



# Chris Hurst for VA-12

## WHY IS THIS RACE IMPORTANT?

- \* All 100 seats in the Virginia House of Delegates are up for election in 2017.
- \* Republicans hold 66 of the 100 seats.
- \* Every seat counts towards flipping the Virginia legislature blue.
- \* GOP leaders believe many districts—including those won by Clinton—remain Republican strongholds for state elections.
- \* In 2015, only 21 Democrats ran against GOP lawmakers. This year, Democrats plan to challenge 45 GOP incumbents—including 17 lawmakers whose districts voted for Democrat Hillary Clinton in 2016.

## 2017 TIMELINE

- May 22: Deadline to register to vote (primary)
- June 6: Deadline to request absentee ballot (primary)
- June 13: Primary election
- October 16: Deadline to register to vote (general)
- October 31: Deadline to request absentee ballot
- November 7: General Election

## ABOUT THE DISTRICT

### Websites

- Voter Registration: [www.elections.virginia.gov](http://www.elections.virginia.gov)
- Blue Virginia: <http://bluevirginia.us>
- Activate VA: [www.facebook.com/ActivateVirginia](http://www.facebook.com/ActivateVirginia)

### Newspapers

- The Roanoke Times [www.roanoke.com](http://www.roanoke.com)
- The Virginia Leader [www.virginianleader.com](http://www.virginianleader.com)
- News Messenger <http://montcova.com>
- Southwest Times [www.southwesttimes.com](http://www.southwesttimes.com)
- Radford News Journal [radfordnewsjournal.com](http://radfordnewsjournal.com)
- NPR affiliate WVTF <http://wvtf.org>

## ABOUT THE CANDIDATE



- Candidate: Chris Hurst
- SDP ActBlue: [https://secure.actblue.com/contribute/page/sd\\_va12](https://secure.actblue.com/contribute/page/sd_va12)
- His website: <https://www.hurst4delegate.com>
- His Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ChrisHurstForVirginia](http://www.facebook.com/ChrisHurstForVirginia)
- His Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ChrisHurstVA>
- Ballotpedia: [ballotpedia.org/Christopher\\_Hurst](http://ballotpedia.org/Christopher_Hurst)

## Democratic Parties

- <http://gilesdemocrats.blogspot.com>
- <https://www.facebook.com/Giles.County.VA.Democrats>
- [www.mcdemocrats.org](http://www.mcdemocrats.org)
- [www.facebook.com/MontgomeryCountyVaDemocrats](http://www.facebook.com/MontgomeryCountyVaDemocrats)

## PAST RESULTS

### 2015 Election Results

Joseph Yost (R)	58.4%	9,245
Laurie Buchwald (D)	41.6%	6,587

### 2016 Election Results

Hillary Clinton (D)	14,530	47.03%
Donald Trump (R)	14,002	45.32%

## BACKGROUND INFO

Chris has dedicated his life to public service and giving a voice to the people of southwest Virginia. As a journalist, he's been a fierce advocate for families struggling to be heard for access to mental health care and equality in education for students with special needs. He's investigated the reasons our workforce must adapt for the careers of the future. He's documented the dramatic rise of child abuse and opioid addiction. And he's held government leaders accountable while showing how our first responders are left without vital resources. If elected to the Virginia House of Delegates, Chris will take that same passionate work ethic to Richmond and help create solutions to our problems, not just report them.

His decision to run for office is a progression from his work in journalism after he recovered from profound tragedy. In 2015, he was just beginning a new life with his late-girlfriend, Alison Parker. Alison and Adam Ward were murdered on television, (<http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/virginia-tv-shooting/wdbj7-reporter-alison-parker-photographer-adam-ward-killed-live-tv-n416221>) which shocked the country and sent Chris on a different path. Continued prayers and support give him the strength to move forward and be a courageous fighter for all Virginians.

Prior to his campaign for delegate, he was evening anchor of WDBJ7 for six years. During that time, he was recognized as "Media Person of the Year" by the National Alliance on Mental Illness, "Citizen of the Year" by the Roanoke NAACP, and "Your Local Hero" by the readers of the Roanoker magazine. He twice won a regional Edward R. Murrow award, and was nominated for an Emmy award.

His parents raised him outside Philadelphia, where his father was a small business owner and his mother worked for nonprofits, including the National Constitution Center. Growing up, he traveled the world as a member of the Philadelphia Boys Choir. He earned a bachelor of arts degree in broadcast journalism from Emerson College.

For fun, Chris likes kayaking, hiking with his dog, Sophie, and seeing concerts and plays. He is an

active member of the Kiwanis Club of Roanoke and has been a member of the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra Chorus. He also volunteered at the Roanoke Baptist Community Center after-school program.

## CHRIS ON THE ISSUES

He said that even though reducing gun violence will be a prominent part of his campaign, "anybody who sees me as a single-issue candidate because my girlfriend was killed with a gun needs to look at my body of work over the past seven years here and see how many different topics I've covered and have been curious and interested in."

