

# Old North State Report – November 6, 2026
# 2026 NC General Election Report

## NC 2026: CONTROL ON THE BALLOT

The statewide general election was Tuesday, November 3, 2026. This election is also known as the "midterm," as it is held two years (midway) into the four-year U.S. presidential term. Seats up for election included:

- One U.S. Senate seat
- 14 U.S. House seats
- 1 NC Supreme Court Associate Justice seat
- 3 NC Court of Appeals Judge seats
- 3 Constitutional Amendments
- 50 NC Senate seats
- 120 NC House seats
- Local judges and district attorneys
- County offices like sheriffs, county commissioners, and Board of Education members
- Municipal elections in some jurisdictions

Before the November 2026 elections, Republicans held firm control of the North Carolina General Assembly, including veto-proof supermajorities in both chambers.

## RESULTS OF 2026 NC HOUSE AND SENATE MIDTERMS

The 2026 midterm elections produced a dramatic shift in North Carolina politics, as Democrats won control of the North Carolina House of Representatives for the first time

since 2010. The victory ended 16 years of Republican control of the chamber and represented one of the most significant Democratic gains in the state in more than a decade.

Democrats will begin January holding 71 of North Carolina's 120 House seats, leaving them one seat shy of a three-fifths supermajority. Representative-elect April Montgomery defeated Republican challenger Charles Taylor in House District 54. Montgomery is unaffiliated and has not indicated which caucus she will join. If she aligns with Democrats, their ranks would increase to 72 members, supplying the House with the three-fifths margin needed for a super majority. Democrats therefore gained at least 22 seats net, far exceeding the 12-seat gain needed to capture the chamber. Several races remained close enough for recounts, but the outcome of House control was not in doubt.

At least five House races remain within recount margins:

| Race | Leader | Opponent | Margin |
|---|---|---|---|
| House District 9 | Claire Kempner (D) | Timothy Reeder (R, incumbent) | < 0.5% |
| House District 20 | Tim Merrick (D) | Dane Scalise (R) | ~0.2% |
| House District 62 | Shelly Headen (D) | John Blust (R, incumbent) | 0.5% |
| House District 63 | Ian Baltutis (D) | Ryan Moffitt (R) | 0.7% |
| House District 93 | Charles Wallin (D) | Ray Pickett (R, incumbent) | 0.6% |

Republicans managed to retain the North Carolina Senate, preserving a narrow majority (a projected 26-24 advantage). A close race involving incumbent Senator Danny Britt (R-Robeson) could affect the final count. Britt leads by fewer than 300 votes, making a recount possible. If he wins, Republicans keep a 26-24 Senate majority. If he loses, the Senate is tied 25-25, giving Lt. Governor Rachel Hunt tie-breaking authority. However, Republicans lost their veto-proof supermajority, a major development for Democratic Governor Josh Stein. Going forward, Republicans will have a more difficult time overriding gubernatorial vetoes or passing controversial legislation without Democratic support.

Several high-profile Republican incumbents were defeated in the 2026 North Carolina midterm elections, reflecting the broader Democratic wave that helped flip control of the North Carolina House of Representatives. Among the most notable losses was Republican Senator Michael Lee of New Hanover County, who was defeated by Democrat Jessica Bichler. Lee was considered one of the Senate's most influential members and a potential future leader of the chamber, making his defeat one of the election's biggest upsets.

In the House, Republican Erin Paré, one of the chamber's leading budget architects and a prominent legislator from Wake County, lost her seat to Democrat Winn Decker. Another significant Wake County defeat came when Republican Mike Schietzelt lost to Democrat Evonne Hopkins in a rematch of their closely contested 2024 race. These suburban losses were particularly damaging to Republicans because they helped Democrats erase a large GOP majority and ultimately capture control of the House.

The results fundamentally change the balance of power in Raleigh. Instead of one-party legislative dominance, North Carolina will enter 2027 with a Democratic House, Republican Senate, and Democratic governor, creating divided government. Major decisions involving the state budget, teacher pay, education funding, health care spending, economic development, and tax policy will likely require bipartisan compromise.

**2026 NC LEGISLATIVE ELECTION RESULTS AT A GLANCE**

| Measure | Result |
|---|---|
| House seats on ballot | 120 |
| Previous House makeup | 71 Republicans, 49 Democrats |
| Seats Democrats needed to flip | 12 |
| Estimated new House makeup | 70 Democrats, 49 Republicans, 1 Unaffiliated |
| Number of incumbents defeated | 17 |
| Senate seats on ballot | 50 |
| Previous Senate makeup | 30 Republicans, 20 Democrats |
| Estimated new Senate makeup | 26 Republicans, 24 Democrats |
| Number of incumbents defeated | 3 |
| GOP Senate status | Retained majority but lost supermajority |

*WRAL (Specht & Doran) 11/4/26*
*The Center Square (Wooten) 11/3/26*
*State Affairs (Sasser) 11/4/26*
*The News & Observer (Ingram) 11/4/26*

**2026 NC CONGRESSIONAL SHAKE-UP – POSSIBLE RECOUNTS LOOM**

North Carolina played a major role in the 2026 Democratic wave election, delivering a key Democratic pickup in the U.S. Senate and several closely watched U.S. House races. The state's most significant congressional result was the election of former Governor Roy Cooper to the U.S. Senate, flipping the seat held by retiring Republican Senator Thom Tillis. Cooper defeated Republican Michael Whatley, former chairman of the Republican National Committee, with approximately 58.7% of the vote to 39.1%, giving Democrats their first North Carolina Senate victory since 2008.

