



NATALIE MURDOCK FOR NC SENATE

“It’s time to lead the state in progressive policy reform, so let’s get to work.
Join our movement today.”

1. Our Community

North Carolina is ranked [22nd](#) in the nation for air quality. According to the Department of Environmental Quality, the source of North Carolina’s air pollution is ground level ozone, or smog, as well as particle pollution from coal-burning power plants and car emissions. North Carolina leads the nation as the [second](#) highest producer of solar energy, but ranks [30th](#) for wind energy production.

North Carolina’s water quality suffers from lack of regulations and aging infrastructure. A recent [report](#) gave North Carolina an “F” grade for keeping lead out of school drinking water, with no policies in place to reduce risks of lead in drinking water. When testing lead concentrations in a Charlotte-Mecklenburg school district, the study found that 41 out of 89 schools in the district had taps with unsafe levels of lead concentrations.

As **Durham’s Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor**, Natalie Murdock spends every day protecting our environment. In this role, Natalie works to ensure high quality drinking water, food production, and open spaces are available to the Durham community. Her experience in local government and city transit make her well equipped to take on the environmental problems facing North Carolina today.

Policy Solutions:

- **100% renewable energy by 2050.** The North Carolina legislature needs to commit to funding projects necessary to reach Governor Cooper’s goal of producing 100% renewable energy by 2050, including funding Cooper’s offshore wind farm job study in full.
- **Higher water treatment standards.** While the Federal Administration rolls back [regulations](#) on coal ash disposal, North Carolina must lead the nation in continuing to uphold Obama-era standards, as well as moving toward proactive, higher standards for our air and water with clear consequences and means of enforcement. This includes reevaluating state water treatment processes to ensure that in cases of water contamination, contaminants are properly removed or inactivated.

- **Expand mass transit.** The General Assembly must commit to expanding mass transit across the state, with an emphasis on low-cost or free public transit systems. This will drastically [reduce](#) emissions polluting our air and help reduce the effects of climate change.
- **Greater energy efficiency.** The state legislature needs to implement energy efficient building code and appliance regulations. Companies need to internalize the negative externality created by carbon emissions through 1) environmental taxes on unsustainable production and 2) cap and trade policies for companies over 50 employees.
- **Repeal harmful policies.** The NC Farm Act of 2018 and House Bill 56, “Amend Environmental Laws” has the potential to allow for more pollutants and contaminants in North Carolina air and water. It’s time to review and amend these laws and commit to higher environmental standards.
- **Invest in STEM.** North Carolina has the brightest minds in the country. We can lead efforts to create a sustainable world by creating STEM project grant funds to get young people excited about environmentally-friendly innovation.

We all have a right to clean air and water. We need legislators that know climate change is real and are willing to do something about it. Studies show that even a fraction of offshore wind energy resources could help meet North Carolina’s energy needs by [20%](#). A 2019 Emissions Gap [Report](#) from the United Nations states that mass transportation is necessary to curb emissions and reduce the impacts of climate change. Natalie Murdock is committed to implementing evidence-based solutions to address our gaps in air and water quality, and she will increase state investment in renewable energy and programs that preserve and conserve our water.

2. Our Health - The Christine Murdock Plan

According to the United Health Foundation, North Carolina ranks [33rd](#) overall for indicators of health and wellbeing. In a recent community health assessment, [70%](#) of Durham respondents identified access to care as a top issue. [13%](#) of Durham residents are uninsured, and uninsured residents who were surveyed identified cost as the number one barrier to coverage. Beyond this, [55%](#) of Durham residents identified mental health as a top community priority, and rates of depression are [increasing](#) among Durham youth. Access to healthcare in North Carolina remains an issue for residents across the state. [Twenty](#) counties in North Carolina have relatively few primary care physicians, and [three](#) counties have none.

Racial inequity plays a part in access to healthcare and overall health in Durham County. Of [uninsured](#) Durham residents, 41% are Latinx, 14% are Native American, 13% are black, 7% are Asian, and 6% are white. Beyond this, in Durham County, mortality rates for four out of five of the leading causes of death in Durham County (cancer, heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, and Alzheimer’s disease) were higher for black Durham residents than white residents. Further, from 2013-2017, black infants in Durham County died at a rate [three times](#) higher than white infants.

