

NEW HANOVER COUNTY COMMISSIONER LEANN PIERCE (R)

In 2026, New Hanover County Commissioner LeAnn Pierce is running for reelection. New Hanover County Republican Party Chair John Hinnant has described Pierce as “wildly popular among Republicans” and “one of the most solid conservative politicians in New Hanover County.” Pierce was first elected to the Board in 2022, garnering the highest vote count out of four candidates. During her tenure, she has served as the board’s vice chair and chair. Prior to running for the county board, Pierce served eight years on the Carolina Beach Town Council. For two of the eight years, she was also mayor of Carolina Beach. Pierce began her career in public service with stints on the New Hanover County Tourism Development Board of Directors, the Town of Carolina Beach Planning and Zoning Commission, and Carolina Beach’s Boardwalk Makeover Group. New Hanover County, which is home to the city of Wilmington, has recently gained national attention as a [political bellwether](#), having flipped blue in 2020 after voting for Republican presidents for 44 years. (The county narrowly voted for Kamala Harris over Donald Trump in 2024.) New Hanover County’s largest voting block is Unaffiliated (42%), followed by Republicans (29%), and Democrats (27%).

Key Findings:

Pierce defended the unveiling of Joseph Ryder Lewis Jr. Civil War Park, arguing that the park would teach future generations about history. Joseph Ryder Lewis Jr. Civil War Park was built on land donated by its namesake with the condition it be turned into a park that preserved and highlighted the site’s significance to the Confederacy’s effort to hold off Union soldiers. Pierce said there were discussions about tying the new park to the Civil War in name over concerns it might overshadow its preservation mission, but ultimately the town decided to honor Lewis jr. and his family’s request to not hide the site’s Civil War history. Pierce said “my stance, and I know everyone might not agree, is that if we erase history, how are we going to teach future generations about it? With this park, future generations can actually see this history in person and learn from it. There is so much history here.” According to Elaine Henson, president of the Federal Point Historical Preservation Society, the project had been in the works for more than eight years, predating the 2020-era national conversation about how Civil War history was preserved.

Pierce cites her experience running a small business, despite potential criticism of the hotel’s operations. On her campaign website, Pierce claimed that thirty years of running a small business, managing budgets, and leading employees prepared her to serve as a mayor and Chair of the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners. Pierce owned Drifter’s Reef Hotel in Carolina Beach for 30 years before selling and retiring in 2024. The hotel’s [online reviews](#) from this period include a number of bad experiences, including claims of bed bugs, cockroaches, and general uncleanness. In 2015, a man was sentenced for kidnapping and raping a woman at Drifters Reef Motel. According to news reports, hotel guests heard the victim’s screams and called 911. Carolina Beach police officers kicked in the door of the room and found the victim. In March 2020, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Pierce laid off all of her hotel employees. She said “in 25 years of business, we have been through hurricanes and all kinds of things, but I've never had to lay off all my [hotel] employees like I did last week.”

Pierce, an owner of several properties, repeatedly voted against housing proposals in New Hanover County, despite acknowledging the lack of affordable housing. In 2024, Pierce voted against a proposal to rezone a property to allow a townhome development, citing density concerns. A month later, Pierce voted against a proposed rezoning for an apartment complex on Carolina Beach Road, citing density and traffic concerns. The same year, Pierce voted against proposed guidelines for infill development, expressing concerns that the guidelines could put developers and the board at odds

with each other. Due to expected higher density projects, the county’s planning department had proposed guidelines for infill development to the board of commissioners. On her website, Pierce notes that “Affordable workforce housing is a problem in New Hanover County. The desirability to live in New Hanover County and near the beaches has driven property values and rental prices to new heights.” In 2022, she said “The lack of housing for those making less than 60% of the area median income is a serious problem that will require a deliberate plan with long-term strategies.” According to Nexis, a public records aggregator, Pierce owns up to 19 properties in North Carolina, including several in the Carolina Beach area.

