

THE INFORMED DEMOCRAT OF SWFL



February 2026

U.S. House of Representatives

The urgent need to reclaim the House of Representatives has inspired several candidates in our area to run. Below are two candidates for District 17 and two for District 19.

District 17

Matthew Montavon – Determined to Flip District 17



My name is Matthew Montavon. I am a Sarasota resident and lifelong public servant. I believe that Southwest Florida deserves a representative who will serve the people's interests and bring accountability and accessibility to Congress—as opposed to Greg Steube who refuses to hold public forums and blindly follows Trump. Steube's in his fourth unproductive term. It's past time for him to go.

With degrees in political science and public administration, I have worked in government service and with organizations including the Illinois Migrant Council, Peace Corps and the United Nations. At the U.N., I served in a leadership role with the Food and Agriculture Organization, combating world poverty and hunger.

For the past seven years, I have volunteered with AARP to provide free tax assistance to seniors at Sarasota County Libraries. I was a founding member of the Immigration Justice Coalition of Southwest Florida, a leading advocate for closing ICE's Everglades detention center and an advocate for immigration justice.

In addition to immigration reform, my priorities include defending our democracy and working for affordability. I will focus on building an economy for all, expanding access to healthcare (including women's reproductive rights), safeguarding Social Security and Medicare, protecting the environment, gun safety, and defending voting and civil rights.

I have been a lifelong Democrat committed to Democratic principles. I have volunteered and donated since high school and have held party positions of responsibility.

I am an experienced, hardworking, dedicated and compassionate advocate for our national well-being and I care deeply about our community. I will passionately represent the interests of FL Congressional District 17 and will be on the ground representing my constituents.

Please support my campaign toward victory in November.
For more information, visit www.MontavonForCongress.com.

Results, Not Retribution. Why I'm Running for the US House



My name is Allen Spence, and Southwest Florida isn't just a district on a map to me, it is the place that helped shape who I am. From walking the halls of Fort Myers High School to meeting my wife at the Publix on Hancock Bridge Parkway in North Fort Myers, some of my life's most important milestones have happened right here. Today, I am a proud father and a Scoutmaster for my son's Scouting America troop in Punta Gorda, where I work to instill the values of character and leadership in the next generation.

I am running for Congress because I see those values, and our local economy, under threat by a "campaign of retribution" that prioritizes political theater over the prosperity of our

families. We can do better by focusing on economic prosperity for the people of Sarasota, Charlotte and Lee counties.

Economic Expertise

I am not a career politician; I have a degree in Economics and am a finance professional with over 20 years of experience. I understand how money moves, how markets fail, and how policy affects your bottom line. My career has been defined by building things that work, including my time at a fast-paced startup, where I helped scale the business from the ground up. I know what it takes to create jobs, manage growth, and navigate complex financial landscapes.

I am running to bring that "start-up" energy and economic discipline to Washington. We don't need more rhetoric; we need a representative who understands that inflation, tariffs, and debt are not just talking points, they are barriers to the American Dream.

Northstars

1. Ending the Trump-Steube Tariff Tax: When studying economics I learned about tariffs and I know that Trump's tariffs act as a massive sales tax on our local families and small businesses.
2. Securing Social Security and Medicare: My finance background gives me a clear-eyed view of how to protect these programs to ensure solvency. We can buy 20 years of solvency by just removing the wage cap. If you earn more than \$176,000 you should pay social security tax on the amount you earn over \$176,000.
3. Investing in People, Not Prisons: I am committed to stopping the expansion of the "police state" and the wasteful spending that comes with it. I will fight to block the \$600 million earmarked for building the unnecessary prison in the Everglades. That money belongs in our classrooms, investing in education and the future of our children, rather than in a project that threatens our environment and our civil liberties.

A Campaign for All of Us

I am a husband, a scoutmaster, with a finance and economic background who believes that America's best days are ahead of us if we choose leadership over grievance. I invite you to join me at spence2026.com as we build a campaign focused on prosperity, integrity, and the community we call home.

District 19

Victor Arias for US Congress



Victor Arias is the Managing Attorney at Arias Law Firm, P.A. and a member of the Florida Bar. He has been practicing law for over 36 years and currently practices law in the areas of Personal Injury Law, Workers' Compensation, and School Law. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Hamilton College, and his Juris Doctorate degree from State University of New York at Buffalo. He has been married to his wife Angelette for 32 years, and they have two children, Ariana and Victor who are attending Universities.

Candidate Arias has been a member of Covenant Presbyterian Church since 1999 where he has served as an Elder and also is an active member of the Board of Trustees.

In addition to practicing law, he is actively involved in public service by working with several organizations and programs to assist diverse members of the community. He has been a large financial and public service supporter and humanitarian for educational programs that support elementary, middle, and high school students throughout southwest Florida.

Candidate Arias also volunteered for six years as a member of the Board of Directors for Suncoast Credit Union. In that role, he used his knowledge and experience to provide expertise on issues involving interest rates, mergers, acquisitions and investments. For 6 years, Candidate Arias attended Governmental Affairs Conferences where he met with US Congressmen and women to discuss financial well-being of residents in SW Florida.

Candidate Arias is a proud graduate and member of Leadership Florida, Class XIII, Leadership Lee County, Leadership Cape Coral, and Leadership Estero.

Candidate Arias has been a consistent supporter of programs offered by the Hispanic American Business Alliance (HABA), since 2009, led by Mr. Leonardo Garcia, President, and Founder of HABA. The mission of

HABA programs is to provide educational opportunities for children in elementary school, middle school, high school, and college by providing school backpacks each year, and other school supplies.

Candidate Arias has assisted in opening up his law firm to students to provide the opportunity for students to experience a professional office setting for college and career readiness. Candidate Arias has also supported the Amigos Center, and various for profit and non-profit businesses through the Greater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce, Cape Coral Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Commerce of Estero, and Collier County, Florida.

Howard Sapp for US Congress



A native of Ft. Myers FL, I have a great love for my city and community. As a retired Air Traffic Controller for over 30 years, I bring a strong sense of leadership and no fear to make tough decisions. Keeping people safe is what I did with passion and love and doing the right thing even when no one is looking continues to be a part of my foundational makeup.

As a husband, a father, a grandfather (pa-pa), a community leader and an ordained minister I understand that people matter. No matter their differences it does not change or negate their rights. Everyone deserves to be represented and heard. As a candidate for US Congress, I am ready to work with all representatives no matter what party they represent. With a plan to move the tough issues forward my fundamental beliefs in my faith, my love for all people, and my commitment to Honesty, Integrity, Accountability is NOT for sale. These are the character traits I teach as a parent, an uncle, and a minister of the gospel of Christ. I am a firm believer in the phrase “practice what you preach” therefore I do every day.

What I want everyone to know about me is that I am approachable, I will always be honest with you even if it's not what you may want to hear and I will fight for what's right with my whole heart.

I am Howard Sapp, your Democratic candidate for The US House of Representatives District 19. Let's win together. Website: [HSapp4Congress.com](https://www.HSapp4Congress.com).