Natalie Murdock’s family has lived in North Carolina for generations. Her father has worked as a social worker, and her, Christine Murdock, mother worked as a nurse. Coming from a family of healers, health care is a top priority for Natalie, and she is committed to ensuring all North Carolinians have access to the care they need.

Policy Solutions:

- **Expand Medicaid.** Accepting federal funds to expand Medicaid will close the insurance gap among thousands of North Carolinians who currently lack access to care.
- **Improve data collection.** Data on health outcomes in North Carolina is limited, particularly when it comes to outcomes by gender and race. By committing to improving data collection on health and wellness at the county level, researchers and policymakers can better understand the issues North Carolinians face and how to address them and fund preventable health measures.
- **Health care in every county by 2025.** The General Assembly needs to address the inequity in primary, mental/behavioral, and dental health care providers across the state. North Carolina must establish a state goal of equitable distribution of health care providers in every county by 2025
- **Invest in care at school.** We need to fund the education budget so that nurses, school psychologists, and social workers serve every school. The health habits children build early in their lives last into adulthood.
- **Reproductive health care for all North Carolinians.** The General Assembly must create a mechanism for students, parents, and teachers to report violations of the Healthy Youth Act, fund doula programs for black women and other people at a higher risk of dying in child birth, and restore the state abortion fund. Access to reproductive health care gives North Carolinians the resources they need to live healthy, fulfilling lives.
- **Expand health care services for LGBTQ+ individuals.** People who identify as LGBTQ+ often have poorer health [outcomes](#) than their cisgender and heterosexual peers. The General Assembly can remedy this by establishing research and development funds dedicated to gender-affirming care, banning conversion therapy for minors, and changing state domestic violence laws to give people in homosexual relationships the same rights as their heterosexual peers.

Over 13% of Durham County residents lack health care. The average household is one medical emergency away from being launched into bankruptcy. States across the nation are rolling back women's reproductive rights. Funding for access to women's health care is under attack. Our rural communities need greater access to health care. We must continue to fight for Medicaid expansion and fund preventable health measures.

3. Our Housing - The Andrea Harris Plan

In a recent [survey](#) of Durham County residents, affordable housing was the most commonly cited priority area for community members. Since 2010, the cost of buying a home in Durham County has risen by [40%](#). Further, a modest two bedroom apartment in Durham County costs an average of \$990 per month. For that to be considered affordable, a resident would need to make at least \$39,600 per year-- much more than the average salary for jobs in food preparation and service, child care, sales, and construction. According to the [Durham County's NC Housing](#) profile, 31% of Durham County households are cost-burdened. 49% of renters have trouble affording rent, and 16% of homeowners have trouble affording their homes. Of cost-burdened renters in Durham County, 32.7% faced an eviction filing in the last year, compared to 0.1% of cost-burdened homeowners who faced foreclosure.

According to a community health [assessment](#), rising housing costs appear to negatively impact renters more than homeowners. 23% of homeowners spent a third or more of their income on housing,

versus 48% of renters, in 2017. 67% of white households in Durham own and occupy their homes compared to 41% of black households and 33% of Latinx households. Despite being banned in 1968, the practice of “redlining”—calculating risk based on a neighborhood’s racial demographics—has likely contributed to at least 30% of the recent disparity in homeownership between residents of color and white residents.