Pierce’s top priorities included protecting the environment, lower taxes, and improving education.

On her campaign website, Pierce said clean water would be a priority to her as a commissioner, citing the need to protect “waterways, beaches, as well as the wildlife and the sea life which inhabit them.” Pierce said she believed in “small government and lower taxes.” She argued that county commissioners should work closely with our local school board to ensure the success of our school system and safety of our students. Her website also noted the importance of affordable housing, small businesses, and public safety. Similarly, in 2022, Pierce said the top issues facing New Hanover County were “balancing smart growth with proper infrastructure and open space, lack of affordable housing and issues within our school system.”

2019: Pierce was elected as Carolina Beach’s first female mayor and said she hoped to inspire young girls to aspire to whatever they want to be. After being elected as the first female mayor, Pierce said “I think it is a big deal and I’m glad to be the one who has been able to break that mold, and I hope all the young girls watching will aspire to whatever they want to be.” She claimed, “Woman can be married and they can have families and have children and run businesses, but they can also do other things, too. They can be in politics and they can be mayors and they can do anything that they want to do. There’s no limit.” Pierce was the first in her family to attend college despite being told “little country girls didn’t go to college.”

<u>Potential Attacks Against Pierce</u>
Poor Business Leadership
Racial Insensitivity
Too Conservative

BACKGROUND & BIO

Personal Life

December 2025: Pierce married Hansen Matthews. “LeAnn married Hansen Matthews in December of 2025 and they now have a blended family. LeAnn is the mother of two sons Andrew and Kyle. Andrew, 33, resides in Lisbon, Portugal with his wonderful wife, Ashley. LeAnn is Grandma LeLe to their children Ameilia and Elliot. Kyle, 29, resides in Wilmington.” [electleannpierce.com, accessed [7/6/26](#)]

Pierce is the mother of two sons, Andrew and Kyle, and the grandmother to their children, Ameilia and Elliot. “LeAnn married Hansen Matthews in December of 2025 and they now have a blended family. LeAnn is the mother of two sons Andrew and Kyle. Andrew, 33, resides in Lisbon, Portugal with his wonderful wife, Ashley. LeAnn is Grandma LeLe to their children Ameilia and Elliot. Kyle, 29, resides in Wilmington.” [electleannpierce.com, accessed [7/6/26](#)]

Pierce grew up in Penderlea, a small farming town, where she spent summers working in tobacco fields. “LeAnn grew up in Penderlea, a small farming town in rural Pender County, where she learned the value of community. Pierce spent summers working in the tobacco fields of Pender County while dreaming of something more.”

Education

Pierce was the first in her family to attend college. “She left Pender County at age 17 to become the first in her family to attend college. LeAnn spent her first year at Craven Community College and later transferred to East Carolina University. She obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and became certified in Business and Technical Communications.” [electleannpierce.com, accessed [7/6/26](#)]

Pierce obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from East Carolina University. “She left Pender County at age 17 to become the first in her family to attend college. LeAnn spent her first year at Craven Community College and later transferred to East Carolina University. She obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and became certified in Business and Technical Communications.” [electleannpierce.com, accessed [7/6/26](#)]

- **Pierce attended Craven Community College for one year.** “She left Pender County at age 17 to become the first in her family to attend college. LeAnn spent her first year at Craven Community College and later transferred to East Carolina University. She obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and became certified in Business and Technical Communications.” [electleannpierce.com, accessed [7/6/26](#)]
- **Pierce was certified in Business and Technical Communications.** “She left Pender County at age 17 to become the first in her family to attend college. LeAnn spent her first year at Craven Community College and later transferred to East Carolina University. She obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and became certified in Business and Technical Communications.” [electleannpierce.com, accessed [7/6/26](#)]
- **Growing up, Pierce was told “little country girls didn't go to college.”** “A Pender County native, Pierce learned the value of hard work at a young age. Working summers in the tobacco

field for school clothes, she understood that you had to work hard for what you wanted. Despite being told that ‘little country girls didn't go to college,’ Pierce graduated from East Carolina University with a bachelor's in biology.” [Star-News, 1/1/20]

