

Bob Drach

NC State Auditor

● What is your background in politics? If you are an incumbent, please state which offices you have held and when.

I am a Certified Management Accountant (CMA). I am the only accountant running for NC State Auditor in this election cycle. The State Auditor should be an accountant. Early in my career, I chose to do my national service as a US Peace Corps volunteer. Since then, I have served on the New Hanover County Board of Equalization and Review. I have been a public-school teacher and served as Chair of the Cape Fear Libertarian Party.

● Why were you drawn to run for office?

I want to fix the mess in the State Auditor's office and restore the integrity of the office. In 2023, ethical problems at the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) led to the resignation of the prior auditor. This created what must be a toxic environment as both staffing and output of the office are down by about 20%. What is worse, the replacement auditor is a political appointee and both major party candidates are not even accountants. It is a mess. The office needs a qualified, competent, and independent leader to rebuild the work environment, triage the problems, augment the talented staff, and bring technology that leverages the organization's talent. I have the right skill sets and experience to do this job well. I will bring the type of leadership and financial management skill that will make our great state better.

● If you had to pick three issues (housing, economy, schools, policing, etc.) which three issues would you say are most important to you?

My #1 issue is restoring the integrity of the Office of State Auditor. #2 is that extreme partisan politics makes government less effective and hurts the people of the state, which is why I am independent of the parties that dominate state politics. For #3. I believe in sound financial management practices which can reduce the potential for waste, fraud, and abuse in state government.

● If elected, how would you work with fellow representatives on the other side of the political aisle?

Two major political parties dominate state government. I am not affiliated with either of these parties. In that way I am the only independent candidate for State Auditor. By voting for me, voters assure that politics will not play a role in the audits that we pursue.

● What do you see as the role of the office you seek?

The Office of the State Auditor (OSA) should be the leader in unbiased financial attestation and review, assuring that the government uses sound financial practices and investigating the effectiveness of government programs. Unfortunately, ethical issues and leaders who are not

qualified in accounting threaten the effectiveness of the OSA. The solution is to elect the only accountant and the independent candidate running for this office, which is me.

● Which city do you live in and what are three favorite things about it?

I live in Wilmington. I love eating seafood all the time, taking my 4-wheel drive out onto the beach, and boating on the intercoastal waterway. Best doing all of these with friends!

● Where do you think our state is headed? What stands in the way? How can you help us get there?

I think the state will lead the nation in rejecting nasty political partisanship. Rancorous partisan politics is harming North Carolina. Voters see this, and in record numbers they are registering unaffiliated and with third parties. This is the largest voting bloc in the state - bigger than both the Rs and the Ds. These voters do not like the choices that Rs and Ds give them, and they do not like it when politicians play games, fail to compromise in good faith, and fail to perform basic functions of government, such as the current problems in the Office of the State Auditor. Like the North Carolina Forward Party, I support collaboration and compromise in government. I support independent and third-party candidates when they offer the most qualified choices, as in the State Auditor race. I also identify with libertarian principles like keeping the functions of government as close to the people as possible, and civil liberties like freedom of association. NC voters have already shown through their voter registration what type of government they want. Now it just takes good candidates for them to choose from, and for them to vote their convictions.

● Our state seems divided by party. What are some of the things that both parties agree on?

This looks like a good opportunity to remind *Triad City Beat* and all the voters trapped by the two-party paradigm that there are many other options out there. The most popular of these is the Libertarian Party, but there is also the Forward Party, the Veterans Party, the Green Party, the Socialists, and the Constitution Party all on the ballot this election cycle. No Labels and We The People parties are also trying to emerge. Given that almost 40% of registered voters in North Carolina are looking for better alternatives to the two-party candidates, they should consider all qualified candidates, of which the Libertarian and Forward candidates are particularly strong. Unfortunately, one thing that the biggest two parties agree on is suppressing third party and independent candidates. Voters should instead demand policies that encourage compromise and reduce the power of the tired and shrinking traditional parties – policies like approval voting, better ballot access for third party and independent candidates, non-partisan methods for drawing legislative districts, and other more democratic electoral reforms.