

Joshua Cole

Virginia House of Delegates District 28

ABOUT THE CANDIDATE



LEARN MORE

JOSHUA COLE

www.jgcole.org



Joshua Cole is a proud product of the Stafford County Public School system and a Fredericksburg area native.

Joshua received his start in politics in 2005 when he was appointed by then-Speaker, the Honorable William J. Howell, as a Page for the Virginia House of Delegates. That same year he was chosen as the Governor's Page for Governor Mark R. Warner. He returned to the General Assembly again in 2016 as a Staff Assistant to the Clerk of the Virginia State Senate.

In 2017 he became the first African-American and youngest person to receive any party's nomination for the Virginia House of Delegates in Virginia's 28th District. The race was riddled with controversy after he fell short of winning by 82 votes, while dozens of residents received ballots for other, incorrect districts.

After the election he was appointed to serve as the Chief of Staff for Delegate Kelly Convors-Fowler. He currently serves on Stafford County Public School Superintendent's Equity, Diversity and Opportunity Committee, the Greater Fredericksburg Area Interfaith Council, is the President of the Stafford County NAACP, and is involved in a host of other local and community initiatives.

His love for education and mentorship are exemplified in various exploits. He has served as an Academic Advisor for Liberty University, a Behavioral Aid in the Richmond City Public Schools, Mentor at the Rappahanock Boys and Girls Club, and spent numerous years as a Youth Minister.

Joshua Cole was a 2017 Democratic candidate for District 28 of the Virginia House of Delegates. He lost by a hair - 82 votes. However, at least 83 voters in District 28 received ballots for the wrong district. These irregularities were challenged in court, but the court concluded that the issues were not widespread enough to invalidate the election results. Robert Thomas Jr. (R) was sworn in on January 10, 2018, bringing an end to the dispute.

SOCIAL MEDIA + LINKS

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DATA ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Population	Households	Over 65	White	Black	Latinx	Median Income	Below Poverty Line	Unemployed	College Grads	HS Grads	No HS Grad
86014	29061	10.50%	62.90%	17.90%	11.0%	87130	6.50%	2.70%	44.80%	48.20%	7.0%

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PAST RACES

Congressional Districts

Nested Congressional Districts: CD1 (Cook PVI: R+8)
Learn more about Cook Political Ratings (Partisan Voting Index):
<https://cookpolitical.com/ratings>

2017 House of Delegates Election Results

Joshua Cole	49.8%	11,760
Robert Thomas Jr.	50.2%	11,842

2017 House of Delegates Fundraising

* Via Virginia Public Access Project (VPAP)

Democrat	\$75,428
Republican	\$234,171

2017 Gubernatorial Results

Ralph Northam	51.09%	13,817
Ed Gillespie	47.52%	12,853

2018 Congressional

Democrat	51.87%	18,873
Republican	47.99%	17,464

2016 President

Hillary Clinton	46.64%	17,847
Donald Trump	47.74%	18,267

2012 President

Barack Obama	49.30%	18,463
Mitt Romney	49.21%	18,430

ON THE ISSUES:

Healthcare For All

Let's make this clear: healthcare is a human right, not a privilege. Last year we pushed through Medicaid expansion, but Republicans tacked on work-requirements. Now, we've got a job to finish: repeal the work requirements and pass Medicaid-for-All so every Virginian can see a doctor.

Fix Our Broken Transportation System

If you've ever driven on I-95, I don't need to explain. Our area remains the worst traffic hotspot in the U.S and shows no sign of letting up. We need a Delegate who will actually put forward the legislation to end this traffic nightmare, not just talk about the issue.

Ratify the Equal Rights Amendment

Until we ratify the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), it is still legal to discriminate against a person because of their sex. That must end. All people are equal, regardless of their sex or gender identity. Our opponent has been fighting against the ERA and voted against a measure that could have led to the passing of the bill. We will make it a priority once elected. We only need one more state to ratify the ERA: let's make it Virginia.

