



VA HD-12 District Primer

April 2017 • Researched, summarized, and edited by Local Majority's all-volunteer electoral research team!

In 2016, Clinton won the district by 1.7% and in 2014 Warner won by nearly 8%. In 2015, Republican Joseph Yost won by a large margin (17%) with only 36% turnout but in 2013 he won by only 4.89% and only 3.32% in 2011. His policies are not in line with the majority. We are going to win this election for the Democrats in 2017!

How We'll Win in 2017: Challenger Chris Hurst



Chris has dedicated his life to public service and giving a voice to the people of southwest Virginia. As a journalist, he's been a fierce advocate for families struggling for access to mental health care and equality in education for students with special needs. He's investigated why our workforce must adapt for the careers

of the future. He's documented the dramatic rise of child abuse and opioid addiction. And he's held government leaders accountable while showing how our first responders are left without vital resources. His decision to run for office is a progression from his work in journalism after he recovered from the profound tragedy of the on-air murder of his girlfriend, news broadcaster Alison Parker.

Prior to his campaign for delegate, he was evening anchor of WDBJ7 for six years. During that time, he was recognized as "Media Person of the Year" by the National Alliance on Mental Illness, "Citizen of the Year" by the Roanoke NAACP, and "Your Local Hero" by the readers of the Roanoker magazine. He twice won a regional Edward R. Murrow award and was nominated for an Emmy award.

Raised by a small business owner father and mother worked for nonprofits, including the National Constitution Center, he traveled the world as a member of the Philadelphia Boys Choir. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in broadcast journalism from Emerson College. Active in the community, he has volunteered at the Roanoke Baptist Community Center after-school program.

Issues

Economic:

Attracting jobs to the NRV through small business support
Access to Broadband in our rural communities: investing in infrastructure and technology

Education:

Overhaul outdated funding formulas
Help our teachers earn a competitive salary
Reduce the burden of standardized testing

Healthcare:

Expand Medicaid to include 3,700 additional individuals
Fight the opioid crisis
Increase access to mental healthcare
Women's Healthcare: Decisions made by the woman

Environment

Fight against the Mountain Valley Pipeline
Protect our water and soil from the danger of contamination
Increase energy mix diversity with renewable sources like wind, solar and geothermal to reduce fossil fuel consumption and lower our utility bills

<https://www.hurst4delegate.com/>

About the Republican Incumbent: Joseph Yost

Joseph Yost is the Republican incumbent from District 12. A native of Giles County, he received a BS and MA in Criminal Science from Radford College. Giles is currently serving his third term and is on the House Committees of Education, General Law, and Health, Welfare and Institutions. Yost votes along party lines (fiscal conservatism, pro-business, anti-abortion and against "big government"). However, he is also an advocate for mental health and education and is willing to break with party lines on key votes in these areas. When not serving as a Delegate, he works as Executive Director of the Giles County Historical Society.

Issues: Until 2017, Yost voted primarily along Republican party lines on most House Bills. The key areas of concern regarding his voting record:

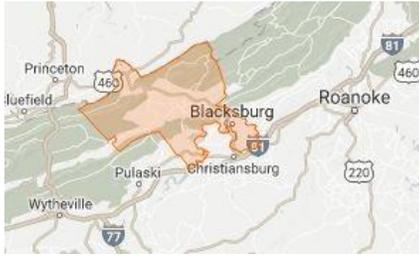
1. **Against raising minimum wage** - Voted for right-wing, pre-emptive legislation to prohibit cities from increasing the minimum wage.
2. **Against expansion of Medicaid** - Voted, along with all Republicans, against Medicaid expansion in the budget bill HB 1500. 3,700 people in District 12 could have gained Medicaid coverage.
3. **Against women's reproductive rights** - Voted to require ultrasounds prior to abortions, to define life as beginning at conception, to prohibit Medicaid payment for abortion even in cases of incapacitating physical defect, to rescind funding for facilities, such as Planned Parenthood. However, more recently (2017), he voted against a bill to rescind the funding. See flip-flopping issue under "weaknesses" below.
4. **Against immigrants' rights** - Voted to require police to ask about immigration status during arrest. However, more recently, he abstained on HB 2000, which prohibits establishment of Sanctuary Cities in VA.

Recent Elections: He has outperformed his opponents in fundraising by a large margin. He raised about 3 times more than his opponent in 2015.

Strengths: Yost is young (31) in a district with 2 universities and Radford is his alma mater. But in 2015 he did not win in the Blacksburg metropolitan area, which is home to Virginia Tech. He advocates for mental health and education. In his re-election campaigns in 2013 and 2015, he was endorsed by the Virginia Education Association. In 2015, Virginia's National Alliance on Mental Illness chose Yost as its Outstanding Legislator.

Potential Weaknesses: At a time when Virginians are concerned about jobs and wages, Yost's vote against improving minimum wage and benefits is tone-deaf. Also, Yost's vote against Medicaid expansion takes money away from Virginians as well as denies important mental health coverage and substance abuse services. The healthcare industry is also a large employer in the district, so his vote limits potential job growth. Yost's voting record on key social issues such as women's and immigrants' rights shows an abrupt change following the 2016 Presidential election (when District 12 voted for Clinton over Trump). This suggests that he is aware that the voters of District 12 may not agree with many of his far-right positions.