In the U.S. House, Democrats largely held their existing seats and scored several notable victories. One of the most closely watched races was in the 1st Congressional District, where Democratic Representative Don Davis survived a major Republican challenge from Laurie Buckhout despite a congressional map that had been redrawn to favor Republicans. Davis won with about 50.1% of the vote.

Democrats also captured the open 11th Congressional District in western North Carolina after Republican Chuck Edwards did not seek reelection. Democrat Jamie Ager defeated Republican Jennifer Balkcom in what was considered one of the state's biggest congressional upsets, flipping a district Edwards had won comfortably in 2024.

Several prominent Democratic incumbents easily won reelection, including Deborah Ross in the Raleigh-based 2nd District and Valerie Foushee in the 4th District. Ross won roughly 75% of the vote in her district.

One of the biggest surprises of North Carolina's 2026 congressional election was the apparent defeat of longtime Republican Virginia Foxx in the 5th Congressional District. However, as of Thursday morning, Foxx has not conceded and trails Democrat Chuck Hubbard by just 99 votes (139,034 to 138,935) with an estimated 2,700 ballots still outstanding. Election officials are continuing the canvass, and a recount remains possible if the margin stays this close. A Foxx loss would end her two-decade congressional tenure and give Democrats a significant pickup in a traditionally Republican district.

Another major upset occurred in the 14th Congressional District, where Democrat Lakesha Womack defeated Republican Representative Tim Moore, the former Speaker of the North Carolina House of Representatives and one of the most powerful Republican figures in state politics. Moore's defeat meant that both he and former Senate leader Phil Berger would be leaving elected office.

Two additional U.S. House contests are currently close enough to trigger recounts:

| Race | Leader | Opponent | Margin |
|---|---|---|---|
| US House District 1 | Greg Murphy (R, incumbent) | Raymond Smith (D) | 0.09% |
| US House District 7 | David Rouzer (R, incumbent) | Kimberly Hardy (D) | 0.7% |

**2026 NC CONGRESSIONAL ELECTION RESULTS AT A GLANCE**

| Measure | Result |
|---|---|
| Previous congressional delegation makeup | 10 Republicans, 4 Democrats |
| Estimated new congressional delegation makeup | 10 Democrats, 4 Republicans |

*NBC News 11/4/26*
*NC State Board of Elections 11/3/26*

*NC Newsline (Spencer) 11/4/26*
*The News & Observer (Ingram) 11/4/26*

**COURT SWEEP 2026**

Democrats won all four statewide appellate court races in North Carolina, successfully defending Anita Earls' seat on the North Carolina Supreme Court and three seats on the North Carolina Court of Appeals.

Anita Earls won a second eight-year term on the state Supreme Court, defeating Republican Sarah Stevens by approximately 58.9% to 41.1%.

On the Court of Appeals, Democratic incumbents John Arrowood and Toby Hampson each won re-election, defeating Republicans Michael Byrne and George Cooper Bell, respectively.

In the only open appellate seat, Democrat Christine Walczyk defeated Republican Craig Collins to succeed retiring Judge Allegra Collins.

Despite the Democratic sweep, the elections did not change the partisan balance of either appellate court. Republicans retain a 5-2 majority on the North Carolina Supreme Court and a 12-3 majority on the Court of Appeals.

Democrats now have a potential path to reclaim a Supreme Court majority in 2028, when three Republican-held Supreme Court seats will be on the ballot.

*Carolina Journal (Staff) 11/3/26*

**CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS WIN EASILY**

North Carolina voters approved all three constitutional amendments on the 2026 ballot, including two tax-related measures and one expanding voter identification requirements. Each amendment passed by roughly a 60% to 40% margin.

**Voter ID Amendment:** Requires photo identification for all voting methods, including absentee mail-in ballots, and places the requirement in the state constitution. North Carolina already requires ID for in-person voting, but this measure extends the constitutional requirement to mailed ballots.

**Income Tax Amendment:** Lowers the constitutional cap on the state personal income tax rate from 7% to 3.5%, making future tax increases above that level constitutionally prohibited. The current flat tax rate is 3.99% and is already scheduled to decline further under existing law.

**Property Tax Amendment:** Requires the North Carolina General Assembly to establish limits on how much local governments can increase property tax collections from year to year, with details to be set by future legislation.

The measures represented one of the few major statewide victories for Republicans on election night and will embed voter ID and tax-limitation policies more firmly in the North Carolina Constitution.

*The Center Square (Wooten) 11/4/26*