Career

As of 2013, Pierce owned the Drifter’s Reef Motel in Carolina Beach. “LeAnn Pierce, owner of Drifter's Reef Motel in Carolina Beach, has been appointed to the New Hanover County Tourism Development Board of Directors. Pierce will serve on the board for a three-year term, representing Carolina Beach hotels. She also serves on the Town of Carolina Beach Planning and Zoning Commission and is a member of the Boardwalk Makeover Group.” [Star-News, 3/27/13]

- **Pierce owned Drifter’s Reef Hotel for 30 years before retiring in 2024.** “Pierce returned home and purchased Drifter’s Reef Hotel in Carolina Beach and spent the next 30 years running this small business. In 2024, LeAnn sold the business and retired. She now commits all her time to being a county commissioner.” [electleannpierce.com, accessed [7/6/26](#)]

Since selling her business, Pierce now commits all of her time to being a county commissioner. “Pierce returned home and purchased Drifter’s Reef Hotel in Carolina Beach and spent the next 30 years running this small business. In 2024, LeAnn sold the business and retired. She now commits all her time to being a county commissioner.” [electleannpierce.com, accessed [7/6/26](#)]

Public Service

2013: Pierce was appointed to a three-year term on the New Hanover County Tourism Development Board of Directors, representing Carolina Beach hotels. “LeAnn Pierce, owner of Drifter's Reef Motel in Carolina Beach, has been appointed to the New Hanover County Tourism Development Board of Directors. Pierce will serve on the board for a three-year term, representing Carolina Beach hotels. She also serves on the Town of Carolina Beach Planning and Zoning Commission and is a member of the Boardwalk Makeover Group.” [Star-News, 3/27/13]

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2013: Pierce was elected to the Carolina Beach Town Council, taking the seat occupied by an incumbent with the most votes of any candidate. “Voters also shook up the Carolina Beach Town Council, electing newcomer LeAnn Pierce and former councilman Gary Doetsch to the seats currently occupied by incumbents Jody Smith and Tom Bridges. Pierce, the election's decisive winner, received

873 votes. Doetsch was second with 672, followed by Bridges with 617 and Smith with 506. Challenger Mike Worley received 220 votes, according to unofficial tallies.” [Morning Star, 11/6/13]

2013: The Carolina Beach Town Council selected Pierce to be mayor pro tem, a role that included, among other things, conducting meetings in the mayor's absence. “The new council selected Pierce as its mayor pro tem, a role that includes, among other things, conducting meetings in the mayor's absence.” [Morning Star, 12/11/13]

2017: Pierce was reelected to the Carolina Beach Town Council. “The Carolina Beach mayoral race had two candidates: Joe Benson and Dan Wilcox. Benson won the position with 55 percent and 827 total votes. Only one seat was open for Carolina Beach Town Council and that went to LeAnn Pierce, who earned 22 percent of the vote.” [The Seahawk: University of North Carolina Wilmington, 11/14/17]

2019: Pierce filed to run for mayor of Carolina Beach, saying “I love our beach town and I have a real passion for maintaining that sense of community.” “The first in line, though, was LeAnn Pierce, a Carolina Beach council member who is running to be the town's mayor. She was followed by Zeke Partin, who is vying for one of two aldermen positions in Wrightsville Beach. ‘I love our beach town and I have a real passion for maintaining that sense of community,’ she said.” [Star-News, 7/5/19]

