

NC State Senate Seat District 50 currently held by Kevin Corbin

Candidate	Kevin Corbin	√ Thomas Downing
General information	<p>Republican.</p> <p>Incumbent since 2021.</p> <p>From Franklin, NC.</p> <p>Insurance executive (Corbin Insurance Agency, Inc. and Blue Ridge Insurance Group, which provide home, auto, health, and business insurance in WNC and upstate SC) (EdNC).</p> <p>Website: kevincorbin.com/</p>	<p>Democrat challenger to Corbin.</p> <p>From Cullowee, NC.</p> <p>Currently in Asheville government administration.</p> <p>Former Special Ed teacher.</p> <p>Website: tomdowning4nc.com/</p>
An economy for all?	<p>Corbin serves on Commerce and Insurance Committee (Ballotpedia) and is endorsed by business organizations such as National Federation of Independent Business, North Carolina Board of Realtors, and BB&T Bank (candidate website). Wants to reduce government. In 2026 Sponsored NC S1080 to lower taxes and NC S972 to reduce state agency budgets by 10% by June 30, 2028 (Ballotpedia). Corbin states, “I believe NC needs to lower the Corporate and Individual income tax, which will put more money in the pockets of the citizens and further strengthen our state economy” (candidate website).</p>	<p>Downing believes that regional cooperation is the key to bringing in economic development (candidate website). Wants to increase pay and benefits for public safety personnel and funds for volunteer fire departments, DOT infrastructure (roads, bridges, culverts), disaster preparedness, affordable day care, affordable housing, regional cooperation for economic development, phone and internet service for ALL, and passing a state budget on time (Ballotpedia).</p>
Healthcare for all?	<p>Corbin serves on Health Care Committee (Ballotpedia). Supported Medicaid expansion in 2022 (<i>The Mountaineer</i>, Wikipedia). Corbin is opposed to providing abortions: “I believe that the government must respect and protect all human life from conception to natural death” (candidate website). Corbin’s campaign is supported by health insurers and other health associations (transparencyusa.org).</p>	<p>Downing sees healthcare as a right. He wants increase healthcare providers in WNC and plan for an aging population (<i>Smoky Mountain News</i>). “Our rural hospitals need a solid plan for dealing with outside influences from Washington that will further strain their finances. People in Macon County must be able to have a baby in Macon County again. How many District 50 residents have had a medical appointment cancelled due to not having a provider available to see them?” (candidate website).</p>
Childcare and quality K-12 education?	<p>Corbin serves as chair of the Appropriations on Education/Higher Education Committee (Ballotpedia). He was elected to Macon County School Board at age 22 and served 20 years, pushing to build schools (EdNC). He favors school vouchers: “In 2024, Corbin voted to overturn then-Gov. Roy Cooper’s veto to a mini budget bill that included \$463 million for school vouchers.” He also supported 8% teacher pay increase (<i>Smoky Mountain News</i>). His focus is on increasing reading and math proficiency, supported by needs-based grants; he sponsored a bill to “eliminate DEI in public education” (ncleg.gov).</p>	<p>Wants to reform education lottery and opposes school vouchers (<i>Smoky Mountain News</i>). “The Republicans in the General Assembly have succeeded in winning the ‘Race to the Bottom’ for public school funding. Now North Carolina is dead last in public school funding – 50th place out of 50 states. Are they trying to make our public schools fail so they can privatize public education?” (candidate website). Downing is known for his passionate public comment and advocacy for the Fontana Regional Library system in Jackson County (<i>Smoky Mountain News</i>).</p>
Fair and accessible elections?	<p>“Citizens should have access to campaign finance records and that voting is a fundamental right” (candidate website). In 2026 Corbin sponsored NC S1084 to reduce the early voting period (Ballotpedia).</p>	<p>Wants to end gerrymandering (Ballotpedia). He has also spoken out on the Jackson County Board of Elections’ decision to close a voting site at Western Carolina University, further biasing the district in favor of Republicans (<i>Smoky Mountain News</i>) – it has been restored as an early voting site.</p>
A healthy planet?	<p>Post Helene, we should “build back for resiliency” (<i>Smoky Mountain News</i>).</p>	<p>Emphasizes disaster recovery/resiliency; NC is ill-prepared for next climate change driven disaster (<i>Smoky Mountain News</i>).</p>