

## Cheri Beasley: U.S. Senate, North Carolina

Recommendation Level: Priority



Officially, North Carolina's U.S. Senate primary is still going on, but there's no question that Cheri Beasley will be the nominee. The former chief justice of the state supreme court, Beasley cleared the field by racking up [early endorsements](#) and [outraising](#) Jeff Jackson, her chief competitor, who dropped out late last year. Her victory marks a turning point in North Carolina politics, where, in past cycles, the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee has passed over Black candidates [in favor of white men](#), with poor results. (The 2020 Senate nominee, Cal Cunningham, lost by a narrow margin after getting embroiled in a sexting scandal.)

If elected, Beasley would be the first Black senator to represent North Carolina, and the only Black woman in the Senate. She would also be the [rare senator](#) with a background as a public defender, a position she held before being elected to the North Carolina Court of Appeals in 2008. That election made her the first Black woman to win statewide office in North Carolina without being appointed by a governor first, and she followed that up by winning a state supreme court election in 2014. Her background as a judge means that she hasn't really had much of a chance to weigh in on policy issues, and she's avoided taking strong stands on much of anything in [interviews](#). Politico described her as being [relatively low-key](#), which belies her obvious political skill.

### Is the race important?

Yes. Holding onto the Senate is the top priority for Democrats in this cycle, and a victory in North Carolina would go a long way toward ensuring they keep their majority or even expand it. This is one of the key races in the country.

### Can Beasley win?

North Carolina is a true swing state. It went for Donald Trump in 2020 by a single point; Democratic Governor Roy Cooper won his race that year by four points; and Cal Cunningham lost the Senate race by just under two points. This suggests that Democrats can win here with the right candidate. Unfortunately, 2022 promises to be a more difficult environment for Democrats than 2020, so Beasley is going to be an underdog. While both [538](#) and [Sabato Crystal Ball](#) rate this race

as Lean Republican, Cook Political Report [rates](#) it as a Toss-up and there are good reasons to believe that Beasley can win. She lost reelection as chief justice of the state supreme court in 2020 by just 401 votes, running well ahead of Joe Biden, which bodes well for her chances.

### **Does she need money?**

Yes. What's notable about Beasley relative to other Senate candidates is that she doesn't have enormous amounts of cash on hand as of the last FEC report, which covers the end of 2021. She has just \$2.8 million; for comparison's sake Florida's Val Demmings—another Black woman who is a presumptive nominee—has over \$8 million. A victory by Cheri Beasley in the North Carolina Senate race this year would be historic.

As Election Day approaches and Beasley gets more media attention, she'll likely be able to raise a lot of money, but having early money is important, and now is the time when she needs it the most, as she gets her general election campaign off and running. The 2020 Senate race in North Carolina was the most expensive of all time, with [nearly \\$300 million](#) going into it. Though that record has since been broken by the 2021 Georgia runoff elections (and will probably be surpassed by the 2022 Florida Senate race), North Carolina remains an expensive place to run, and Beasley's current lack of national name recognition means she isn't yet flush with cash. Given the importance of this race, her clear chances of victory, and her need for money, we believe that donating to Beasley's campaign is a **priority**. ([Read more about how we pick candidates.](#))

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