- **2019: Pierce was elected as Carolina Beach’s first female mayor, beating out three other candidates with around 54 percent of the vote.** “History was made in Carolina Beach Tuesday night as voters elected the Pleasure Island town's first female mayor. Voters in Wrightsville Beach also selected a new mayor Tuesday. In Carolina Beach, LeAnn Pierce beat three other candidates for the town's top spot. Pierce, a current town councilwoman, replaces Mayor Joe Benson, who decided not to seek a second four-year term. She also becomes Carolina Beach's first female mayor. Pierce received nearly 54 percent of the vote, according to Tuesday night's unofficial results. Coming in second was Tom Elicson, with 40 percent.” [Star-News, 11/5/19]
 - **Pierce: “I think it is a big deal and I'm glad to be the one who has been able to break that mold, and I hope all the young girls watching will aspire to whatever they want to be.”** “These are the three keys to success as described by the recently elected mayor of Carolina Beach, LeAnn Pierce. On Nov 5, Pierce made history when she became the Pleasure Island beach town's first female mayor, an honor that she is proud of and humbled by. ‘I think it is a big deal and I'm glad to be the one who has been able to break that mold, and I hope all the young girls watching will aspire to whatever they want to be,’ Pierce said.” [Star-News, 1/1/20]

2021: Pierce announced that she would run for Carolina Beach Town Council, instead of seeking re-election to the Carolina Beach Town Council. “The mayor of Carolina Beach announced plans Tuesday to run for a spot on the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners. In a video posted to her Facebook page on Tuesday morning, LeAnn Pierce announced that she will not run for re-election to the Carolina Beach Town Council. Pierce has served on the town council for eight years. She served as mayor for two of those years. Instead, she plans to file to run for a New Hanover County Board of Commissioners seat when her term on the town council ends in December.” [Star-News, 6/29/21]

- **Pierce served on the town council for eight years and served as mayor for two of those years.** “The mayor of Carolina Beach announced plans Tuesday to run for a spot on the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners. In a video posted to her Facebook page on Tuesday morning, LeAnn Pierce announced that she will not run for re-election to the Carolina Beach

Town Council. Pierce has served on the town council for eight years. She served as mayor for two of those years. Instead, she plans to file to run for a New Hanover County Board of Commissioners seat when her term on the town council ends in December.” [Star-News, 6/29/21]

2022: Pierce was elected to the New Hanover County’s Board of Commissioners, narrowly garnering the highest vote count out of four candidates. “New Hanover County's Board of Commissioners is set to get a new member and could see a political shift, following Tuesday's election. Former Carolina Beach mayor LeAnn Pierce, a Republican, won the most votes, taking 27.3% of ballots cast or 47,462 votes overall. Coming in second, Democratic incumbent Rob Zapple received 45,144 votes or 25.97% of the ballots cast. While monitoring results Tuesday night, Pierce said she was surprised at how tight the race was after early voting numbers were reported. She continued watching as votes came in from precincts around the county, waiting for the votes in Carolina Beach to come in -- an area where she knew she'd have strong support. With every precinct reporting late Tuesday night, Pierce came out on top, garnering the highest vote count of the four candidates.” [Star News, 11/9/22]

- **2023: Pierce was the vice chair of New Hanover County’s Board of Commissioners.** “LeAnn Pierce, vice chair of New Hanover County’s Board of Commissioners and a member of the county’s airport authority, called the flight ‘another milestone’ for the airport and thanked Sun Country for their investment.” [Star News, 6/1/23]

2025: Pierce was named the board’s new chair. “Commissioner LeAnn Pierce, who was named the board's new Chair at the top of the meeting, said that preservation is a priority for many residents in the county.” [Star News, 12/19/25]

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Total Contributions (First Quarter 2026)	Total Expenses (First Quarter 2026)	Fund Balance (End of Reporting Period)
\$4,950.00	\$1,067.65	\$56,021.35

[North Carolina State Board of Elections, accessed 7/8/26]

POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

September 2014: Pierce donated \$250 to David Rouzer for Congress. [FEC, accessed [7/8/26](#)]

October 2021: Pierce donated \$500 to David Rouzer for Congress. [FEC, accessed [7/8/26](#)]

February 2022: Pierce donated \$250 to the Pat McCrory Committee. [FEC, accessed [7/8/26](#)]

