

Pastor Wins 71% of the Vote in North Carolina House Primary

With 71% of the Republican Primary vote, Pastor Neal Jackson easily won in the 78th district of North Carolina. Jackson chose to run after state Rep. Allen McNeill, Jackson's "great friend for many years," decided to retire after 10 years of service.

Jackson, pastor of Beulah Baptist Church in Bennett, North Carolina, says he was motivated by a trip he and other pastors took to Israel with David Lane's organization, the American Renewal Project. "We were just challenged that we as Christians must invade the public arena," says Jackson. "We're to be a light in a dark world, and this includes the arena of politics."

Through trips to Israel and other events, Lane's American Renewal Project has recruited over 50 pastors to run for office in North Carolina for the 2022 election.

During the trip, Jackson felt convicted to pray for those in authority over him, but at the time, he didn't know the names of most of his elected local and state officials. "So I just came back and started taking them out to eat and developing relationships," he says.

As Jackson prayed for them and got to know them, he began to pray, "God, if You open up doors, we will serve You while pastoring, but getting out of the church building and into the community." When McNeill announced his retirement, Jackson felt as though God were blessing the timing and the opportunity. His church and his family both also gave him their blessing to run for office.

But Jackson wasn't so sure about support from the rest of the community. He says, "I wondered how they would respond to having a pastor representing them in Raleigh, but the community has been above and beyond just wonderful in embracing us."

Jackson's first priority as a candidate has been rallying churches to pray for the upcoming election. He also appeared and spoke at several organizations and business gatherings in his area. While he was campaigning, he not only highlighted his pastoral experience, but he also spoke about the 13 years of experience he had in financial planning and insurance sales. But at every speaking engagement, he says, he led with his faith.

"You say, 'Why should I vote?'" Jackson says in a video he made to motivate his community to vote. "Life is on the ballot tomorrow. I give you my word—I will be pro-life every day that I'm in Raleigh." He continues, "Morality is on the ballot, and I give you my word—I am a Christian. I am a conservative, and I will act like that. And I will vote like that."

Jackson's campaign website, , makes his stance on many issues clear: "pro-life," "pro-family," "pro-gun," "pro-freedom," "pro-jobs," "pro-law enforcement" and "pro-education."

Jackson has five children, a church of 800, two dogs and 35 Black Angus cows. In 2020, he and his wife, Tracy, also "founded Grace Haven, a residential group home for children in foster care."

Jackson explains on *The Water Cooler with David Brody* podcast, "It's great that we have all these members, and they come to church. But unless we get outside the salt shaker and into ... society, we're really not impacting culture as Jesus commanded."

Jackson says he believes prayer and politics are the only way to change this nation. "We go into the prayer closet to hear

from God. And then when God tells us what to do, we go into the arena and we work for God. So I believe it's a hand in a glove; prayer and politics [are] going to save America." {eo}

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