



JUDGE REPRESENTATIVE COTHAM ON HER RECORD,
NOT ON HER DECISION TO CHANGE PARTIES

By Stacie McGinn

Woman of Substance

Republican women in Mecklenburg County are thrilled to have this accomplished legislator among our ranks. An experienced leader, accomplished educator, mom to two boys and a lifelong advocate for important causes, Tricia Cotham represents what all legislators should strive to become, regardless of party.

She speaks with authority on the matters she is charged with, because she has learned from the ground up. As a teacher in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School system, the second largest school system in the state, she was recognized as Teacher of the Year and later served as an Assistant Principal at East Mecklenburg and Independence High Schools. She is a small business owner, who understands the challenges these businesses face.

Successful Track Record

For those who would cast aspersions solely on the basis of her party choice, we say, judge her record. She comes from a distinguished family of public servants from Mecklenburg County. And she has continued that tradition, serving for 10 years in the NC State House. Even her critics acknowledge Cotham has a longstanding reputation for working successfully across the aisle. And those efforts have delivered results on her promised priorities for her constituents in Mint Hill and East Mecklenburg.

In education, Cotham has served for years on the House Education subcommittee (K-12) and is currently Chairman. Her advice on issues impacting vulnerable students and underserved schools, racial and socioeconomic conditions—and her support of school choice as a solution to these challenges—has been invaluable in this role. She sought to raise teacher pay and fund more support services for students and families, including mental health, and increase investment in early childhood education and after school programs. Many of these measures are included in the House budget that recently passed, thanks to tireless efforts of legislators like Cotham.

In health care, she has long believed that quality, affordable health care should be a right for all North Carolinians. And she has fought to bring Medicaid Expansion to North Carolina. We're on the cusp of making that a reality in our state.

With regard to the economy, Charlotte generally, and House District 112 in particular, is experiencing record growth, particularly in comparison to other parts of the country, due to lower taxes and limited regulation.

[Votes Her Conscience](#)

Cotham has accomplished these things not out of political expediency, but because it was the right thing to do. That is who she is. A former student described her as his “hero,” because she took kids to the state fair each year, paid for those who didn't have the money to go, and sat on the bus next to a lonely child who felt ostracized by the other kids. He went on to be a success and supported Tricia because, in his words “she fights hard for everyone and shows no favoritism...and she isn't afraid to do the right thing.” Isn't that what we want in our legislators?

A Charlotte Observer Editorial staff member put it best last February when she said, in describing Representative Cotham's inclination to vote her conscience:

Elected officials — both Democrat and Republican — should be led by their values instead of blind allegiance to their party. Excess partisanship doesn't benefit anyone, and it's always more important to do the right thing than it is to simply fall in line.

Representative Cotham has been doing the right thing for her family, students, constituents and North Carolinians throughout her career. She deserves our respect and the benefit of the doubt that she will continue this meritorious service for years to come.