AFFORDABILITY

2021: Pierce said a community fridge aimed at addressing food insecurity was “a great thought and a need. I just don’t know how you make it safe.” “Town council members supported the project's goal of addressing food insecurity in the community but had questions about its location and other logistics. Mayor Leann Pierce asked Overby-Dosier how she would monitor the safety and quality of food donated to the fridge. ‘I think it's a great thought and a need,’ Pierce said at the February meeting, ‘I just don't know how you make it safe.’” [Star-News, 4/19/21]

BUDGETS & TAXES

Pierce: “I believe in small government and lower taxes.” “I believe in small government and lower taxes. The county should have remained revenue neutral this budget year. Businesses struggled during the pandemic with restrictions and labor shortages. Many residents were out of work and parents were homeschooling due to COVID-19. This is not a time to add the additional burden of a tax increase to our citizens. I believe in being a good steward of your tax dollar and cutting unnecessary expenses. I will stand for transparency and fiscal responsibility as your commissioner.” [electleannpierce.com, accessed [7/6/26](#)]

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After Carolina Beach Town Council has agreed to hike a host of fees to balance the town's 2018-19 budget, Pierce said “This is not something that we can do next year. I think we're at a cap on these.” “The Carolina Beach Town Council has agreed to hike a host of fees to balance the town's 2018-19 budget, which was unanimously passed Tuesday. Fees for parking, trash pickup, registering a golf cart, driving onto Freeman Park and much more all saw increases, which council members said were preferable to a property tax increase. The town's tax rate of 22.5 cents per \$100 of assessed value will remain flat in the budget. For the owner of a \$200,000 home, town property taxes would be \$450. “This is more of a cost-sharing with the people who come here to use the same services we do,” Mayor Joe Benson said during Tuesday night's public hearing to adopt the \$24.5-million spending plan, which goes into effect July 1. But council members warned that the wide-ranging hikes may be a one-time revenue boost to balance the town's budget. ‘This is not something that we can do next year. I think we're at a cap on these,’ Councilwoman LeAnn Pierce said. ‘I feel like we put a Band-Aid on the budget this year.’” [Star-News, 6/13/18]

2020: As mayor of Carolina Beach, Pierce said town leaders would rather have parking fees than raise property taxes, and the extra revenue would go to infrastructure projects around town. “Pierce said leaders would rather have parking fees than raise property taxes, and the extra revenue would go to infrastructure projects around town.” [WNCN, 3/11/20]

Pierce, 2022: “Government that grows using temporary funding is not sustainable. During the pandemic, there have been injections of federal money, which New Hanover County has used to create programs and positions that will need staffing long after the federal dollars expire. Rampant spending increases need to be checked and this pattern risks putting our county into financial trouble.” “Pierce: Government that grows using temporary funding is not sustainable. During the pandemic, there have been injections of federal money, which New Hanover County has used to create programs and positions that will need staffing long after the federal dollars expire. Rampant spending increases need to be checked and this pattern risks putting our county into financial trouble. We are faced with addressing smart, sustainable growth and infrastructure required to support it. Finding

a balance is the key. I will work with commissioners and staff to champion government that is efficient, designed to uphold public safety and not overburden citizens with taxation.” [Star News, 4/26/22]

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Pierce, 2022: “As a small business owner, I have a diligent eye and will watch our county's finances. I believe government should be run like a business, and I know how to do that.” “Pierce: My experience as mayor of Carolina Beach allows me to enter office ready to work. I understand how government works and how long it takes to be successful. I have experience making things happen quickly and efficiently and have built connections with people we must work with for New Hanover County to succeed. Understanding the importance of our beach towns and the revenue they generate, I will bring a perspective to the board that's been missing. As a small business owner, I have a diligent eye and will watch our county's finances. I believe government should be run like a business, and I know how to do that.” [Star News, 4/26/22]

