CITIZEN INTELLIGENCE ARCHIVE

Senate Race File #005 — North Carolina

Session 2 Update | August 2026

SESSION 2 UPDATE — TRACKAIPAC CANDIDATE DATA APPLIED

> **WHAT CHANGED SINCE SESSION 1:** Real pro-Israel lobby figures found for both candidates via TrackAIPAC's candidate-level database. Neither candidate shows a direct AIPAC-specific contribution — both take money from other pro-Israel PAC networks instead.

> **FRAMEWORK QUESTION FOR UMA:** Cooper has received $132,025 from pro-Israel lobby groups (DMFI, JAC, J Street) — Whatley has received $26,156 (AMP, Republican Jewish Coalition). Neither includes AIPAC by name. Your framework's automatic disqualifying flag is written specifically as "AIPAC funding." Decide: does the flag apply only to literal AIPAC dollars (in which case both candidates are technically NO on this specific flag), or to the broader pro-Israel PAC category as a whole (in which case both are FLAGGED, just via different organizations)? This profile presents the raw numbers below and marks the flag as a judgment call pending your decision — not resolved unilaterally.

North Carolina's Senate seat is open — Republican Thom Tillis is retiring. This race could cost up to $800 million, which would make it the most expensive Senate race in American history. Democrats have not won a Senate seat in North Carolina since 2008. But Roy Cooper has never lost a statewide race — and current polling shows him leading by high single digits to double digits.

CANDIDATE A — MICHAEL WHATLEY (R)

Republican nominee | Former RNC Chair 2024–2025 | Former NC GOP Chair 2019–2024 | Oil & Gas Lobbyist 15+ years | Age 57

Michael Whatley has never held elected office. He is a career political operative and lobbyist who ran the Republican National Committee before Trump encouraged him to run for Senate. He was born in Michigan and moved to North Carolina as a teenager. Trump endorsed him and he won the GOP primary with 64.6% of the vote.

THE FACTS — BACKGROUND & RECORD

Oil & Gas Lobbying

For more than 15 years, Whatley worked as a lobbyist for oil and gas companies. He was a partner at lobbying firm HBW Resources and executive vice president of the Consumer Energy Alliance. He lobbied for offshore oil drilling in the Atlantic Ocean — including off the North Carolina coast — a position that drew bipartisan opposition from North Carolinians who depend on coastal tourism and fishing. After becoming a Senate candidate, Whatley's oil and gas stocks rose by up to $63,000 in a single weekend after he cheered on the Trump administration's Venezuela oil policy.

Healthcare

Whatley has called for eliminating the Affordable Care Act. Nearly 1 million North Carolinians get their health coverage through the ACA. He has not offered a replacement plan.

Hurricane Helene — Failure to Show Up

Trump appointed Whatley to the FEMA Review Council after Hurricane Helene devastated western North Carolina in October 2024. More than 13 months later, Helene victims had received federal support covering only 12% of their documented needs. Over 100 western NC residents signed a petition demanding Whatley resign or be replaced from the council.

Elections & Democracy

After January 6, 2021, Whatley refused to blame Trump for the Capitol attack. In February 2021, he claimed there was "evidence of voting irregularities" in the 2020 election — a claim that courts rejected more than 60 times nationwide. He also said "we don't need separation of church and state."

THE FACTS — FOLLOW THE MONEY

SOURCE	AMOUNT / NOTES	FLAG
Pro-Israel PAC money (TrackAIPAC confirmed)	$26,156 total lifetime, from AMP (Americans for Good Government / American Principles) and the Republican Jewish Coalition. **No AIPAC-specific contribution found.** TrackAIPAC has separately published a public callout labeling him "Israel First," citing a speech where he said he was running "to stand for Israel" — this is a rhetorical/messaging flag, not a funding figure.	■ **PRO-ISRAEL PAC (not AIPAC) — judgment call**
Senate Leadership Fund (McConnell/ Thune PAC)	$71 million pledged for ads attacking Cooper and boosting Whatley; $17M already deployed as of late July.	■ **FLAGGED**
Energy company donors	$250K from Voltagrid CEO; $150K+ from ConocoPhillips, Marathon executives and other energy firms.	■ **FLAGGED**
Oil & gas stock profits	Personal stock gains of up to $63K in a single weekend tied to energy policy he supports.	■ **FLAGGED**
Total raised (through Q2 2026)	Over $11 million raised across campaign and joint fundraising committee; ~$2.5–3.4M cash on hand.	**NOTE**

AIPAC MONEY: **NO DIRECT AIPAC $ FOUND** — $26,156 from other pro-Israel PACs (AMP, RJC). Whether this counts under the framework's AIPAC flag is a call for Uma.

