





Hypothetical Robinson-Tillis 2026 Matchup: A Dogfight Waiting To Happen

Research Report Prepared by Campaign Viability Research

POLL CONDUCTION: November 13th through 15th, 2024

SAMPLE: 800 North Carolina Republican Primary Voters

SPONSOR: Self-Sponsored (Campaign Viability Research)

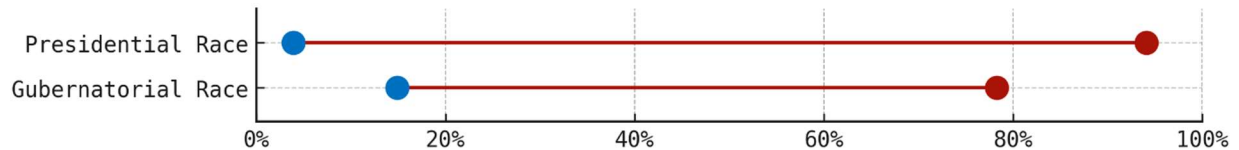
Campaign Viability Research (CVR) helps Republican candidates fund their campaigns through data-driven strategies proven to bolster donor confidence and maximize ROI. Our offerings include:

- *Viability Research:* As our name suggests, we were the pioneers of campaign viability research. We create research deliverables that donors and decision makers trust to provide clear-eyed analyses of your candidate profile, your district, and your path to victory. Our partnership with a top national polling firm allows us to integrate precise polling data into your research deliverables, which high-dollar donors rightfully demand before getting involved in a race.
- *Donor Relationships:* We have access to a vast array of donor data throughout the country. Our team can help you craft a fundraising strategy, provide call lists of potential donors, and — if our research finds you with a strong path to victory — introduce you directly to our tight-knit network of top Republican donors.

This Campaign Viability Research Report was not sponsored by any candidate, PAC, party, or other political entity. Rather, this is a public display of our firm's ability to identify narratives before they develop, forecast outcomes of complex situations, and paint donors and insiders a comprehensive picture of an election — before it even begins.

Understanding The Past

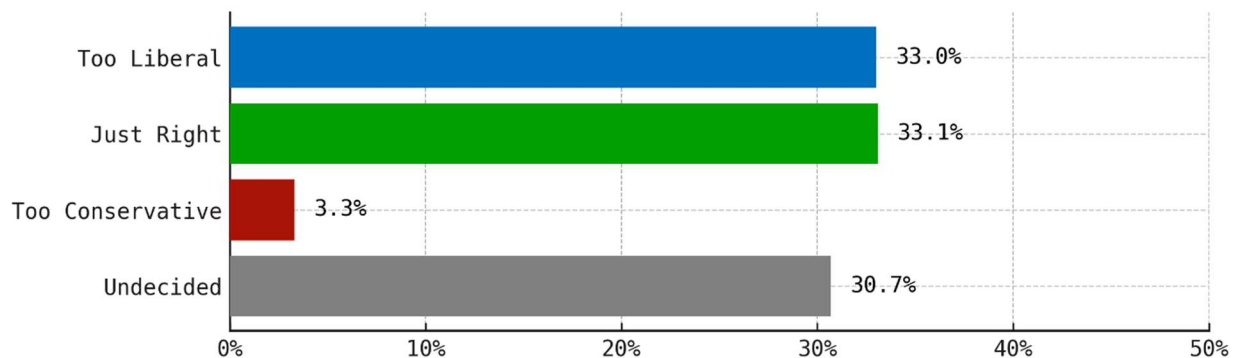
Before trying to predict the future, it's important to understand the past. We began by asking respondents – all of whom are likely North Carolina Republican primary voters – how they voted in the 2024 general elections for President and Governor.



94% of the Republican primary electorate stuck with Donald Trump, their party's nominee for President. However, in the gubernatorial race, only 78% stuck with Mark Robinson. Not all voters who defected from Robinson necessarily voted for Josh Stein; 17% of defectors voted third-party and 14% chose not to vote in that race at all.