2024: Pierce voted against a rezoning proposal that would allow a new affordable housing project in Castle Hayne. “The New Hanover County Board of Commissioners approved a rezoning that will allow a new 128-unit affordable housing project in Castle Hayne. [...] Ultimately, the New Hanover County Commissioners approved the rezoning with all but one in favor. Bill Rivenbark, Jonathan Barfield Jr., Dane Scalise and Rob Zapple all voted yes, with LeAnn Pierce in opposition.” [Star News, 3/20/24]

2025: Pierce favored a revenue neutral tax rate of 29.2. “Commissioners agreed that the tax rate should be brought down further from the 35-cent rate at a meeting on June 2, but were split on what the new rate would be. Bill Rivenbark, Rob Zapple and Stephanie Walker voiced support for a rate of 33.9, while Dane Scalise and LeAnn Pierce were in favor of the revenue neutral rate of 29.2.” [Star News, 6/4/25]

CONTROVERSIES

March 2020: Pierce laid off all of her hotel employees due to COVID-19. “And Carolina Beach Mayor LeAnn Pierce understands the challenges faced by owners of vacation rentals as the community closes its doors. ‘In 25 years of business, we have been through hurricanes and all kinds of things, but I've never had to lay off all my [hotel] employees like I did last week,’ says Pierce, who owns the town's Drifter's Reef Hotel. As Pierce watched news of the spreading coronavirus, though, she was concerned by a surge of phone calls she received from people from across the country deciding they'd rather quarantine at the beach.” [CNN, 3/29/20]

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the community closes its doors. ‘In 25 years of business, we have been through hurricanes and all kinds of things, but I’ve never had to lay off all my [hotel] employees like I did last week,’ says Pierce, who owns the town’s Drifter’s Reef Hotel. As Pierce watched news of the spreading coronavirus, though, she was concerned by a surge of phone calls she received from people from across the country deciding they’d rather quarantine at the beach.” [CNN, 3/29/20]

2021: In reference to a park named Joseph Ryder Lewis Jr. Civil War Park, Pierce said “my stance, and I know everyone might not agree, is that if we erase history, how are we going to teach future generations about it?” “Carolina Beach Mayor LeAnn Pierce said there were discussions about tying the new park to the Civil War in name over concerns it might overshadow its preservation mission. Ultimately, the town wanted to honor Lewis Jr. and his family’s request to not hide from the site’s Civil War history but rather embrace it as an educational opportunity. ‘My stance, and I know everyone might not agree, is that if we erase history, how are we going to teach future generations about it?’ Pierce said. ‘With this park, future generations can actually see this history in person and learn from it. There is so much history here.’” [Star-News, 2/10/21]

- **Pierce said there were discussions about tying the new park to the Civil War in name over concerns it might overshadow its preservation mission, but ultimately the town decided to honor Lewis Jr. and his family’s request to not hide the site’s Civil War history.** “Carolina Beach Mayor LeAnn Pierce said there were discussions about tying the new park to the Civil War in name over concerns it might overshadow its preservation mission. Ultimately, the town wanted to honor Lewis Jr. and his family’s request to not hide from the site’s Civil War history but rather embrace it as an educational opportunity.” [News & Record, 2/14/21]
- **Joseph Ryder Lewis Jr. Civil War Park was built on land donated by its namesake with the condition it be turned into a park that preserved and highlighted the site’s significance to the Confederacy’s effort to hold off Union soldiers.** “On Thursday, the Town of Carolina Beach and Federal Point Historical Preservation Society will unveil the Joseph Ryder Lewis Jr. Civil War Park, built on land donated by its namesake that features original Sugar Loaf earthworks manned by soldiers during the final days of the War Between the States. Before Lewis Jr.’s passing at age 84 in 2010, the life-long Carolina Beach resident, U.S Army veteran and member of the Federal Point History Center bequeathed the 10-acre patch of land to the town on the condition it be turned into a park that preserved and highlighted the site’s significance to the Confederacy’s effort to hold off Union soldiers as Fort Fisher became threatened in 1865.” [Star News, 2/10/21]
- **According to Elaine Henson, president of the Federal Point Historical Preservation Society, the project had been in the works for more than eight years, predating the 2020-era national conversation about how Civil War history was preserved.** “Henson said the project has been in the works for more than eight years, predating the current national conversation about how Civil War history is promoted and preserved following high-profile instances of racial injustice last year.” [Star News, 2/10/21]