BIG OIL / DARK MONEY: **FLAGGED** — Funded by energy companies he lobbied for. $71M super PAC from Republican Senate leadership.

> **ARCHITECT ANALYSIS — MICHAEL WHATLEY (updated):** The oil and gas money picture hasn't changed — it's still the clearest flag in this race. On the Israel question, the picture is more textured than Session 1 assumed: Whatley takes real money from pro-Israel PAC networks, just not AIPAC by name. TrackAIPAC itself treats him as a target regardless — their own messaging calls him "Israel First" based on his public statements, not his FEC filings. That's a meaningful distinction for a fifth-grade-reading-level audience: "he

> took AIPAC money" and "watchdogs call him Israel-aligned based on what he's said" are different claims, and the framework should be precise about which one it's making.

CANDIDATE B — ROY COOPER (D)

Democrat | Former Governor of North Carolina 2017–2025 | Former Attorney General 2001–2017 | Age 68 | Nash County, NC

Roy Cooper has won six statewide elections in North Carolina without a single loss. He served as Attorney General for 16 years, then as Governor for 8. He won the governor's race in 2016 and 2020 — both times Trump carried the state.

THE FACTS — RECORD IN OFFICE

Healthcare

As governor, Cooper expanded Medicaid in North Carolina — covering hundreds of thousands of low-income residents who had no health insurance. He opposes cuts to the ACA and supports protecting coverage for the nearly 1 million North Carolinians who depend on it.

Economic Record

During Cooper's tenure as governor, North Carolina was consistently ranked among the top states for business and job growth.

Public Safety

Cooper spent 16 years as Attorney General prosecuting violent criminals. He signed tougher bail and pretrial release laws as governor for violent offenders.

Hurricane Helene

Cooper was still governor when Helene hit in October 2024. He coordinated the state's emergency response in the immediate aftermath and has called for rebuilding FEMA, saying the federal agency "has been almost destroyed" under Trump.

THE FACTS — FOLLOW THE MONEY

SOURCE	AMOUNT / NOTES	FLAG
Pro-Israel PAC money (TrackAIPAC confirmed)	$132,025 total lifetime, from DMFI (Democratic Majority for Israel), JAC (Joint Action Committee), and J Street. **No AIPAC-specific contribution found.** Note: J Street in particular is generally considered more dovish/ pro-diplomacy than AIPAC — lumping all three together as equivalent would misrepresent the underlying groups' actual positions.	■ **PRO-ISRAEL PAC (not AIPAC) — judgment call**
Small donors — 95% under $100	Over $34.9 million total contributions through June 2026. Donors in all 100 NC counties.	**CLEAN**
Senate Majority PAC (Democrat)	$32 million committed to Cooper's race. This is outside money — not from Cooper's campaign directly.	**NOTE**
		NOTE

Total raised (through Q2 2026)	~$35 million raised, ~$20.7 million cash on hand — outpacing Whatley roughly 3-to-1.	

AIPAC MONEY: **NO DIRECT AIPAC $ FOUND** — $132,025 from other pro-Israel PACs (DMFI, JAC, J Street), including from J Street, a group generally distinct in stance from AIPAC. Whether this counts under the framework's AIPAC flag is a call for Uma.

BILLIONAIRE / DARK MONEY: **NO MAJOR RED FLAGS** — 95% small-dollar grassroots funding remains the clearest money signal in this race.

> **ARCHITECT ANALYSIS — ROY COOPER (updated):** Cooper's grassroots fundraising advantage holds up under Session 2 scrutiny — it's real and it's large. The pro-Israel PAC money ($132K) is worth naming honestly rather than either hiding it or inflating it into an "AIPAC-funded" claim that the numbers don't actually support. J Street's inclusion in that total matters — treating it identically to AIPAC money would blur a real distinction that a credibility-first archive should preserve.

STATUS: SESSION 2 UPDATE COMPLETE for money data. AIPAC-flag classification is pending Uma's decision on scope (literal AIPAC only vs. broader pro-Israel PAC category). Expected to be among the most expensive Senate races in US history — outside spending continues to escalate.

CHANGELOG (Session 2, August 2026):
— Cooper AIPAC status: PENDING → specific figure found ($132,025, non-AIPAC pro-Israel PACs); flag classification open pending framework decision
— Whatley AIPAC status: PENDING → specific figure found ($26,156, non-AIPAC pro-Israel PACs); flag classification open pending framework decision
— Updated fundraising totals for both candidates through Q2 2026
— Added framework question banner distinguishing "AIPAC dollars" from "pro-Israel PAC dollars" for Uma's decision

"I don't tell you how to vote. I give you the X-ray. You decide."
— Uma | PixelMagic / MindTraveler | People Over Party