

The North Carolina case features Deborah Ross (D) against incumbent Richard Burr (R). Neither is a well-known figure nationally.

Ross was a lawyer and state representative. More surprisingly for a candidate in a Southern swing state, she served as executive director for the state ACLU. Her website reports that she had a 94 percent lifetime score from the North Carolina League of Conservation Voters. (This is the first time I've ever seen a reference to a state LCV score.) She touts her support for state legislation promoting renewable energy and offers a distinctive pocketbook argument for climate action:

"Our mountains and coasts are not just national treasures, they are a part of North Carolina's vital tourism industry. Each year visitors spend billions in our state, help sustain hundreds of thousands of jobs, and provide a huge boom to our real estate market. To protect these national treasures and bolster our tourism economy, Deborah knows that we need to slow the harmful effects of climate change."

Richard Burr, the Republican incumbent, has a lifetime LCV score of 7%. His website calls for "reining in the excessive Obama regulatory mandates that are choking off our economy and killing jobs with higher costs and red tape."

One of the things I enjoy about doing these Senate posts is finding out about local issues. Burr doesn't have an energy tab on his website, but he does have one on "conservation." There, he makes an unusual plea: "I've also been fighting to save a true North Carolina treasure, the wild horses of Corolla, from extinction. Believe it or not, there are bureaucrats in Washington who believe the Corolla horses are an 'invasive species' and not worthy of our protection." It [turns out](#) that these are wild horses on the Outer Banks, thought to be of Spanish descent. The horses are heavily inbred. They are being pushed by development into federal wildlife areas, where they pose a risk of overgrazing. Saving them would involve crossbreeding with horses from elsewhere. Burr has also pushed for reauthorization of the permanent reauthorization for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Burr isn't the *most* anti-environmental Senator in Congress, but he's vigorously opposed to air pollution and climate regulations. Ross's record in the state legislature suggests that she would be a vigorous advocate for clean energy. We'll see in a few weeks how this one comes out.

