

Public Policy Network of Western NC and North Georgia
Candidate Profiles—NC Senate District 50
Financial Security

Jim Davis- Republican Incumbent

Mr. Davis' office did not respond to PPN's surveys; however, PPN was able to find published statements about his legislative priorities on the NC Legislature's website, and in his responses to WLOS's 2018 survey of candidates. See references cited below.

Recent changes to federal tax laws are expected to explode the national debt to-\$1.9 trillion by 2028. Since **Medicare** and **Medicaid** make up nearly 30% of the U.S. budget, many public policy analysts believe that these programs are likely to be a primary focus of Congressional efforts to reduce the deficit. The **Social Security** program provides a financial security net for over 62 million Americans (including 43 million retired workers; 6 million survivors of deceased workers; and 11 million disabled workers and dependents). According to the SSA, 62% of the people receiving Social Security benefits receive at least half of their retirement income from Social Security; 34% rely upon Social Security for almost all of their retirement income (90-100%). Social Security is critical to the economic security of residents of western North Carolina: 1 out of every 5 residents of Cherokee and Clay Counties (20%) receives Social Security.

- 1. What actions do you propose to take to make sure that the most vulnerable low-income, elderly and disabled individuals and families in North Carolina who rely upon Medicaid for their health care will NOT be negatively impacted by Congress' efforts to reduce the federal budget?**

Not answered directly. However, in his published responses to the WLOS survey on the most significant issues facing North Carolina, Mr. Davis identified the state's liabilities for state retirees as one of his top priorities for the State of North Carolina. He explained that the state's retirement system is underfunded by \$14 billion; the retiree health care system is underfunded by \$34 billion. "To put this obligation in perspective, this year's total state budget was a little over \$23 billion. In the last few years the legislature has reduced these liabilities but

they remain substantial. Treasurer Dale Folwell is also making significant changes which are paying dividends."

- 2. Do you believe the new federal tax legislation provides the greatest benefits to the wealthiest Americans? If so, what measures would you take to try to remedy the inequity?**

No information available.

- 3. Do you support an increase North Carolina's minimum wage (to supplement the federal minimum wage)?**

No information available.

Jobs/Economic Development in Western NC:

PPN was unable to find published statements by Mr. Davis which addresses financial stability or economic development that will directly benefit the residents of western NC. However, we did find published remarks by Mr. Davis regarding his objection to "unfunded federal mandates" which have required the state to remove funds from existing agency programs, or risk forfeiting federal funds. Mr. Davis also believes that a new EPA mandate (created by the "Waters of the U.S." definition under the Clean Water Act) could increase the cost of permitting and cause significant harm to farmers, businesses and landowners in North Carolina.

References cited: [https:// www.ncleg.net](https://www.ncleg.net) and <https://wlos.com/news/kyc/nc-senate/sen-jim-davis-r-nc-senate-district-50>

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Bobby Kuppers- Democratic Challenger

Mr. Kuppers did not respond to PPN’s surveys; however, PPN was able to find published statements about his legislative priorities on his campaign website.

1. What actions do you propose to take to make sure that the most vulnerable low-income, elderly and disabled individuals and families in North Carolina who rely upon Medicaid for their health care will NOT be negatively impacted by Congress’ efforts to reduce the federal budget?

No information available.

2. Do you believe the new federal tax legislation provides the greatest benefits to the wealthiest Americans? If so, what measures would you take to try to remedy the inequity?

PPN’s Federal Tax question was not directly answered; however, Mr. Kuppers’ makes this statement: “I consider myself a jobs-first Democrat. While I hate excessive taxes and unnecessary regulation, I still believe there’s an important role for government to play in maintaining a level playing field and making sure entrepreneurs and corporations have everything they need to create jobs. This includes a world-class infrastructure, excellent public education (K-12, as well and community colleges and universities), and regulatory agencies that help businesses while protecting consumers.”

3. Do you support an increase North Carolina’s minimum wage (to supplement the federal minimum wage)?

No information available.

Jobs/Economic Development in Western NC: PPN was unable to find published statements by Mr. Kuppers which addresses financial stability or economic development that will directly benefit the residents of western NC.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: “I believe that government must invest in the people, particularly in rural areas of the state. Cities like Charlotte and Raleigh have thrived in recent years, while many parts of western North Carolina have not fully recovered from the great recession. We can and will fix this. A well-balanced regulatory environment, modern tax code, and proper incentives can encourage companies to locate to rural areas, while robust technical training for 21st century manufacturing jobs can give our workforce the skills it needs. When I’m elected, I promise to work across the aisle to find common sense solutions that create jobs all across our great state.”

INFRASTRUCTURE: “Good infrastructure is crucial to attracting jobs to North Carolina and allowing our own entrepreneurs, farmers, and manufacturers to access markets across the state country, and world. That’s why I support updating North Carolina’s infrastructure, including roads and bridges. Aside from transportation infrastructure, we must also find ways to close the urban-rural gap in high tech infrastructure. Too many parts of our state have been left behind when it comes to things like broadband Internet access. In the information age in which we live, this is a critical piece of a modern, robust economy. One shouldn’t have to live in a major urban center to access this important technology.

HIGHER EDUCATION: “North Carolina’s public university system has been a driver of economic development for our state since the 18th century... Countless North Carolinians have attended campuses all over the state ..In the 21st century economy, higher education is now more important than ever. The percentage of jobs that require at least a college degree has increased dramatically over the years, and we must act accordingly and renew our commitment to higher education.”

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TRADE SCHOOLS and COMMUNITY COLLEGES: “We must also acknowledge that a four-year degree isn’t for everyone. Trade schools and community colleges also have an important role to play in preparing our young people for the jobs of tomorrow, including high tech manufacturing. As a state legislator, I will ensure all North Carolinians have access to affordable and modern higher education options that prepare them to compete in the 21st century economy.”

References cited: [https:// www.kuppersforsenate.com](https://www.kuppersforsenate.com)