

Know Before You Go: FL-16 District Primer

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In the last election, Republican Vern Buchanan won this district handily. But with your help, Democrat David Shapiro, an attorney who has tirelessly fought for Floridians, can win it in 2018!

About the Incumbent:

Introduction: Republican Vern Buchanan has served in the House since 2007. A Michigan native, he joined the Air National Guard after high school. He attended Cleary University and earned an MBA from the University of Detroit. Buchanan is among the five wealthiest members of Congress.

Issues: Buchanan recently voted to fund the border wall, to limit immigration, and to criminalize performing an abortion after 20 weeks except when necessary to save the mother's life or when the pregnancy results from rape. He has a consistent 100% ranking from the National Right to Life Committee and an A-rating from the National Rifle Association, of which he is a lifetime member.

Committees: Buchanan serves on the House Ways and Means Committee.

Strengths: FL-16 is majority Republican, and Buchanan strongly supports President Trump, who won the district by 11%. Buchanan sweetened recent tax legislation with a measure that helped local citrus growers hurt by Hurricane Irma. He's an animal welfare advocate; and despite his anti-choice stance, he supports the Violence Against Women Act.

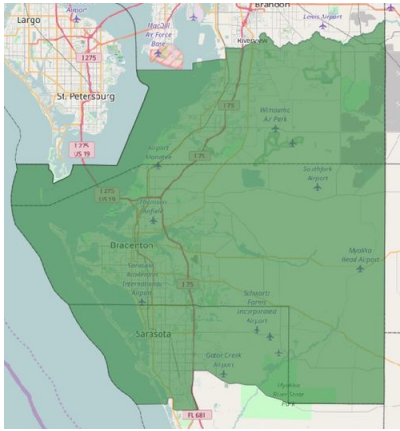
Potential Weaknesses: Buchanan has a history of serious ethics violations. His company, American Speedy Printing, filed for bankruptcy, and he was personally sued under Michigan law. He's also had difficulties with the IRS. Buchanan has been investigated by the House Ethics Committee and the FEC. His vote for the Tax Cut and Jobs Act is under question as he would benefit from the lower tax rate on pass-through income from real estate. He purchased a multimillion-dollar yacht on the same day he voted for the tax bill, financing the purchase with a loan from a bank that spent \$340,000 lobbying for tax relief in Congress.

About the Challenger:

Introduction: Democrat David Shapiro, a Florida native, is a first-generation college graduate who practices law in Sarasota, Florida. He graduated from the University of Florida in 1981 and Florida State Law School in 1985. He's successfully litigated civil rights cases involving access to courts and rights under the Rehabilitation Act to the United States Supreme Court. He is married with three adult children and is an active member of his community serving with Children First, Sarasota Chamber of Commerce, Sarasota Film Festival, and Sarasota Civic League.

Issues: Shapiro believes in access to affordable, high-quality healthcare for all and will work to retain and improve the Affordable Care Act. He believes a strong economy is centered in the middle class and supports a higher minimum wage, job training for the 21st century, and tax cuts that help working families. He will protect Medicare and Social Security from being cut, privatized, or reduced. He understands that climate change is a real threat to Florida's coastal communities and supports investments in alternative clean energy. Shapiro supports a woman's right to choose. He is a believer in common sense gun safety laws and will fight for universal background checks for gun purchases, keeping assault weapons out of the hands of criminals and the mentally unstable, and closing dangerous gun show loopholes to make communities safer.

Strengths: As a Florida native, Shapiro understands the state and FL-16. His work ethic and deep Floridian roots will appeal to voters in the district. Starting with a job at the age 11 in a dry cleaning store, he worked his way through college and has continued working to defend Florida's most vulnerable populations for 30 years. Shapiro has been endorsed by Gabby Giffords, the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, AFSCME, and AFGE.



FL-16: Better Know the District

Geography

FL-16 is a southwestern coastal district south of St. Petersburg, including all of Manatee County, northern Sarasota County, and eastern Hillsborough County south of the Alafia River. The Manatee River to the north, Gulf of Mexico to the west, and Lake Myakka to the south are major geographic features. Sarasota is known for white sand beaches, as well as for being home to the Ringling Brothers Circus. The district previously stretched to the Atlantic Coast and further south in Sarasota County before redistricting in 2010.

Citizenry

702,795 people live in FL-16, which is majority white (87%), 11.2% Hispanic, and 6.7% black. The district is home to Sarasota National Cemetery and a significant veteran population. 33,052 veterans live in Manatee County and 44,236 veterans live in Sarasota County. The median household income in Manatee County is \$51,483 and \$52,796 in Sarasota County.

Elections

FL-16 favored Trump in 2016 (53.7% - 43%), Romney in 2012 (53.7% - 45.1%), and McCain in 2008 (51.2% - 47.7%). Manatee County favored Trump, (57% - 39.8%) as did Sarasota County (54.3% - 42.7%). In a February 2018 special election for the State House District 72 seat, Democrat Margaret Good defeated James Buchanan, the son of FL-16's Rep. Vern Buchanan. Congressman Buchanan won his seat in 2016 by a wide margin (59.8% to 40.2%). In 2014 he won 61.5% of the vote and in 2012 he won by 53.6% in this newly redistricted 16th, gerrymandered to favor a Republican.

Higher Education

The district is home to a private liberal arts college, New College of Florida, as well as the Ringling College of Art and Design, the State College of Florida Manatee Sarasota, and the East West College of Natural Medicine, which specializes in acupuncture. Nearby universities include Eckerd College, Florida Gulf Coast, the University of Tampa, and the University of South Florida. 27.9% of people in Manatee County and 33.1% of people in Sarasota County hold a bachelor's degree or higher. Students are a great voter registration opportunity!

Industries

Southwest Florida has experienced strong economic growth in recent years, with real GDP in the Sarasota-Manatee region increasing by 3.5% from 2016 to 2017. Educational services, health care and social assistance are the dominant industries in the region. Tropicana was founded in Bradenton, and the corporate headquarters for both the retailer Bealls and Boar's Head Provisions are in the district. Additionally, the area is known for the Sarasota modern style of architecture, and is home to a vibrant cultural scene, including an orchestra, ballet, opera, and museums.

FL-16: Facts & Stats

Population Centers

- Sarasota (56,994)
- Bradenton (56,508)

2016 Presidential Results

- Clinton: 170K (43%)
- Trump: 213K (53.7%)

2016 House Results

- Schneider (D): 155K (40%)
- Buchanan (R): 231K (60%)

2014 House Results

- Lawrence (D) : 105K (38%)
- Buchanan (R): 169K (62%)