Policy Solutions:

- **Invest in strong low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.** The General Assembly needs to allocate funds to create neighborhood associations in low-income neighborhoods. The state must also commit to keeping North Carolina’s public services--like libraries, parks, schools, roads, and community centers--public.
- **Subsidize low-income renters.** The General Assembly should establish a progressive tax on luxury properties to subsidize low-income renters and homeowners in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods who commit to investing in their neighborhoods, like attending neighborhood association meetings and beautifying their streets.
- **Cap rent hikes.** North Carolina needs a percentage cap on yearly rent increases.
- **Get community input.** The General Assembly must establish a law stating that new city planning and housing regulations must undergo a thirty day public review period by community members before being enacted to ensure minimal burden on homeowners.
- **Fine bank-owned properties in blight.** North Carolina needs to create a fine for every day that bank-owned properties remain in blight to ensure property owners are investing in community properties.
- **Hold landlords accountable.** Renters need an easy-to-use method of reporting landlords who break contracts, unnecessarily raise rent, and exploit their tenants.
- **Encourage homeownership among low- and moderate-income families.** To encourage homeownership among low- and moderate-income taxpayers, the state should convert home-related tax deductions into refundable tax credits.

Across our District, people that have lived in their neighborhoods for decades are struggling to keep their homes. Let’s work to remove legislative barriers that prevent local communities for utilizing the creative and innovative tools neighboring states are using to fight gentrification and keep people in their homes. We can work to expand public-private partnerships, incentivise homeowners to stay in their homes, and provide tax credits to communities that need help with home repairs to maintain the value of their homes. Renters need additional rights and support; let’s continue to fund eviction diversion programs. State agencies that support our homeless populations are working to provide services in the midst of devastating state funding cuts; those services need to be fully restored.

4. Our Education - The Lucas & Parker Education Plan

In Education Week’s 2019 Quality Counts [report](#), North Carolina was ranked 37th for K-12 public school quality, receiving a “C-” grade and a score of 72/100. In the three categories of Chance for Success, School Finance, and K-12 Achievement, North Carolina consistently received scores below the national average, including ranking 48th in the nation and receiving an “F” grade for school spending. According to the most recent data, North Carolina spent over [\\$3,000](#) less per pupil than the national average. North

Carolina currently needs an estimated [\\$8 billion](#) to address facility costs for their public schools. Current funding proposals—a statewide \$2 billion bond and a Senate-backed \$2 billion school construction fund—do not meet this need in full. Counties spend \$3 billion on instructional expenses or [24 percent](#) of the total share of federal, state, and local dollars. Further, as of March 2018, North Carolina had [50,742](#) eligible children on the waitlist for early childhood education and child care assistance vouchers.

Children also face challenges of racial inequity in North Carolina. According to the most recent [data](#), across the state, black students were over four times more likely to be suspended from school than white students. Here in Durham County, black students are almost ten times more likely to be suspended than white students. [Studies](#) show that suspension is a key factor in the school to prison pipeline, along with school-based arrests and lack of school funding.

In North Carolina, the state base teaching salary is [\\$35,000](#)—less than the amount needed ([\\$39,600](#)) to afford housing in Durham. Including the local teaching supplement, that amount increases to [\\$39,900](#)—just barely enough to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment in Durham. The average base salary for teaching assistants is [\\$23,546](#), compared to [\\$23,262](#) for custodians. Further, North Carolina school employees have to work with less staff than the national average. In North Carolina, there is one school nurse for every 750 students, meaning school nurses serve [48%](#) more students than the federal standard. Additionally, there is one school social worker for every 1,427 students, meaning social workers are serving over [three](#) times more students than the federal standard. The state also employs one school counselor for every 350 students—[100](#) more students than the nationally recommended 1:250 ratio. In our district, [36%](#) of students in public school meet proficiency standards for their grade level in reading and [35%](#) meet mathematics proficiency standards. Yet, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill consistently ranks among the top [five](#) public universities, and North Carolina has been applauded as one of the [best states](#) to go to college.

Natalie Murdock is a product of North Carolina public schools—from kindergarten to college. She takes pride in her North Carolina education, and she is committed to ensuring this state provides all children the opportunity to get the best education possible.

