

NC State Senate District 50

Candidates: John J. Snow, Jr. (Democrat)
Jim Davis (Republican)

QUALIFICATIONS

1. What are your strongest qualifications for this position?

Snow (D)	Davis (R)
<p><i>Married 39 years, 4 kids, 4 grandkids, 3 teachers in the family. 31 years in the court system: 27 as District Court Judge, 4 years Asst. DA. I know important issues for children, families and businesses of WNC. Judges and Senators have similar duties. I have served 3 terms as a Senator. Legislative emphasis on issues involving children, families, economics and public safety. 7 Senate committees. Co-Chair of Crime Control and Public Safety. Sponsor of 179 bills. Hard working-people before politics, strong constituent service.</i></p>	NR

ECONOMY - JOBS

Unemployment in the United States and Western North Carolina has recently reached levels rarely seen since the Great Depression.

2. What are the 1 or 2 most important actions that the NC General Assembly should take to increase employment?

Snow (D)	Davis (R)
<p><i>Supporting small businesses is the key to creating jobs, and the key to helping small businesses is providing access to credit. See: http://jobsnow.nc.gov/financing.aspx Small Business Center Network of 58 business centers supports development of new businesses. See: http://www.sbcn.nc.gov/localSBC/ Dept. of Commerce supports small businesses. See: http://www.nccommerce.com/en/BusinessServices/ Helping unemployed find work, employment sec. assistance. See: http://www.jobsnow.nc.gov/findJobs.aspx Incentives are sometimes necessary. See: http://www.nccommerce.com/en/PressRoom/PressReleases/</i></p>	NR

ECONOMY - BUDGET

The "Great Recession" which began in December 2007 has strained state budgets. North Carolina saw a shortfall of over \$5 billion in the 2009 budget. To balance the budget the legislature made cuts of \$4 billion, increased taxes by \$1 billion, and still needed federal stimulus money to prevent thousands of teachers losing their jobs.

3. *With the prospect of another shortfall in revenue for 2010, what state programs would you consider for further cuts and/or what tax increases or other revenue-generating ideas would you support?*

Snow (D)	Davis (R)
<p><i>With the largest budget cuts in history, further cuts in education and DHHS will be hard. Possible cuts would include non-profits that receive funds from the state. Cuts on state paid athletic scholarships for out of state students. Cuts on bloated administrative positions in the UNC system. Cuts identified by the Budget Reform and Accountability Commission that look through the budget to find inefficient programs. Tax reform that broadens the base will not be possible in this economic environment.</i></p>	<p>NR</p>

HEALTH CARE

The US Congress continues to struggle with health care reform. With no change or reform, the number of uninsured North Carolinians is projected to grow by more than 30% (to over 2 million people) in 10 years. In that same time, family spending on health care will grow by about 70%, and the NC share of Medicaid and the children's health program will almost double.

4. *What should the NC General Assembly do now to address the growing numbers of uninsured, the cost of health care for families, and the burden on state budget?*

Snow (D)	Davis (R)
<p><i>National Health Care will help NC coverage in the 1st year: Dependant coverage for children up to age 26. Bars denial of ins. to kids w/pre-existing conditions. Bars placing caps on dollar value of lifetime benefits & covers many preventive services at no charge. Create temporary high-risk pool for those unable to buy insurance. Gives conditional tax credit to businesses w/fewer than 25 workers. Gives help to businesses that provide coverage to retirees over 55 who aren't eligible for Medicare. Increases access to care with 11 billion dollars in new funding to community health centers.</i></p>	<p>NR</p>

MENTAL HEALTH CARE

By many accounts, implementation of mental health reforms begun in North Carolina in 2001 has been seriously flawed and made worse by recent budget shortfalls. There is substantial support within the mental health community for a new comprehensive provider plan – the Critical Access Behavioral Health Agency – announced in November by the NC Dept of Health & Human Services. However, there is significant concern that rural areas – including most of western NC – do not have the provider resources required to make this plan effective here.

