



From: Jim Williams, Public Policy Polling
To: Interested Parties
Subject: Franklin, Nash, and Vance County Voters Express Serious Concern Over Budget Impacts on Local Teachers, Hospitals, and Medicaid
Date: March 31, 2026

A new Public Policy Polling survey of voters in North Carolina's 11th Senate District finds that the nearly three-year failure to pass a state budget is generating significant constituent backlash against State Senator Lisa Stone Barnes, who chairs the Senate Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Natural and Economic Resources. Voters in the district express serious concern about the impact of the budget stalemate on local teachers, hospitals, and Medicaid recipients, and those concerns appear to be translating into electoral vulnerability for Barnes.

The survey finds Trump underwater in the district at 41% approve / 54% disapprove, and Democrats hold a 3-point lead on the generic legislative ballot (47-44). Barnes posts a negative job approval rating, with just 27% approving of her performance and 29% disapproving, while 43% of voters have no opinion of her at all.

When voters learn that Barnes chairs a Senate budget committee and North Carolina families have still gone nearly three years without a budget, 57% express serious concern about her role. And when voters are presented with specific, local consequences of the budget failure, they register serious concern at high levels:

- 57% of voters express serious concern that Barnes's inaction has left nearly 1,700 teachers in Franklin, Nash, and Vance Counties waiting nearly three years for a pay raise that depends on a state budget.
- 57% express serious concern that more than 76,000 people in Franklin, Nash, and Vance Counties who depend on Medicaid for their health coverage are at risk without a state budget.
- 54% express serious concern that rural hospitals in Franklin, Nash, and Vance Counties depend on state budget funding to keep their doors open and serve local patients.

These concerns are showing up on the ballot. In an initial test, Democratic candidate James Gailliard leads Barnes 43-40. After voters hear information about the budget's impact on their community, Gailliard's lead expands to 48-42. That 6-point swing is driven almost entirely by budget accountability, and it suggests that as voters learn more about the real cost of legislative inaction, Barnes's position could continue to weaken.

Public Policy Polling surveyed 539 voters in NC Senate District 11 on March 25-26, 2026. The margin of error is +/- 4.2%. 89% of interviews were conducted by text message and 11% by telephone.

