

North Carolina Senate



THE ISSUES

CAL CUNNINGHAM

DEMOCRAT



THOM TILLIS

REPUBLICAN • INCUMBENT

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AFFORDABLE CARE ACT Support Affordable Care Act (ACA), also known as Obamacare?	Yes. “Strengthen and extend coverage under the ACA.” Wants North Carolina to expand Medicaid.	No. Voted to repeal ACA . Calls it “a failed health care plan.” Would protect pre-existing conditions, but with no lifetime cost cap .
CAMPAIGN FINANCE Require political ads to disclose their largest funders?	Yes. Supports HR1 and wants to eliminate “dark money” donations from anonymous donors. Overturn Citizens United decision .	No position found.
CLIMATE CHANGE Consider human-caused climate change a serious threat? Support government action?	Yes. “One of the most urgent issues facing us.” State has “seen the effects of climate change firsthand through the historic storms and flooding.” Supports efforts to move to 100% renewable energy by 2050 , rejoin Paris Agreement and train workers for green jobs.	Mixed. Previously doubted human role and supported Trump withdrawal from Paris climate agreement . Now sees climate change as solvable with “responsible market-driven solutions.” Supported Trump rule easing emission limits on coal-fired power plants .
COURTS—SUPREME COURT Pick Ruth Bader Ginsburg replacement now or let November winner choose? See CEEP Supreme Court guide .	Wait. “Sen. Tillis supported that very idea in 2016. He trusted and wanted to hear from the American people in 2016. He doesn’t today. Rather than act as a check and balance, Senator Tillis has written a blank check.”	Confirm now. Obama “was on his way out the door... President Trump deserves to send forth a nominee and I intend to hear them in (the) Judiciary Committee and then move for passage on the floor.”
COVID-19 Support administration’s response to coronavirus pandemic?	No. Administration “was caught flat-footed and continues to botch [its] response.” Needed more protective equipment .	Yes. “I applaud President Trump for declaring a national emergency to combat the coronavirus.”
COVID-19 ECONOMIC RESPONSE Best economic response to coronavirus pandemic?	Service and infrastructure projects to “put people to work,” support for rural hospitals, more unemployment benefits, aid to farmers and greater oversight of federal response .	A “Cold War-style approach” to punish China for its virus response. End federal regulations to make it easier for businesses .
EDUCATION Use public funding for private schools?	No. Supports phasing out school vouchers to pay for private-school tuition.	Yes. Supports vouchers for students to attend private schools with government assistance.
ENVIRONMENT Tighten or loosen environmental regulations?	Tighten. As a state senator, supported a Clean Smokestacks Act , requiring coal-fired power plants to reduce carbon emissions .	Loosen. Supports Trump EPA head Andrew Wheeler’s attempts to loosen regulations as needless red tape. Environmental groups have criticized Wheeler’s actions.
FINANCIAL REGULATION Tighten or loosen regulation of banks and credit card companies?	Tighten. Early backer of Consumer Financial Protection Bureau . Address “tax loopholes ... that benefit corporations and the wealthy.”	Loosen. Voted in favor of rolling back Dodd-Frank banking regulations . Says the CFPB needs more “oversight from Congress.”