5. *What are the 2 or 3 most important actions that the NC General Assembly should take to assure availability of mental health provider resources in western NC?*

Snow (D)	Davis (R)
<p><i>Reform has destabilized & fragmented services from providers. The CABHA initiative attempts to integrate primary and behavioral health care w/a full range of services-access to psychiatric, clinical and treatment as well as strong case mgt. as a safety net for consumers. CABHA's will</i></p>	<p>NR</p>

restore a community mental health center focus. Smoky Mtn. LME more rural than Western Highland LME will have a more difficult CABHA implementation. As revenues return adequate funding is imperative for the success of CABHAs. We can't afford more cuts in Mental Health!

EDUCATION

State funding for education has suffered greatly during the recent recession. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funding saved many teacher jobs in NC (21 in Transylvania County) as well as provided funds for other educational needs. Those funds were limited to two years.

6. What tax increases, program cuts or other revenue-generating ideas do you support to assure adequate funding to educate NC children?

Snow (D)	Davis (R)
<p>Tax increases in the last budget were expressly for keeping teachers working. I have mentioned possible areas for further cuts in the answer for #3. Also in #3 the purpose of the BRAC Commission will be important in looking for efficiencies. We must protect teachers and the vulnerable citizens in the mental health program. At last resort we can take percentage cuts from all agencies and programs based on their ability to withstand the cuts and still perform their core functions. I do not see raising taxes again, by broadening the base in these tough economic times.</p>	NR

ENVIRONMENT- RENEWABLE ENERGY

By 2021, North Carolina will require investor-owned utilities – Duke Energy, Progress Energy, etc. – to produce 12.5 % of their electricity from renewable resources, or from more energy efficient fossil fuel plants. According to the Department of Energy, NC ranks in the top 10 states in wind power capacity. Duke Power is constructing a pilot wind farm in Pamlico Sound and Appalachian State University has built a demonstration wind farm near its campus.

7. Do you support utilizing the abundant wind power found in Western North Carolina as a source of renewable energy? (Strongly Support, Support, Neutral/Undecided, Opposed, Strongly Opposed)

Snow (D)	Davis (R)
Strongly Oppose	NR

8. Please comment on your response:

Snow (D)	Davis (R)
<p>The abundant wind power in NC is on the coast. In WNC the best wind is 3,000 ft. or above. NC ridge law puts a height restriction on structures built at 3,000 ft. or above. Senate Bill 1068 would prohibit commercial wind farms at 3,000 ft. or above, but will allow, with limits, windmills for residential use. Commercial windmills would mean groups of as many as 20 or more windmills strung along the ridges at or above 3,000 ft. I believe this would destroy the esthetic beauty of our mountain tops, as well as spoil their value as a tourist attraction.</p>	NR

ENVIRONMENT- OIL & GAS

The state of NC has control of waters up to 3 nautical miles from the coast and can manage, develop and lease resources there, and the US government controls out to 12 miles (called the Outer Continental Shelf). According to NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR,) a potential large gas field may exist off the coast near Manteo.

9. *Would you support offshore oil or gas drilling off the coast of North Carolina? (Strongly Support, Support, Neutral/Undecided, Opposed, Strongly Opposed)*

Snow (D)	Davis (R)
<i>Oppose</i>	<i>NR</i>

10. *Please comment on your response:*

Snow (D)	Davis (R)
<i>I would, most likely, be opposed to off-shore exploration due to the danger to the fragile aquatic environment through oil spills that could destroy the coastal area for tourists and damage the commercial & sport fishing industry. Whatever way they vote, (for or against) I would support the vote of the coastal legislators on this issue. I would hope they would support me on the windmill issue. There are areas in the Dakotas that have gas & oil deposits and a less threatened environment for drilling.</i>	<i>NR</i>

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Current financing of political campaigns contributes to voter apathy, raises questions about the role of special interests, requires that lawmakers spend much of their time fund-raising, and discourages those without considerable financial resources from seeking public office.

The NC Legislature has enacted a program of voter-owned elections covering several Council of State offices. This program provides a competitive amount of campaign money from a public fund to candidates who meet strict guidelines.

11. *Do you support extending the voter-owned elections legislation to cover the following offices? (Support/Oppose)*

	<i>Snow (D)</i>	<i>Davis (R)</i>
<i>State Legislature</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>NR</i>
<i>Governor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>NR</i>
<i>Lt. Governor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>NR</i>
<i>Council of State offices not yet publicly funded</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>NR</i>