Assessing The Present

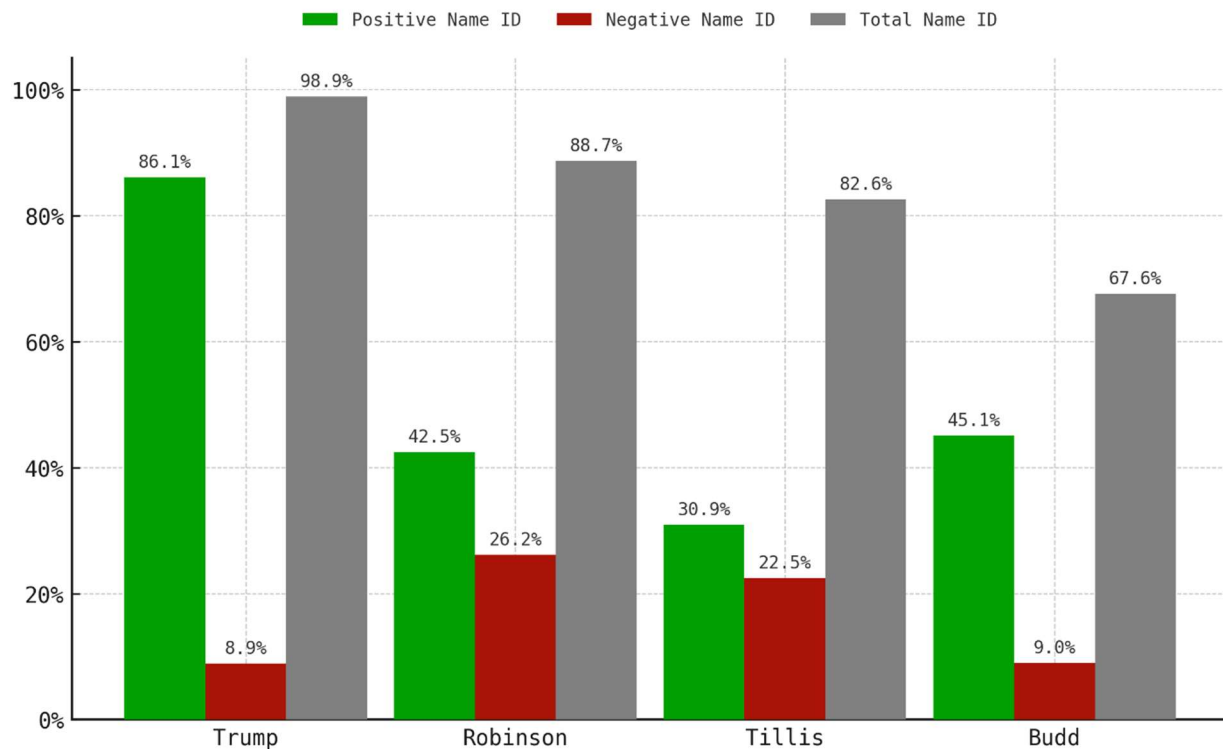
Next, it's important to assess the current situation and how voters feel *right now*. To do this, we started by asking voters how they felt about Thom Tillis right now: is he too liberal, too conservative, or just right?



Voters are quite divided on this issue. About a third believe he is too liberal, a third think he's just right, and another third are undecided altogether. Barely any voters think he's too conservative.

Assessing The Present (cont.)

We also asked voters to share their opinions of Trump, Robinson, Tillis, and also Ted Budd, the state's other Republican US Senator.

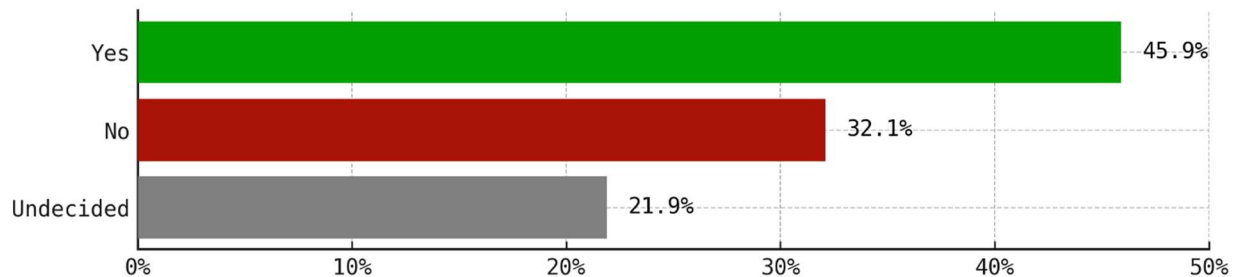


Trump has more than double the Positive Name ID of any of the other three, despite having the lowest Negative Name ID of any of the four. In other words, he is both the most widely-liked and the least widely-disliked. This is an impressive feat. Interestingly, Budd seems to be the second-most popular figure, collecting only 0.1% more Negative Name ID than Trump while earning 45% Positive Name ID, which beats Robinson's 42% and Tillis's 31%. Budd does all of this while having by far the lowest Total Name ID (68%) of the four.

Let's shift our focus to Robinson and Tillis. Both are known by between 80% and 90% of the electorate, and both have more Positive Name ID than Negative Name ID, meaning they're both viewed more positively than negatively right now. Robinson has 12% higher Positive Name ID than Tillis, but also 4% higher Negative Name ID. On the whole, it appears that neither Robinson *nor* Tillis post very impressive numbers, especially when compared to Trump or Budd.