VA HD-12: Better Know the District



VA HD-12: Facts & Stats

Population Centers (2013)

- Blacksburg – 43,000
- Christiansburg – 21,000
- Radford – 16,000
- Pearisburg – 2,727
- Fairlawn – 2,367 (2010)

2016 Presidential Results

- **Clinton: 16,062 (48%)**
 - **Trump: 15,069 (45%)**
 - **Registered, didn't vote: 13,405 (30%)**
- Clinton defeated Trump in Montgomery county by 1.3 percentage points, but in all the surrounding counties Trump's range of victory ranged from 34.4 to 57.4 percentage points. In Giles County, his margin was 49 percentage points. Yet governor McAuliffe won by large margins in each of these counties.

2015 House of Delegate Results

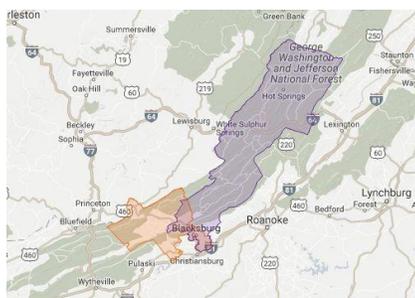
- **Yost (R) 9,245 (58%)**
- **Buchwald (D) 6,587 (42%)**
- **Registered, didn't vote: 24,737 (61%)**

2014 US Senator Results

- **Warner (D): 8,851 (52.24%)**
- **Gillespie (R): 7,421 (44.80%)**
- **Sarvis (L): 651 (3.84%)**
- **Registered, didn't vote: 24,555 (59%)**

2013 House Results

- **Harder (D): 8,650 (47.42%)**
- **Yost (R): 9,541 (52.31%)**
- **Registered, didn't vote: 23,286 (56%)**



2011 redistricting map (orange is new)

Geography & Environment

Located in the New River Valley of Southwest Virginia, this district is comprised of Giles County, the Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Radford Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), part of Montgomery county and part of Pulaski County. The district is home to Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Radford University in Radford City and the New River Community College in the town of Christiansburg. District 12 is bordered by the Allegheny Mountains to the North and the Blue Ridge Mountains to the South, with the New River flowing through the valley itself. Much of the district is rural and conservative whereas the largest centers of population tend to be more liberal.

Citizenry

The contrast between the highly educated urban and the suburban to very rural areas makes for strongly divergent ways of life and political leanings. Overall, the residents of District 12 are primarily white adults of working age. 52% are adults between the age of 18 and 39; 23% between 40 and 64; 14% between 0-17, and 10% over 64. The district is predominantly white (83%), with the next highest ethnicity being Asians at 6.1%. Blacks represent 4.4% and Hispanics 2.7% of the population. Compared to the overall district, Giles County has a higher number of white citizens (95.7%), a slightly older population and a higher median income (\$45,100). In District 12, the primary occupations are education, food service, administrative and sales while Giles County has more jobs in production, administrative, management and construction. Only 39% of District 12's residents consider themselves religious, with Christians (mostly Protestant) the overwhelming majority (36%). There are two mosques in the Metro area.

Education

The educational level of the residents is mixed, depending on location.

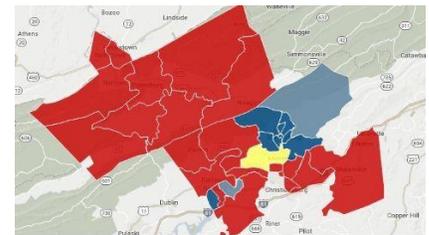
Educ. Level	Dist. 12	Blacksburg	Giles
Higher Degree	48%	77%	25%
H.S.	40%	26%	54%
No H.S. Diploma	12%	4%	20%

Economy

District 12 has a median income of \$38,000 per year, significantly below the state median of \$63,900, possibly skewed by the large college student population, however there are pockets of deep poverty throughout the district. Caucasians have the highest median household income with \$40,400 per year followed by mixed race at \$34,000 per year, Asians at \$30,000 per year, Hispanics at \$22,100 per year and Blacks at \$21,300. Of people aged 25 to 64, 52.5% are employed, 4.3% are unemployed and 42.9% are not in the workforce. For the age group 30-34 unemployment increases to 7%. 7% percent of households (2,304) are on food stamps, which is lower than the state's 9.1%. However, in some areas food stamp usage is as high as 29.5%.

Health Status

Substance abuse problems, including prescription drug abuse, are common throughout the district. The New River Valley has a very diverse population with suburban and rural areas that are less well educated, poorer, less healthy and have less access to healthcare. Giles county was above the Virginia average in total deaths (836 versus 739) from Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, chronic liver disease, and unintentional injury. Because there is substantial stigma to having mental illness or substance abuse problems, people are reticent to seek care and not enough outpatient options exist. Lack of insurance and under insurance are major problems in District 12, and 3,700 people could gain Medicaid coverage through closing the coverage gap.



2016 election results

www.vpap.org/offices/house-of-delegates-12/election-results-map/