

Know Before You Go: VA-05 District Primer

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In the last election, Republican Thomas Garrett won this district by 17%. With your help, we're going to win this seat for the Democrats in 2018.

About the Republican Candidate

Introduction: Republican Denver Riggleman is a former candidate for Virginia governor and a distillery owner in Nelson County who considers himself to be the anti-establishment candidate. He ran as a populist in 2017, often discussing regulatory barriers to owning his distillery outside Charlottesville. He dropped out of the race last March, several months before the Republican primary "Based on business considerations, resource shortages, and family health issues." Although colorful, Riggleman's gubernatorial campaign had few supporters. Before he opened Silverback Distillery, Riggleman served in the United States Air Force as an intelligence officer. He was selected by the Republican committee after Rep. Thomas Garrett announced he would not be seek re-election. If elected, he plans to join the House Freedom Caucus.

Issues: Riggleman believes the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is beneficial for individuals and businesses. He is pro-life and believes abortions should be legal only in cases of rape, incest, and when the pregnancy would pose a risk to the health of the mother. Riggleman supports the administration's current immigration policies, with the exception of family separation.

Strengths: A Libertarian-leaning Republican, Riggleman has not fully aligned himself with Trump, campaigning as someone will "align with policy." He doesn't have a voting record to make him vulnerable at the federal level.

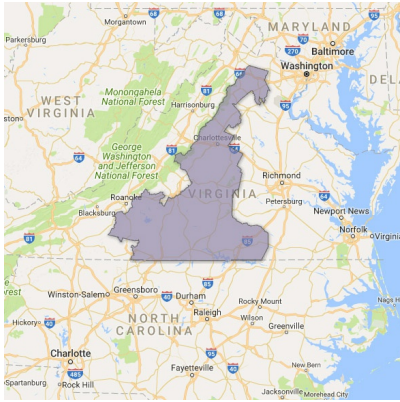
Potential Weaknesses: Riggleman's pledge to join the Freedom Caucus could be a sign that his voting record will be similar to Rep. Garrett's. He also opposed the removal of confederate war monuments in Charlottesville that honored those that fought to preserve slavery.

About the Democratic Candidate

Introduction: Democrat Leslie Cockburn is a community advocate and distinguished journalist whose family has run a farm in Rappahannock County for nearly 20 years. She has covered the major issues of our time as a producer for CBS's "60 Minutes," a correspondent for PBS's "Frontline," a Ferris Professor of Journalism at Princeton, and an author and writer. She has served on the boards of the Piedmont Environmental Council and the Krebsler Fund in Rappahannock, both dedicated to conservation.

Issues: Cockburn believes in protecting and expanding the ACA, Medicare for all, holding big pharma accountable for price gouging and for its role in the opioid crisis, funding addiction treatment, and protecting Medicare and Social Security. She wants to restore the EPA, make climate change a top priority, and expand conservation funding. Cockburn supports expanded pre-K, making community college free for Virginians, and easing student debt burdens. She supports equal pay for women, paid family leave, and better workplace protections for everyone, especially for women in the military. She believes that a woman's right to choose must remain the law of the land. Cockburn supports criminal justice reform. She wants to raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour and create green energy jobs, and she supports unions and collective bargaining. Cockburn wants to close background check loopholes and ban bump stocks, supports an Assault Weapons Ban while protecting the rights of hunters, and believes domestic abusers should not own guns.

Strengths: Cockburn has 35 years of award-winning investigative journalism behind her, exposing wrongs in Washington and on Wall Street. As a community advocate, she's already working to protect the Affordable Care Act and fight out-of-state companies looking to pollute Virginia's air and water with dangerous fracked gas.



VA-05: Better Know the District

Geography

VA-05 stretches vertically from the north of the state down to Virginia's southern border. Its western border runs through the Shenandoah mountains and parallels I-81 south before it cuts inward to exclude Lynchburg. The only cities with populations over 10,000 in VA-05 are Charlottesville, in the middle of the district, and Danville, on Virginia's southern border.

Demographics

The district is 75% White, 20% African American, and 2% Asian American. 3% of residents are of Hispanic or Latino origin. 28% have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 36% statewide. Median household income is \$52,237, below the statewide median of \$65,015.

Elections

Virgil H. Goode won this seat in 1996 as a Democrat, switched parties in 2002, and continued to be elected as a Republican until losing to Democrat Tom Perriello in 2008. Perriello lost to Republican Robert Hurt in a close election in 2010 following his vote in support of the Affordable Care Act. Hurt was re-elected with comfortable margins in 2012 and 2014, but declined to run in 2016. That year, Garrett defeated Democratic nominee Jane Dittmar by 16 points.

Higher Education

VA-05 is home to the University of Virginia in Charlottesville (20,000+ students), Averett University in Danville (~2,000 students), and Danville Community College (~4,000 students).

Industry

Danville, Virginia was a prominent hub of the tobacco industry dating back to the nineteenth century and was home to the largest single-unit textile mill in the world. With the closing of the mill in 2006 and decline of manufacturing, Danville has seen its population drop over the last few decades from 56,000 to 42,000. Educational, health, and social services account for the most jobs in the district.

VA-05: Facts & Stats

Population Centers

- Charlottesville: 46,597
- Danville: 42,082

2016 Presidential Results

- Clinton: 21.3%
- Trump: 75.4%

2016 House Results

- Dittmar (D): 41.6%
- Garrett (R): 58.2%

2014 House Results

- Gaughan (D): 35.9%
- Hurt (R): 60.9%