ISSUES	CUNNINGHAM (D)	TILLIS (R)
GUN RULES Enact more restrictive legislation on guns?	Yes. Wants to “expand background checks, ban high-capacity magazines, pass red-flag laws and fund gun-violence research.”	No. Supports promoting Second Amendment rights . Co-sponsored bill to allow concealed-handgun carry across state lines .
IMMIGRATION Create path to citizenship for “DACA” residents brought as children to U.S.?	Yes. Calls for “comprehensive immigration reform” that “protects DREAMers and provides a fair pathway to citizenship.”	Yes, 15-year process paired with increased border security, limits on sponsoring relatives, and revocation of status for any violation .
IMMIGRATION Support additional border walls.	Mixed. Against Trump diverting funds from military bases for border wall, but wants a mix of “physical barriers, technology and manpower.”	Yes. Called Trump’s declaration of a national emergency to extend the wall executive overreach . Later voted for it as giving president tools to “keep America safe.”
IMPEACHMENT Support U.S. Senate calling witnesses and voting to convict President Trump? Judgment of Trump Presidency.	Yes. Was “appalled the Senate did not hear from witnesses or request documents.” Would “vote to convict” Trump. Considers him bad role model for the next generation .	No. Said impeachment “motivated by partisan politics.” Voted “no,” and against allowing witnesses . “Trump deserves to be defended.”
IRAN Oppose military attacks on Iran without congressional approval?	Unclear. Sees killing of Iranian general as “high risk.” “Congress needs to reassert its role in conducting military operations.”	No. Voted against a bipartisan Senate resolution requiring congressional authorization for military action in Iran.
LABOR Support “right to work” laws, banning unions from mandating dues for workers they represent?	Mixed. Endorsed by major unions . Calls for a “living wage” and defending workplace protections . In 2014 endorsed state’s unique “right-to-work laws.”	Yes. Co-sponsored National Right to Work Act . As state speaker of the House, vowed to keep North Carolina “the least unionized state in the United States.”
LEGAL ABORTION Keep legal or ban?	Legal. Believes “a woman’s choice is a woman’s right [and] will always defend Roe v. Wade against partisan attacks.”	Ban. Signed a brief asking the Supreme Court to overturn Roe v. Wade . “I will never stop fighting for the sanctity of life. ”
LGBTQ RIGHTS Support same-sex marriage and extension of LGBTQ rights?	Yes. Wants to stand “with the LGBTQI community and communities of color in the fight against regressive policies.”	Mostly no. In 2012 helped add same-sex-marriage ban to North Carolina constitution . Supported repeal of “bathroom bill.”
MARIJUANA Decriminalize or legalize?	Yes. Supports “allowing states to develop own regulation and taxation of cannabis.”	No. Opposes marijuana legalization , but backs study of effectiveness for medical use.
MINIMUM WAGE Raise federal hourly minimum wage above current \$7.25?	Yes. Supports “raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour and eliminating the subminimum wage.”	No recent position found. In 2014 opposed a federal minimum wage , calling it a “defeatist mentality” compared to focusing on jobs.
PLANNED PARENTHOOD Support Planned Parenthood’s receiving public funds for providing health care?	Yes. “Will strongly oppose partisan efforts in Washington to attack and defund Planned Parenthood.”	No. Joined court brief to allow states to prohibit Planned Parenthood receiving funds for non-abortion services .
STUDENT FINANCIAL AID Reduce cost of college for lower-income individuals? Forgive student debt?	Mostly yes. Wants to lower the cost of college , let students refinance college loans, fix loan forgiveness and expand Pell Grants. Unclear on forgiving student debt .	Unclear. Supported Trump rule making it harder for students to discharge their loans if defrauded by for-profit schools . Joined unanimous vote supporting Minority Serving Institutions . No student debt position found.
TAXES Support administration’s \$1.9 trillion (2017) tax cuts?	No. Overwhelmingly benefits “the largest corporations and the ultra-wealthy while leaving middle-class and poor ... behind.”	Yes. Called the tax cuts “historic tax reform that will lead to bigger paychecks for hard-working Americans.”
VOTING RULES Strict ID and other rules to combat possible fraud, even if limiting access?	No. Supports reinstating protections under the Voting Rights Act . Supports automatic and same-day registration and early voting.	Yes. Under Speaker Tillis, the N.C. House passed a package of restrictive election rules, later overturned by the U.S. Court of Appeals .

[Campus Election Engagement Project](#) is a nonpartisan effort to help colleges engage students in elections. Sources include [Votesmart.org](#), [FactCheck.org](#), [Politifact.com](#) and candidate statements. [Vote411.org](#) and [Ballotready.org](#) offer guides to local races.