment, **GRNC-PVF recommends Judge MICHAEL STADING.**

NC SENATE

District 01 (R): In a district which found two Republicans "double bunked," **GRNC-PVF recommends NORMAN SANDERSON** (pro-gun voting record: 100%, ****) over Bob Steinburg (pro-gun voting record: 84%, **).

District 04 (R): This race represents a rare opportunity for gun voters. In the Republican primary for NC Senate District 4, the **GRNC-PVF strongly recommends BUCK NEWTON** (pro-gun voting record: 100%, GRNC ****). In previous NC Senate service, Newton was a gun rights leader who wrote and sponsored numerous pro-gun bills. Meanwhile, opponent Joe DeMocko (GRNC survey: NR, GRNC 0-star) refused to return GRNC's candidate survey, suggesting that he doesn't want you to know where he stands on the Second Amendment. In this race, Newton is the clear choice.

District 05 (D): In this D+8 district, **GRNC-PVF recommends LENTON CREDELLE BROWN** (GRNC survey: 100%, ****) over Kandie D. Smith (NC House pro-gun voting record: 25%, 0-star).

District 10 (R): In this R+11 district, **GRNC-PVF recommends BENTON SAWREY** (GRNC survey: 100%, ****) over Matt Ansley and Jill Homan (both GRNC surveys: NR, 0-star).

District 12 (R): **GRNC-PVF recommends incumbent JIM BURGIN** (pro-gun votes: 100%, ****) over challengers David Buboltz and Ernie Watson (both GRNC surveys: NR, 0-star).

District 13 (R): **GRNC-PVF recommends DAVID BANKERT** (GRNC survey: 96%, ****) over Jeff Werner (GRNC survey: NR, 0-star).

District 18 (R): In this race, E.C. Sykes (GRNC survey: 95%, ****) and Dimitry Slabyak (GRNC survey: 93%, ****) both earned 4-star evaluations. Consequently, GRNC-PVF makes no recommendation in this race.

District 19 (R): **GRNC-PVF recommends WESLEY MEREDITH** (pro-gun votes: 100%, ****) over Dennis Britt (GRNC survey: 100%, ****) due to Meredith's voting record and history of bill sponsorship in previous NC Senate service.

District 30 (R): In this rematch, Steve Jarvis (****) and incumbent Eddie Gallimore (****) have both returned GRNC surveys (with 98% and 97%, respectively), both have 100% pro-gun voting records, and sponsored pro-gun legislation in the past (Gallimore in the NC Senate, Jarvis in the NC House).

However, Gallimore is the more devoted Second Amendment supporter. **GRNC-PVF recommends EDDIE GALLIMORE.**

District 36 (R): Shirley Blackburn Randleman (pro-gun votes: 100%, ****), Lee Zachary (pro-gun votes: 87%, ****) and Eddie Settle (GRNC survey: 100%, ****) have all earned 4-star evaluations. However, **GRNC-PVF recommends SHIRLEY BLACKBURN RANDLEMAN** due to her 100% voting record in previous senate service.

District 37 (R): GRNC-PVF recommends **VICKIE SAWYER** (pro-gun votes: 100%, ****) over Tom Fyler (GRNC survey: NR, 0-star).

District 42 (R): GRNC-PVF recommends **SCOTT STONE** (pro-gun votes in previous service: 100%, ****) over Cheryl Russo (GRNC survey: NR, 0-star).

District 46 (R): GRNC-PVF recommends **WARREN DANIEL** (pro-gun votes: 100%, ****) over Mark Crawford (GRNC survey: 98%, ****).

District 47(R): An unfortunate race in which two pro-gun Republicans have been “double bunked.” Both Deanna Ballard (****) and Ralph Hise (****) have 100% pro-gun voting records. GRNC-PVF has no recommendation in this race.

NC HOUSE

NC House District 5 (R): Bill Ward submitted a late survey of 100%, resulting in the following: In this race, Donald Kirkland (GRNC survey: 92%, ****) and Bill Ward (GRNC survey 100%, ****) both earned 4-star evaluations. GRNC-PVF makes no recommendation in this race.

District 6 (R): GRNC-PVF recommends **MURRAY SIMPKINS** (GRNC survey: 99%, ****) over Joe Pike (GRNC survey: NR, 0-star).

District 9 (R): GRNC-PVF recommends **TONY MOORE** (GRNC survey: 94%, ****) over Timothy Reeder (GRNC survey: NR, 0-star).

District 13 (R): GRNC-PVF recommends either **PETE BENTON** (GRNC survey: 100%, ****) or **CELESTE CAIRNS** (GRNC survey: 100%, ****), but not Eden Gordon Hill (survey: NR, 0-star).

District 14 (R): Incumbent George Cleveland is one of the few long-term stalwart Second Amendment defenders of the NC House, with a 100% voting record and repeated 100% survey score, more than earning a GRNC 4-star evaluation (****). **GRNC-PVF strongly recommends GEORGE CLEVELAND** over challenger Debbie Burke (GRNC survey: NR, 0-star).

District 25 (R): GRNC-PVF recommends **ALLEN CHESSER** (survey: 99%, ****) over Yvonne McLeod (survey: 87%, ***) or Aelsey Heth Hopkins (survey: NR, 0-star).

