

Opinion

Our choice for North Carolina Superintendent

BY THE EDITORIAL BOARD

For a moment, forget all the worst things you know about Michele Morrow. Forget that she advocated for a pro-Trump military coup on Jan. 6, or that she called for the public execution of former president Barack Obama, or her disturbing video post about seeing people who didn't look or sound like her in a local retail store.

Take away all of that — alongside so many other troubling and bizarre comments — and what are you left with? A Republican nominee to lead the North Carolina's public school system who has no experience working in public schools, no children who were enrolled in public schools, and no experience in leadership or public office.

Extremism aside, Michele Morrow is wholly unqualified to hold the office she seeks, more so than any major party state superintendent candidate in our state's history.

Voters thankfully have a strong alternative in Maurice "Mo" Green. The Democratic nominee brings a deep background in education, including seven successful years as superintendent of Guilford County Schools and time as deputy superintendent and general counsel with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. His two now-adult children graduated from North Carolina public schools.

Green's leadership experience also includes seven years as executive director of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, a major donor to causes across North Carolina that include innovative education initiatives. (Note: Opinion Editor Peter St. Onge served on a community leadership council from 2016-19 for the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation while Green was the foundation's executive director.)

Green, simply put, knows public schools. He understands the challenges facing both urban and rural public school systems, and he has a clear-eyed perspective on the landscape facing public education in a state with

an unfriendly Republican-led legislature. Importantly, he's had success navigating those challenges; in Guilford County, schools improved performance and increased graduation rates under Green's leadership. The district also was recognized as a national district of character, a reflection of the values that Green brings to whatever role he serves.

The same can't be said for Morrow, whose bizarre rantings and videos should trouble all voters. She's posted QAnon slogans and disparaged Islam. She claimed, just four years ago, that an organized group of child traffickers and pedophiles tortures and kills children to harvest their blood for an anti-aging elixir. She's already been an embarrassment for North Carolina as a major party candidate. She should not be a public official representing our state and its people.

That's why when Morrow won the Republican primary for superintendent, the N.C. Chamber felt compelled to publish a warning of threats to the state's business climate from "candidates that do not share our vision for North Carolina." Most prominently mentioned: Michele Morrow.

The threat Morrow poses to public schools is even more acute. She has shown frequent disdain for the schools and educators she wants to lead. She's called public education a "cesspool of lies, evil and deception" and suggested public schools are being taken over by Satan. Voters have every reason to wonder why she would want to lead them — and what damage she might inflict on them if she did.

If you're a voter who understands that public schools play a vital role in our communities and our state's future, one candidate shares that foundational belief. If you believe our public schools can improve with thoughtful, collaborative, innovative leadership, the choice in this race could not be clearer.

We recommend **Mo Green** for North Carolina Superintendent of Public Instruction.



U.S. Capitol

Raleigh

Our choices in Mecklenburg's three congressional races

BY THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Congressional elections in Mecklenburg County look different this year, thanks to new maps drawn by Republican lawmakers. Rather than being equally split into two districts, the county is now carved rather unevenly into three parts

Two of those districts — Districts 8 and 14 — group parts of Mecklenburg County with other counties in the state and lean Republican.

DISTRICT 8

This district creeps all the way from Matthews and Mint Hill to Robeson County. And with U.S. Rep. Dan Bishop running for state attorney general, there's no incumbent.

One of the candidates in this race is still familiar, though: pastor Mark Harris, who is making a second congressional run. Harris ran in the 9th Congressional District in 2018, but his victory was overturned due to an absentee ballot fraud scandal involving a political operative hired by his campaign. Harris, who did not respond to an interview request from the Editorial Board, now says that the 2018 election was stolen

from him, despite all evidence to the contrary. He also boasts the endorsement of Donald Trump, another election denier. As we said during the primary, we believe that narrative is dangerous and disqualifying.

Voters should feel confident in his opponent, Democrat Justin Dues. Dues is a U.S. Marine Corps veteran running on a platform of anti-corruption, with an emphasis on voting rights and income inequality. He's also committed to term limits, which should be a welcome reprieve to voters who are unhappy with the political status quo. We recommend **Dues**.

DISTRICT 12

U.S. Rep. Alma Adams seeks reelection in what is now Mecklenburg County's lone Democratic district, encompassing most of the central part of the county.

Adams has been a capable congresswoman during her time in office, focusing on what she calls her "4 Hs": hunger, housing, health care and higher education. Now in her fifth term, she's gained seniority as a member of Congress, and is recognized as

a leader by her colleagues. She's been a leader on issues like Black maternal health and support for HBCUs — issues that she has worked with colleagues across the aisle to make progress on.