Rather than gun bans, Hurst is interested in changing state law to keep guns away from domestic abusers during the high-risk period directly after an emergency protective order has been granted, as well as creating a "gun violence restraining order" law, which would create a process for police or family members to ask a judge for a temporary confiscation of guns from someone who seems to be heading towards violence, whether to harm themselves or someone else.

He said that he wants to make sure that Virginia Tech, which he described as a "massive economic driver," continues to have the resources to create high-tech innovations and green jobs. He also wants Tech to attract the "best and brightest from around the world to Blacksburg" and provide incentives to keep students in the New River Valley after they graduate. Improving funding for rural schools is also a priority, he said.

Protecting the environment will be a priority, said Hurst, who said he fears there will be "continued rollbacks of some needed regulations to make sure our waterways and our property [don't] become polluted."

In addition to policy issues, he said that he was inspired to run because of the "apathy and indifference" he sees from some people in power.

## ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Giles County contains 92.4 square miles of Jefferson National Forest and many accesses to the



From 1992-2013, the Democratic Party was the majority in the Virginia State House of Representatives for the first four years while the Republicans were the majority for the last 14 years.

Major issues facing the Virginia General Assembly in 2015 were job creation and education, the latter being especially important to Republicans; Democrats were especially focused on gun control issues. But, both parties expressed their desire to work towards improving Virginia's economy.

## REDISTRICTING IN VIRGINIA

The governor signed into law a state legislative redistricting plan ([https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/politics/virginia-assembly-approves-new-legislative-maps/2011/04/07/AFRjhrxC\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.a4ba10f9b849](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/politics/virginia-assembly-approves-new-legislative-maps/2011/04/07/AFRjhrxC_story.html?utm_term=.a4ba10f9b849)) on August 29, 2011. In 2014 and 2015, the legislature made attempts to modify the districts that were approved in 2011. The governor vetoed each of these bills.

On December 22, 2014, opponents of the newly drawn map filed suit in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, alleging that 12 state legislative districts constituted an illegal racial gerrymander. According to the Oyez Project at the ITT Chicago-Kent College of Law, the district court rejected this argument:

“The district court held that the plaintiffs did not establish that race was the predominant factor in the creation of 11 of the 12 challenged district. The district court also held that, although race was the predominant factor in the creation of one district, in doing so the General Assembly was pursuing a compelling state interest and its use of race was narrowly tailored to serve that interest.”

—Oyez (<https://www.oyez.org/cases/2016/15-680>), ITT Chicago-Kent College of Law

The plaintiffs appealed this decision to the Supreme Court of the United States, which agreed to hear the case (Bethune-Hill v. Virginia Board of Elections <http://www.scotusblog.com/case-files/cases/bethune-hill-v-virginia-state-board-of-elections>) on June 6, 2016.

In the 2015, session of the Virginia General Assembly, the state Senate passed three nonpartisan redistricting bills, all of which died in the House.

On March 1, 2017, the Supreme Court of the United States issued its ruling (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/01/us/politics/supreme-court-virginia-house-delegates-gerrymandering.html>) in Bethune-Hill v. Virginia Board of Elections, finding that the district court “employed an incorrect legal standard in determining that race did not predominate in 11 of the 12 districts.” For these 11 districts, the high court remanded the case to the district court for reconsideration. The court ruled 7-1 on the case. Justice Anthony Kennedy penned the court's majority opinion, which was joined by Chief Justice John Roberts and Associate Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor, and Elena Kagan. Associate Justice Samuel Alito concurred in the judgment, filing a separate opinion. Associate Justice Clarence Thomas filed an opinion that concurred in part with the majority opinion and dissented in part. Kennedy wrote the following in the court's majority opinion:

“The challengers first argue that the District Court misunderstood the relevant precedents when it required the challengers to establish, as a prerequisite to showing racial predominance, an actual conflict between the enacted plan and traditional redistricting principles. The Court agrees with the challengers on this point. ... The challengers submit that the District Court erred further when it considered the legislature's racial motive only to the extent that the challengers identified deviations from traditional redistricting criteria that were attributable to race and not to some other factor. In the challengers' view, this approach foreclosed a holistic analysis of each district and led the District Court to give insufficient weight to the 55 percent [black voting age population] target and other relevant evidence that race predominated. Again, this Court agrees.”

—Associate Justice Anthony Kennedy

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court affirmed the district court's ruling in the case of the remaining

challenged district (District 75), arguing that the lower court's ruling was consistent with Alabama Legislative Black Caucus v. Alabama (<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/26/us/justices-side-with-black-lawmakers-in-alabama.html>), a case decided by the high court in 2015. Alabama Legislative Black Caucus v. Alabama established that “where a challenger succeeds in establishing racial predominance, the burden shifts to the State to ‘demonstrate that its districting legislation is narrowly tailored to achieve a compelling interest.’”