

GUNS ON THE BALLOT: KIGGANS V SMASAL IN VA-02

JEN KIGGANS (R, INCUMBENT) VS. MISSY COTTER SMASAL (D)



Photo by Tim Baker/Herald

The election for Virginia’s 2nd Congressional District is set to be one of the most competitive in the country this November, and gun safety is on the ballot. In VA-02, incumbent Rep. Jen Kiggans has consistently voted against gun safety laws and received significant support from the gun lobby. Missy Cotter Smasal, who is challenging Kiggans, has a strong record of supporting gun violence prevention measures. Smasal [narrowly lost](#) to Kiggans in 2022, setting the stage for a highly anticipated rematch in 2024. With the balance of power in Congress potentially at stake, the outcome of this contest could shape the future of gun legislation across the country.

REP. KIGGANS IS AN NRA-ENDORSED AND FUNDED CANDIDATE WITH EXTREMIST VIEWS ON THE SECOND AMENDMENT.

- As a Virginia State Senator, she received an [“A” rating from the NRA](#) and voted against various gun safety measures.
- The Gun Lobby has donated \$21,301.06 to Jen Kiggans, including \$6,950 in [NRA Direct Support](#) and \$8,467 in [NRA Independent Support](#).

REP. KIGGANS HAS A HISTORY OF SUPPORTING LEGISLATION THAT PRIORITIZES THE GUN LOBBY OVER SAFER COMMUNITIES.

- She voted for [H.J.Res.44](#), which would have [repealed](#) President Biden’s Executive Order outlawing the use of firearm stabilizing braces, which have been used to circumvent regulations and transform pistols into more lethal short-barreled rifles.
- Rep. Kiggans has also demonstrated a consistently poor voting record against Veterans, a community disproportionately impacted by firearm suicide, [voting](#) to cut the Department of Veteran Affairs budget by 22%.
- During her time as a State Senator, she has voted against establishing [gun-free zones](#) on school board property, against the prohibition of [possessing a firearm](#) within 40 feet of a polling place, against [increasing waiting periods](#) on firearm purchases, and against prohibiting those subjected to a protective order from [possessing firearms](#).

CHALLENGER MISSY COTTER SMASAL IS A FORMER U.S. NAVY SURFACE WARFARE OFFICER, SMALL BUSINESS OWNER, AND GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION ADVOCATE.

- In her [2019](#) State Senate campaign, she made gun violence prevention a central issue and [said](#) she would not be “bullied” by the gun lobby.



- Smasal created a “locked doors” [petition](#) to improve school safety and ensure children don’t have to fear violence in their schools.

THE STAKES FOR VIRGINIA THIS NOVEMBER ARE HIGH: EVERY EIGHT HOURS, SOMEONE IN VIRGINIA IS KILLED BY GUN VIOLENCE.

- Each year, 1,160 people in Virginia are killed by gun violence, including 55 children.
- Virginia has the 15th lowest rate of firearm mortality in the country, but the firearm suicide rate is 5.5% higher than the national average.