Protect Reproductive Freedom

Every year, conservatives in Richmond try to strip Virginians of their reproductive liberties. We can't infringe on bodily autonomy. We must block any attempt to criminalize abortion, silence victims of assault, restrict birth control or repeal existing laws limiting freedoms.

LGBTQ Equality

Far too long has the LGBTQ community been marginalized and discriminated against. We will fight for equality for the LGBTQ community and remain committed to ending bullying and violence in our communities. It's unacceptable that members of the LGBTQ community can still be refused service at a store or restaurant and be evicted from their homes. This fight is not over and I will continue to support any legislation that supports equality for the LGBTQ community.

A \$15/HR Living Wage

Virginians are struggling under the current system. Today we're working harder and longer hours and a \$7.25 minimum wage is not cutting it. Meanwhile, the top 10% make 237 times more than the poorest 10%. We need to protect unions, reach equal pay, and raise our wages.

Make Housing Affordable For All

Eviction rates across the district are far above the national average. In 2016, landlords evicted 1 out of 27 residents in Fredericksburg. When an unexpected car repair can mean destitution, we need a change. Our next Delegate must fight for rent control and to end homelessness.

No More Rigged Elections

If the 2017 elections taught us anything, it's that gerrymandering and split-precinct voting make elections unfair and undemocratic. Let's end these confusing, rigged elections. We need third-party redistricting, automatic voter registration, and no split-precincts.

Stop Mass Shootings and Gun Violence

In 2017 alone, 346 mass shootings occurred in the US. We can no longer entertain a debate over whether or not guns are the real problem because the truth is obvious. We need a Delegate who will keep weapons from dangerous individuals and keep our schools and public spaces safe.

End For-Profit Mass Incarceration

Our criminal justice system desperately needs reform. The failed "War on Drugs" caused levels of incarceration unseen in our history, with imprisonment disproportionately affecting Blacks and Latinos. We must reform our law enforcement, end monetary bail, and legalize cannabis.

Campaign Finance

Our campaign is not a puppet of big money— to challenge the machine we cannot accept its norms. We are proud to be a people-funded campaign that relies on donations from everyday working-class citizens. We do not accept corporate PAC contributions or corporate lobbyist contributions. Politicians often serve money, but our loyalties lie with the people. Our future depends on putting people above profit. For the sake of our state, our nation, our world - we invite you to join our fight.

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ABOUT THE STATE

General Demographics

- Virginia is the 12th-most populous state, with over 8 million residents.
- Virginia's non-white citizens represented 38% of the population in 2017, up from 22% in 1990.
- As of 2015, the non-white voter population was 28%, suggesting that people of color are a growing segment of the general population but not growing as fast in the voting population.
- In the last four presidential elections, voter turnout has been greater than 70%. But in the last 4 elections held in the year just prior to the presidential election (which would be a predictor for 2019), turnout has hovered around 30%.
- Turnout among younger voters (18-29 years old) has steadily increased from 17% in 2009 to 26% in 2013 to 34% in 2017. This segment of the population voted heavily Democratic in 2017 --almost 70/30.
- The Commonwealth has elected Democratic governors in four out of the last five gubernatorial elections, and has not voted for a Republican President since 2004.

District Lines

District lines for Congress and state legislature are drawn by the General Assembly (state legislature). There is a bipartisan advisory commission, but the General Assembly is not required to take their recommendations. The governor has veto power over district lines.

The Commonwealth's district boundaries have been a hot topic of conversation in past years. Both Congressional and state legislative district lines in Virginia have been held unconstitutional by federal courts due to racial gerrymandering. Congressional districts were redrawn by court order in 2016, which increased Democratic representation. Currently, a number of districts in the lower chamber are the subject of ongoing litigation, which is currently being heard by the Supreme Court. The new maps for these lower chamber districts will be used in the 2019 general election unless the Supreme Court overturns the new maps. That decision is due over the summer. The redrawn districts (which more accurately reflect the population) lean more Democratic.

