

## **Ronda Mays, Candidate for NC State Senate District 31**

### **For all candidates:**

● **What is your background in politics?** I have not run for or held a political office in the past. I was elected as the full-time release president of Forsyth County Association of Educators and served for two terms. I was also elected by the statewide membership of the North Carolina Association of Educators to serve as the NC Director on the National Education Association Board.

### **If you are an incumbent, please state which offices you have held and when. NA**

● **Why were you drawn to run for office?** I have advocated, lobbied, and organized platforms on education, healthcare, voting rights, housing, and minimum wage. The common thread with each of these issues is the fact it takes too much time and effort to get things changed. I became frustrated with it appearing as if the lawmakers were not listening to the will of the people. I want to be at the table and in the room when issues are being discussed, and I want to include the voices of the constituents in the NC State Senate District 31.

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

1. Schools/education: I have served as a school social worker for the state of NC for over 24 years, minus the four as president of Forsyth County Association of Educators. I have seen first hand the importance of having resources in our schools. The educators at each level and career category make it possible to provide a quality education to our students. When we are lacking funding for mandates that are given by lawmakers, it makes it difficult to follow through. We continue to lose qualified educators to other careers and/or states. We have too many students in classrooms, and we do not have enough qualified educators to teach our students. For ten years the state has provided funds to private schools and continued to not provide the necessary funding to our public schools, resulting in county commissioners trying to close the gap. It is time for our state to honor the Leandro ruling and provide the public schools across NC with the necessary funding for our students' education.
2. Economy: The state minimum wage is \$7.25/hr. This needs to be increased to a rate that is in-line with the consumer price index. People need to be making enough money to purchase goods and services. Wages should increase with the individual's educational level and experience. There should also be a cost of living increase for those who are retired and receiving social security and/or state retirement plans. We also must attract and retain businesses to various areas in the 31st Senate District.

3. Housing: The availability of quality, affordable housing is an issue. The condition and cost of some of the available housing is in question. The rent prices are high and the quality of the housing is unacceptable. I would like to know what information is available concerning renovation of houses and other property that could be converted to single family or multifamily housing.

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

I would have a conversation with them to find out what they are passionate about or want to focus on. This information can help us find out what we have in common. This will give us a starting point for us to build upon.

- **What do you see as the role of the office you seek?**

The role is to create a budget for the state. To review and pass laws for the safety and democratic process of our state.

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

Rural Hall: 1) The openness of the neighborhoods. Housing that is not so close to one another. 2) The friendliness of the people; everyone speaks to each other when coming in contact. 3) The safety and security of the area. You do not feel like you will be harmed in any way.

**For state races:**

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

If we do not start making more of an investment in our public schools in NC, which in turn would supply the needed resources for our students and educators, we will continue to lose educators and business. When a company is looking at a location to operate their business, the school system is something they consider. Strong public schools are vital to the economy.

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

This question is difficult because the parties agree on things/issues on the surface, but then one starts looking at each party's differences on the definition of the item/issue. Each party definition is different. For example, both parties agree that family, education, and safety are important issues. How these issues are defined and how to accomplish the goals are often different between the two parties.

**• For state representatives: If elected, what are some pieces of legislation you would work to draft or sponsor?**

I would work to:

- \* issue a moratorium on opportunity scholarships
- \* reinstate longevity pay for state employees, who lost it in 2014
- \* Leandro ruling to be executed allowing school districts to receive the funds per the court ruling
- \* funding for mental and physical healthcare issues
- \* Childcare funding
- \* Increase the state minimum wage

**• For state representatives: Which laws that have been passed in the last few years are you most in support of? Which do you least support?**

I am supportive of the medicaid expansion. This allows for more people to have medical coverage. They are able to address their mental health and physical health needs. This will assist them with being able to have a more productive life.

I am least supportive of the opportunity scholarships. This law has allowed for tax funds to be given to private schools where there is no oversight from the state. Public Schools are in need of funding; these funds should be given to them. This could address many of the funding and structural needs that many of the school districts in NC are facing.

**• For state representatives: Who are your legislative role models and why?**

Senator Graig Myer- He shows compassion and willingness to listen to the issues.

Senator Dan Blue- He is willing to listen and discuss issues with voters. He has strong leadership skills.

Senator Paul Lowe- He makes himself available and discusses the issues of concern.

Representative Amber Baker- She is dedicated and compassionate on issues impacting children and families.

**• What are the drawbacks of gerrymandered districts to our state? Are there any benefits?**

The lines are drawn to increase the likelihood of one party maintaining power and control over the decisions made. This is not a democratic process. The voters should have the power to elect who they want to represent them.

Gerrymandering only benefits the party who is maintaining power and control. The lines should be drawn where there is an equal representation of each party.