Policy Solutions:

- **Raise wages.** North Carolina must provide ALL public school personnel with a \$15 minimum wage, \$45,000 starting pay for teachers with a bachelor’s degree, raise wages 5% for all non-certified staff, teachers, and administrators, and provide a 5% cost of living adjustment for all retirees.
- **Meet national staffing standards.** The General Assembly must ensure that public schools have adequate school librarians, psychologists, social workers, counselors, nurses, and other health professionals.
- **Restore benefits.** The General Assembly must [reinstate](#) retiree health benefits and compensation for advanced degrees taken from teachers in 2017 and 2013.
- **Fund early childhood education.** The state legislature must commit to funding [Pre-K](#) for all children and ensure that every child in North Carolina who qualifies for child care assistance receives it.
- **Increase funding to HBCUs & community colleges.** According to the North Carolina state constitution, all schools in the UNC system should be free to North Carolinians “as far as practicable.” Let’s start with community college.
- **Address infrastructure.** Natalie will work to ensure the state fulfills its obligation to fully support state public education facilities by dedicating [\\$8 billion](#) to updating and repairing school infrastructure.

- **End the school to prison pipeline.** Natalie will fight for a mandatory [implicit bias](#) and [restorative practice](#) training for all members of school communities, regular [audits](#) of North Carolina school districts' disciplinary procedures, and research-based [alternative education programs](#) in every community. She will require school districts to create [memoranda of understanding \(MOUs\)](#) with law enforcement agencies limiting when school-based arrests and court referrals can occur. Better define the role of SRO in the MOU to decrease criminalized interactions with students and SRO's. Hold administrators and sheriffs accountable to collect the data that reflects accurate contact they have with students to get the baseline and accountability that the MOU is being followed. Support and fund race equity training and trauma informed classroom training.

Public schools in our district need adequate funding to provide our children with the education and tools they need to compete upon graduation. We must work to prepare students for the jobs of tomorrow. Let's pay our teachers what they deserve, expand free Pre-K, and fully restore our Teaching Fellows Program. Such programs should also aim to diversify our teaching workforce.

5. Our Jobs - The Dorthey Lee Jackson Murdock Plan

According to MIT's [living wage calculator](#), the minimum wage in North Carolina is far below the wage necessary for a person working full time to support themselves--that is, to pay for food, shelter, medical care, and transportation. Further, in Durham County, transportation and housing make up almost [60%](#) of a single person's yearly expenses--20% and 40% respectively. [16%](#) of Durham County residents live below the poverty level, and a community health assessment recently identified poverty as one of the [top three](#) community priorities for Durham County residents. In Durham County, women ages 25-34 are most likely to live in [poverty](#), and black and brown residents are more likely to live in poverty than white residents. Yet, the unemployment rate in Durham County is currently at [3.1%](#).

North Carolina's private sector experienced a **1.2% job increase from February 2018 to February 2019, a drop from 1.7% growth between February 2017 and February 2018**. Since 2015, the entrepreneurship growth rate in North Carolina, currently at .27%, has decreased by [12%](#). Over the past 10 years, there has been a [36%](#) decline in loans made to small businesses and entrepreneurs, and [805,985](#) entrepreneurs in North Carolina are operating without employees. Further, [53%](#) of entrepreneurs need less than \$100,000 to start their business, and 63% used their own savings to start their business. Despite all this, small businesses employ almost [half](#) the private workforce in North Carolina.

As a minority and woman business owner, Natalie Murdock knows how hard it can be to start a new business. She knows from her own personal experience the challenges businesses in North Carolina face as they grow and expand. Natalie Murdock is personally invested in making the economy work for all North Carolinians, and she's willing to fight for your jobs.

Policy Solutions:

- **Raise the minimum wage.** The General Assembly must commit to increasing the minimum wage to \$15 per hour by 2024 for all North Carolina workers.
- **Consider the impact on small business.** All state agencies must be required to write up a small business impact plan for all proposed regulations.

- **Make entrepreneurship accessible.** North Carolina needs small business one-stop shops where entrepreneurs can apply for licenses, ask legal questions, and learn more about starting their own business. These should be focused in rural counties and in areas with high concentrations of poverty.
- **Invest in innovation.** North Carolina should invest in research and development grants and loans for early-stage and start-up businesses, with funding for businesses marketing sustainable products.
- **Protect LGBTQ+ workers.** The General Assembly must pass a workplace harassment statute that includes harassment on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation and establish a nondiscrimination ordinance so that employers cannot fire anyone on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.
- **Provide employees with benefits.** For the workplace to be accessible to and respectful of all workers, North Carolina must require 12 weeks of paid family leave for all businesses with 50 or more employees. All employers must allow employees twelve paid sick days per calendar year. Further, all employers must give employees notice of work schedules at least one week in advance, with the exception of emergencies.
- **Uplift local talent.** North Carolina state policy must incentivize large employers to hire locally. Tax credits will be provided for businesses with over 50 employees that hire over half of their employees from within a 50 mile radius of their business.