Citizens' groups in Virginia have been working to establish fairer districting processes, including pushing for a nonpartisan redistricting commission. In 2019, the General Assembly approved the "first read" of a constitutional amendment to create an advisory commission for Congressional and state legislative lines. The next step would be for the General Assembly to pass an identical resolution during the next legislative session – after the 2019 election. Then the measure would go onto the ballot in November 2020, at which point Virginians could vote to approve the independent commission.

Voter Suppression

Virginia currently has a voter ID law, passed by its Republican state legislature and governor in 2013. In 2016, the Fourth Circuit of Appeals upheld the Virginia Voter ID law, after a suit alleging it violated the 1965 Voting Rights Act. In addition, Virginia's GOP has made it more difficult to register people to vote. In particular, third-party voter registration requires groups receiving 25 or more registration forms to register with the state. Further, Virginia uses both the controversial Crosscheck and ERIC programs to determine if there are duplicate voter registrations.

Voter Registration and Day of Voting

You must provide a photo ID to register to vote and to vote physically at the polls. Acceptable IDs include:

- Driver's license
- US passport
- Tribal ID issued by one of the 11 tribes recognized by the Commonwealth of Virginia
- Student or employee ID from a public or private school in Virginia
- Virginia Voter Photo ID

If you do not have an ID, you may apply for a free Virginia Voter Photo Identification from any general registrar's office.

Last Day:

For the June Primary, you must register by Monday, May 20th, 2019.
For the November Election you must register by Tuesday, October 15th, 2019.

Absentee Ballots:

For the June Primary, absentee ballots must be requested by Tuesday, June 4th, 2019.

For the November Election absentee ballots must be requested by Tuesday, October 29th, 2019.

You can also request a ballot by appearing in person - Request Absentee Ballot by appearing in person by: 5:00 p.m. Saturday, November 2, 2019.

June 11: Primary election

November 5: General Election

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ABOUT THE STATE

Current State Legislature

Virginia is currently under a divided government: the governor is a Democrat, while Republicans control both chambers of the legislature by an extremely narrow margin—just two seats each. The entire Virginia General Assembly is up for election in 2019, and these are all “Last Chance” races; the legislators elected in 2019 will be serving during the 2021 redistricting process. The state legislature draws district lines, and the governor has the power to veto district maps.

The state Senate is currently comprised of 19 Democrats and 21 Republicans, while the House of Delegates has 48 Democrats and 51 Republicans. Democrats have an incredible opportunity to flip both Virginia state legislature chambers in 2019.

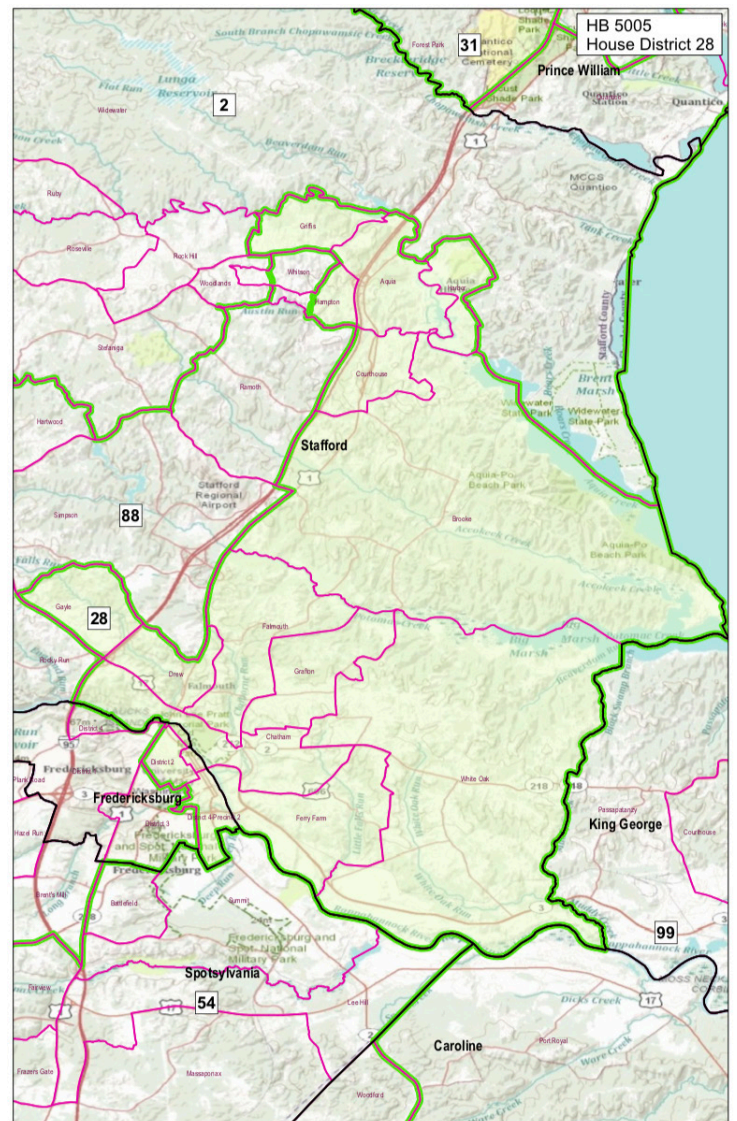
Demographic shifts in Virginia favor Democrats. And a number of badly gerrymandered House districts have recently been fairly redrawn upon federal court order (subject to Supreme Court review). This should give Democrats an opportunity to compete fairly in a broader set of House districts this year.