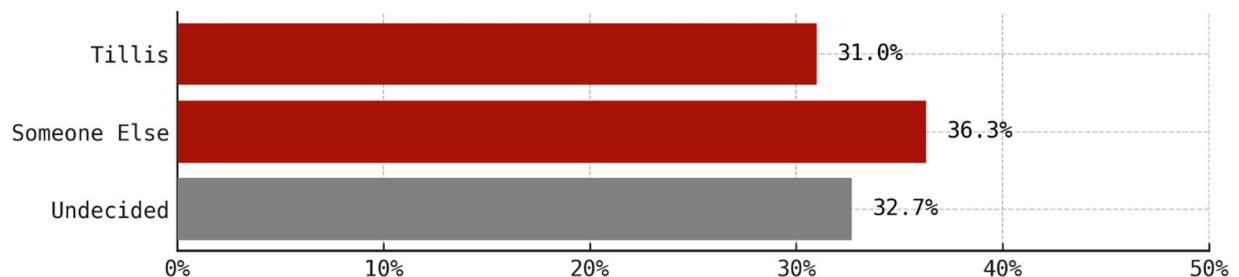
Predicting The Future

Stein's landslide win over Robinson caused many to speculate about Robinson's political future. After a crushing defeat like that, would voters – specifically Republican primary voters, since they'd have the first say – want Robinson to run for office again in the future?



A plurality of voters – but not a majority – say yes, they would want Robinson to run for office again the future. 32% say they don't want him to, and another 22% are undecided. These results could be spun in either direction. Robinson's supporters could argue that only less than a third of the base want him to go away, and that Robinson shouldn't allow a minority of voters to make that decision for him. On the other hand, Robinson's detractors could argue that these results show voters have lost excitement over the once-rising star in GOP politics, as less than half even want him to run for office again.

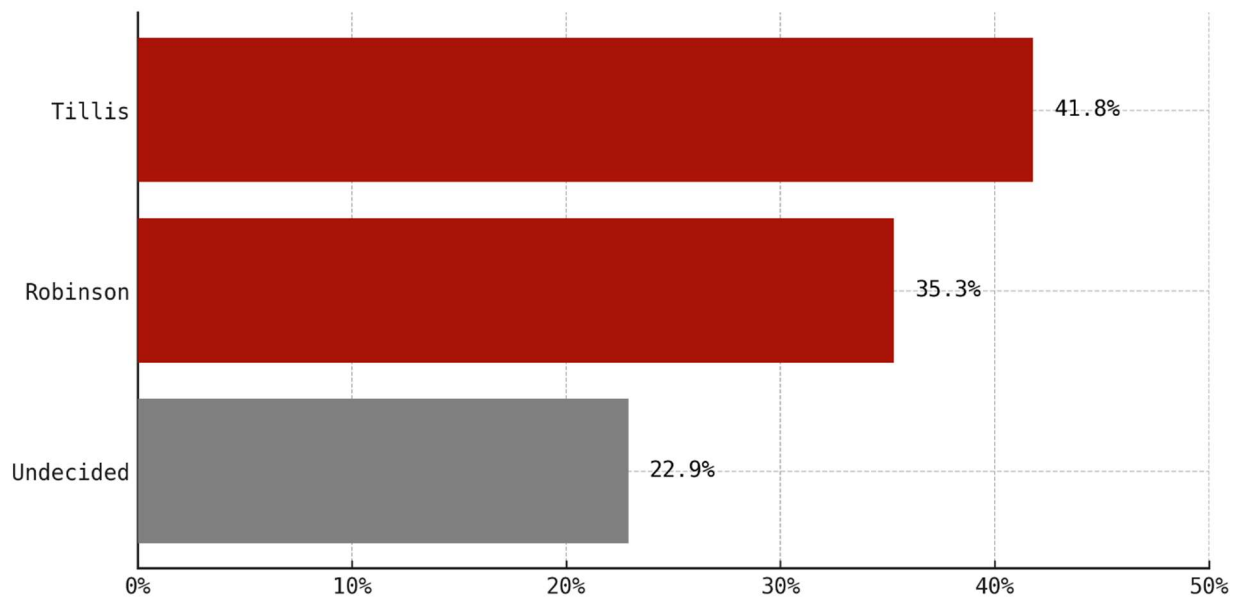
But by that logic, should Tillis run again, or should he step away, too? We asked Republican primary voters who they would vote for in a hypothetical matchup between Tillis and an unnamed Republican challenger, and they sided with the challenger.



In this hypothetical race, Tillis would receive less than a third of the vote. Many voters are undecided about who they'd support, but the unnamed "Someone Else" option holds the advantage nonetheless.

Predicting The Future (cont.)

If you've read this far, you're probably asking the same question we are: If Robinson were to challenge Tillis in the Republican primary for US Senate in 2026, which imperfect candidate would GOP voters choose?



The answer is... still unclear. Though Tillis has a 6.5-point lead over Robinson, neither candidate comes close to the 50% mark. With 23% of voters undecided, if this race really were to come to fruition, it would be a knock-down drag-out fight for the Republican nomination. The grassroots conservatives would likely fiercely back Robinson, while the political establishment and general election-focused pragmatists would likely back Tillis.

We'll end this research report with a piece of advice. If North Carolina's 2024 election cycle taught us anything, it's that a fractured Republican Party has a lot of difficulty winning statewide races. For the GOP to build a culture of winning in 2026 and beyond, party unity must be a top consideration.

