



Making a checkmark and filling in a bubble are simple acts. Yet they become meaningful when done beside a name on the ballot. This year, two states in the Second Episcopal District, Virginia and North Carolina, are holding elections. Voters in both states will decide the vision for their communities, shaping the makeup of their governments and their approaches the issues we face today.

The residents of North Carolina will decide the makeup of their local governments. Although some may overlook local elections, our mayors, city councils, and county supervisors have a profound impact on our daily lives. The decisions of local governments affect issues such as garbage collection, school funding, zoning regulations, and street repairs. In some cases, municipalities can shield residents from state and federal policies that conflict with local priorities.

While North Carolina's contests focus on local government offices, Virginia voters will select who directs the Commonwealth. Voters will decide the governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, and all members of the House of Delegates and (in some cases) local constitutional officers. Like local elections, many people overlook state elections in Virginia because they occur during what is considered an 'off year.' However, because Virginia is a Dillon's Rule state, local governments operate under state authority. Decisions made by the state government affect not only its own operations but also those of the local government.

Early voting has started in Virginia. In North Carolina, early voting begins **on October 16th**. If you're not registered, visit your local voter registrar's office to register. If you are unable to vote in person, request a mail-in ballot through your state's Board of Elections.

Former Speaker of the US House of Representatives Tip O'Neill once said, "All politics is local." He was right. Politics is about addressing the issues we face in our communities every day. During this voting season, we have the power to choose leaders who will address the issues we care about and help We the People build a more perfect union.

Winston G. Favor