She faces a challenge from Republican Addul Ali, who says he would prioritize issues like education and economic mobility. Ali is a thoughtful conservative with a willingness to work across the aisle, and he's willing to distance himself from the more extreme members of his party. He's a solid choice for moderate and conservative voters looking for someone to represent them.

However, Adams has been a hardworking representative for her district, and she has a proven track record of serving her community well. She's earned another term. We recommend **Adams**.

DISTRICT 14

Currently represented by U.S. Rep. Jeff Jackson, this district has undergone some changes and now snakes from northern Mecklenburg County down to south Charlotte and into western North Carolina. It also now leans Republican.

The likely winner of this race is N.C. House Speaker Tim Moore, whose congressional aspirations have been an open secret in Raleigh for years. And after a decade steering a Republican-led legislature, Moore should be a known quantity to every North Carolinian. (He did not respond to an interview request from the Editorial Board.) In his five terms as speaker, Moore has overseen the passage of some of North Carolina's most damaging and divisive legislation, including House Bill 2, dramatic tax cuts and a 12-week abortion ban. Moore would likely be effective at pushing through his desired agenda in Washington, but will that really leave his district and our state better off?

Luckily, voters have another option in Democrat Pam Genant, a nurse and U.S. Army veteran. Having never held elected office before, Genant should be an ideal choice for those looking for fresh leadership and a fresh perspective, and she is particularly passionate about issues like voting rights and the housing crisis. We recommend **Genant**.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The writer was Republican mayor of Charlotte from 1991-95:

With regard to Ned Barnett's anti-voucher column in the Observer "NC's vouchers for all may hurt the GOP's original school choice — charters," he seems to believe that school choice advocates support a particular school or type of school, such as charters. That's wrong.

Unlike "school system" advocates — whose loyalty is to their "system" — charter school advocates support all choices, not charter schools per se. They rightly believe that more competition for the privilege of educating our children is better than having fewer options. If that means that some poor-performing charter schools must shut down because they can't com-

pete, so be it. That's what free markets are all about, Ned.

Richard Vinroot, Charlotte

Bishop ad

A Dan Bishop campaign ad implies that school resource officers make students safer. Can he show us the evidence? No, because it doesn't exist.

Two things SROs definitely do is increase the cost of running schools and habituate impressionable youth to the constant presence of police. This is great PR for police agencies looking to expand their presence in the community because people grow up expecting to always see an officer.

Unfortunately there is little if any correlation between a high ratio of

police to civilians and reduction of crime rates or resolution of crimes, but that doesn't fit the "more police is better" narrative conservatives like to promote.

Thomas J. Strini, Spencer

Lead in school water

The writer works with non-profit Environment North Carolina

The EPA's new deadline for replacing lead pipes is a significant step for public health, although they do little to protect kids at school. Lead is toxic to children even at low levels, with links to learning disabilities such as ADHD, antisocial behaviors, and depression.

Lead contaminated drinking water is widespread in North Carolina schools. Lead was detected in about 52% of nearly 21,865 water samples

taken at NC schools, according to a state sponsored program. Replacing pipes won't fix the issue, since most lead in schools comes from fixtures within the building.

We know how to solve this problem. We need to replace lead-bearing fountains with lead-filtering water stations and put filters on all other taps. Kudos to EPA on heeding our call to replace lead pipes. Now, we need school districts to get the lead out of water for our kids.

Emily Mason, Cary

Trail magic

The writer founded environmental non-profit George Masa Foundation

The floodwaters from Hurricane Helene have finally receded, revealing destruction across western North Carolina. Yet amid the devastation, there's

hope and unity. Instead of focusing on personal loss, people are asking, "How can I help?"

We're witnessing a kind of "trail magic," familiar to Appalachian Trail hikers — unexpected kindness from strangers. I've seen firsthand volunteers from as far away as Missouri and Kentucky arriving to provide meals. Volunteers are clearing debris, while people from across the region are sending much-needed resources. My fellow North Carolinians have continued to show up to help, lending a hand and sending relief. Neighbors are sharing food, water, and shelter, with strangers becoming friends during this crisis.

These acts of kindness remind us that in times of crisis, our shared humanity shines through. Nature doesn't discriminate, and neither do we. As we face the same storms, it's our compassion and commu-

nity that will help us rebuild.

In the aftermath of Helene, this spirit of generosity — this trail magic — will be our greatest strength.

David Huff, Asheville

Typical white man

I'm the typical white, Christian, straight, married GOP voter from central NC. I believe in free speech and the Second Amendment. I believe in being fiscally conservative, and I'm in favor of slow, cautious progress, but progress nonetheless. I've never voted for a single Democrat in my 42 years of life.

I'm embarrassed to be a Republican. I can no longer support the leadership of the GOP as the behaviors, word and actions are no longer consistent with my values.

Joseph Peascoe, Greensboro

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