2019 Executive Controversies

The current Governor, Lt. Governor and Attorney General are all Democrats, and none are up for election in 2019. However, each has been the subject of controversy in 2019. Governor Ralph Northam shocked the Commonwealth when photos surfaced of him in blackface during his years as a medical student. Lieutenant Governor Justin Fairfax seemed poised to transition into the Governor’s seat—until allegations of sexual assault in his past came to light. The third in line for the Governor’s seat, Attorney General Mark Herring, proactively admitted to dressing in blackface as a teenager himself. Ultimately, none of the men have resigned, despite calls to do so from numerous elected officials, organizations, and citizens groups.

At Sister District, these events have underscored the need to build a deep bench of diverse leaders and a strong Democratic majority in the state legislature. Without positive reinforcement from the Governor’s office this year, General Assembly candidates will certainly need our help.

THE DISTRICT



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ABOUT THE OPPONENT

Robert “Bob” Thomas Jr. is a Republican member of the Virginia House of Delegates, representing District 28. Thomas was elected to the chamber in 2017. The 2017 election was reviewed by the courts due to voting irregularities, but the courts concluded that the issues were not widespread enough to invalidate the results. Thomas was sworn in on January 10, 2018, bringing an end to the dispute.

2018 Legislator Scorecards

In 2018, the Virginia General Assembly was in session from January 10 through March 10. Special sessions were held from April 11 to May 30 and from August 30 to October 30.

Virginia Chapter Sierra Club

Legislators are scored on their votes on bills related to the climate and energy. Thomas received an F grade for the 2018 session.

Virginia Education Association

Legislators are scored on their votes on bills related to education. Robinson received a score of 67% for the 2018 session.

Virginia League of Conservation Voters

Legislators are scored on their votes on environmental and conservation issues. Thomas has a score of 57% for the 2018 session.

Republican Primary

Incumbent Bob Thomas is being primaried by another Republican, Paul Milde.

CANDIDATE IN THE NEWS

Cole plans another run for 28th District Delegate

https://www.insidenova.com/news/election/cole-plans-another-run-for-th-district-delegate/article_a16a88aa-8489-11e8-880e-57f868cff0af.html

Why Cole won't contest Va. House election despite dozens of wrong votes

<https://wtop.com/virginia/2017/12/cole-wont-contest-va-house-election-despite-dozens-wrong-votes/>

Joshua Cole makes history as the official Democratic Nominee for Virginia House of Delegates 28th District

<https://potomaclocal.com/2017/05/17/joshua-cole-makes-history-as-democratic-nominee-for-va-house-of-delegates-28th-district/>