District 26 (R): GRNC-PVF recommends incumbent **DONNA MCDOWELL WHITE** (pro-gun votes: 100%, ****) over challenger Rick Walker (GRNC survey: NR, 0-star).

District 28 (R): GRNC-PVF recommends **LARRY STRICKLAND** (pro-gun votes: 100%, ****) over James Davenport (GRNC survey: 79%, **).

District 35 (R): GRNC-PVF recommends **FRED VON CANON** (GRNC survey 92%, ****) over Brandon Panameno (GRNC survey: NR, 0-star).

District 43 (R): GRNC-PVF recommends **DIANE WHEATLEY** (pro-gun votes: 100%, ****) over Clarence W. Goins, Jr. (GRNC survey: 94%, ****) due to Wheatley’s demonstrated voting record.

District 47 (R): GRNC-PVF recommends **JARROD LOWERY** (GRNC survey: 96%, ****) over Mickey Biggs (GRNC survey: NR, 0-star).

District 52 (R): In another unfortunate double-bunking of Republicans with good voting records, **GRNC-PVF recommends BEN MOSS** (pro-gun votes: 100%, GRNC ****) over Jamie Boles (pro-gun votes: 95%, ****).

District 53 (R): Because voting record is a better measure of candidates than survey scores, **GRNC-PVF recommends HOWARD PENNY, JR.** (pro-gun votes: 100%, ****) over Brian Hawley (GRNC survey: 100%, ****).

District 54 (R): GRNC-PVF recommends **CRAIG KINSEY** (GRNC survey: 100%, ****) over Walter Petty (GRNC survey: NR, 0-star).

District 55 (R): Because voting record is a better measure of candidates than survey scores, **GRNC-PVF recommends MARK BRODY** (pro-gun votes: 100%, ****) over Brandon Smith (GRNC survey: 96%, ****).

District 63 (R): Because voting record is a better measure of candidates than survey scores, **GRNC-PVF recommends STEPHEN ROSS** (pro-gun votes: 100%, ****) over Ed Priola (GRNC survey: 100%, ****) or Peter Boykin (GRNC survey: 95%, ****).

District 65 (R): GRNC-PVF recommends **A. REECE PYRTLE, JR.** (GRNC survey: 94%, ****) over Joseph A. Gibson III (GRNC survey: NR, 0-star).

District 70 (R): GRNC-PVF recommends incumbent **PAT B. HURLEY** (pro-gun votes: 94%, ****) over challenger Brian Biggs (GRNC survey: NR, 0-star).

District 73 (R): GRNC-PVF recommends **PARISH MOFFITT** (GRNC survey: 100%, ****) over Catherine Whiteford (GRNC survey: 88%, ***) and Brian Echevarria (GRNC survey: NR, 0-star).

NC House District 78 (R): David Ashley submitted a late 100% survey. Accordingly, the recommendation in this race is now: **GRNC-PVF recommends either CORY BORTREE** (GRNC survey: 100%, ****) or **DAVID ASHLEY** (GRNC survey: 100%, ****) over Neal Jackson (GRNC survey: NR, 0-star).

District 79 (R): GRNC-PVF strongly recommends incumbent **KEITH KIDWELL** (pro-gun votes: 100%) over challenger Ed Hege (GRNC survey: 100%, ****). Kidwell has been a leader for gun rights, sponsoring numerous pro-gun bills.

District 83 (R): GRNC-PVF recommends **BRAD JENKINS** (GRNC survey: 100%, ****) over Kevin Crutchfield (GRNC survey: 88%, ***) and Grayson Haff (GRNC survey: NR, 0-star).

District 89 (R): Because voting record is a better measure of candidates than survey scores, **GRNC-PVF recommends MITCH SETZER** (pro-gun votes: 98%, ****) over Benjamin Devine (GRNC survey: 100%, ****). Kelli Weaver Moore (GRNC survey: 84%, **).

District 90 (R): Incumbent Sarah Stevens (pro gun votes: 93%, ***) dropped votes in years past but has voted with gun owners in recent years. Challenger Benjamin Romans returned a 100% survey, earning four stars (****). GRNC-PVF has no recommendation in this race.

District 91 (R): GRNC-PVF recommends incumbent **KYLE HALL** (pro-gun votes: 100%, ****) over James Douglas (GRNC survey: NR, 0-star) and Stephen L. James (GRNC survey: NR, 0-star).

District 109 (R): In this four-way Republican primary, Donnie Loftis is the incumbent but has no voting record because he was recently appointed to fill a vacant seat. **GRNC-PVF recommends DONNIE LOFTIS** (GRNC survey: 95%, ****) over Lauren Bumgardner Current (GRNC survey: NR, 0-star), John Gouch (GRNC survey: NR, 0-star) and Ronnie Worley (GRNC survey: NR, 0-star).

District 113 (R): Another unfortunate district in which redistricting double-bunked two pro-gun Republicans, Jake Johnson (pro-gun votes: 100%, ****) and David Rogers (pro-gun votes: 100%, ****) have identical voting and survey scores. GRNC-PVF has no recommendation in this race.

District 117 (R): GRNC-PVF recommends **DENNIS JUSTICE** (GRNC survey: 96%, ****) over Jennifer Capps Balkcom (GRNC survey: NR, 0-star) and Chelsea Walsh (GRNC survey: NR, 0-star).

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