We must work to ensure our residents are provided with the training and skills needed to compete in an ever-changing economy. Let's work to support small businesses and entrepreneurship. As new businesses come to our community, let's make sure they hire locally.

6. Our Justice -The Pauli Murray Plan

In a report from the Electoral Integrity Project, North Carolina received a score of 58 out of 100 for the 2016 election. This score is comparable to nations with authoritarian regimes and pseudo-democracies, such as Cuba, Indonesia, and Sierra Leone. Further, North Carolina scored lower on voting district boundary integrity than all countries evaluated by the report, receiving a score of 7/100.

North Carolina's jail and prison incarceration rates are steadily increasing, with 160,000 people either incarcerated or under criminal justice supervision. North Carolina's incarceration rates are higher than that of the next highest five countries' incarceration rates combined. In Durham County, over 1,500 people are incarcerated. In Durham, black people make up more than 80% of the jail population, while making up only 38% of Durham's population.

As a lifelong North Carolina native, Natalie is dedicated to ensuring North Carolina is committed to justice and a fair democratic process for all citizens. She feels a deep sense of duty and obligation toward continuing the path of progress that our parents, grandparents, ancestors and so many others established. Natalie will work to set a new, progressive agenda that will help create a direction to improve life for all in the district, in Durham County and in North Carolina.

Policy Solutions:

- **Offer alternatives to incarceration.** Research shows that restorative justice can be an effective alternative to traditional trials and sentencing. North Carolina must invest in alternative programs, including restorative justice, behavioral health programs, and treatment centers to better rehabilitate and prepare people who break the law to be better citizens.
- **Evaluate the justice system.** The General Assembly must require regular evaluations of the state justice system to ensure it is meeting our goals and standards for re-entry.
- **Decriminalize non-violent crimes, including marijuana.** North Carolina must allocate research funds to the health impacts of marijuana, with the goal of legalizing and selling marijuana in North Carolina. Further, the state must release individuals incarcerated for non-violent crimes and explore alternatives for rehabilitation.
- **Update the rules.** North Carolina needs an independent commission that will fairly draw legislative and congressional districts, as well as clear and fair rules for operation of the legislature to make sure it works to improve life for all of North Carolina's residents. Further, we must amend North Carolina's Constitution to more specifically define the duties of the governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, auditor, treasurer, superintendent of public instruction, attorney general, commissioner of agriculture, commissioner of labor and commissioner of insurance.
- **Make voting accessible.** The state must establish automatic voter registration, make election day a holiday, and guarantee that voters continue to have access to at least two weeks of early voting dates, including the Saturday before an election.
- **Protect minorities.** North Carolina needs to repeal HB142 and establish an LGBTQ+ nondiscrimination statute, guaranteeing nondiscrimination protections in housing, employment, public places and spaces, credit, insurance, education, and jury service. Further, North Carolina must end the 287(g) program, in which local agencies work with ICE to deport community members. Finally, North Carolina must allow for gender neutral markers on state documents and establish a robust hate crime policy that includes crimes committed because of gender identity and sexual orientation.

Our district is in the midst of a criminal justice renaissance. More funds are needed to support the grassroots work of organizations right here in Durham that are working to implement needed reforms. Natalie Murdock will work with the community to keep our neighborhoods and streets safe. As your state senator, Natalie will support and fund our North Carolina Reentry Council, fund money bail reforms, support criminal record expungement programs, strengthen domestic violence laws, support common sense gun laws, and stand up for our immigrant community. We must stop locking people up for non-violent and minor drug offenses. As we combat the opioid crisis, we must also stop criminalizing the use of marijuana.