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Pierce said she was not in favor of Carolina Beach extending paid parking to year-round, saying it was “a bad decision for the business owners.” “Mayor LeAnn Pierce agreed. Pierce owns Drifters Reef Hotel in Carolina Beach and said not having paid parking is one way the town attracts visitors during slow off-seasons. ‘I’m not in favor of year-round parking,’ Pierce said. ‘I think that’s just a bad

decision for the business owners.’ But other members of the council pointed out that private parking lots are allowed to charge for parking year-round, so town lots should charge, too. Mayor-elect Lynn Barbee said he supports the uniformity the change could bring to parking in Carolina Beach. Extending the paid parking season is expected to bring in an estimated \$65,000 in revenue, Ed Parvin, Carolina Beach assistant town manager, told council members. Pierce and council member JoDan Garza voted against extending paid parking while Jay Healy, Steve Shuttleworth and Barbee voted for the measure.” [Star-News, 11/30/21]

2015: A man was sentenced for kidnapping and raping a woman at Drifters Reef Motel, which was owned by Pierce. “A Duplin County man is headed to prison after pleading guilty to raping and kidnapping a 24-year-old woman in Carolina Beach in March. According to a news release, John Thomas Barnette, 49, pleaded guilty to second-degree rape and kidnapping in New Hanover County Superior Court Thursday. A jury trial was scheduled for Monday, Oct. 12. Barnette will serve a minimum of 22 years in prison and will have to register as a sex offender upon release and will be required to wear GPS-monitoring equipment for the rest of his life. On March 21, 2015, Barnette held the victim against her will at the Drifters Reef Motel on North Lake Park Boulevard in Carolina Beach. As Barnette raped the woman, hotel guests heard the victim's screams and pleas for him to let her go. Barnette placed a pillow over the woman's face when the guests began to bang on the door to stop the attack. The guests heard the victim's muffled screams and then called 911. Carolina Beach police officers kicked in the door and found the victim crawling on the floor towards them.” [WECT, [10/8/15](#)]

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ELECTIONS & BALLOT ACCESS

Pierce criticized the County Board of Elections’ decision to only allow one early voting location in July 2025 and affirmed she believes in democracy.



LeAnn Pierce

July 27 · 🌐

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For those of you calling and emailing me about the Board of Elections irresponsible decision to only allow only one early voting location, I agree with you 100%. The county commission increased their budget over last year by \$344,000, built a 7000 square-foot facility at the cost of \$5.6 million taxpayer dollars and yet they still cannot run a low turnout election with more than one early voting location? I believe every citizen deserves the right to vote, I believe in transparency and I believe in democracy.



[Facebook, accessed, 9/12/2025]

September 2014: Pierce donated \$250 to David Rouzer for Congress. [FEC, accessed [7/8/26](#)]

October 2021: Pierce donated \$500 to David Rouzer for Congress. [FEC, accessed [7/8/26](#)]

Rouzer announced that he would object to the certification of electoral votes from several states, citing concerns about the integrity of the election. “Congressman David Rouzer (NC-07) today issued the following statement: ‘I will be among those objecting to the Electoral College votes of several states January 6th. When more than a third of the American public — including 17% of Democrats based on a recent Reuters poll — do not believe in the integrity of the election, truth and transparency deserve to be heard,’ said Congressman David Rouzer. ‘When there are wide-spread and grave concerns, I do not believe our Founders intended Congress to be an automatic rubber stamp of approval of a state’s votes. Election integrity is a foundational matter that needs to be ensured.’” [[David Rouzer](#), Press Release, 1/4/2021]

Rouzer joined other House Republicans in voting to sustain objections to electoral college votes on January 6, 2021. “Congressman David Rouzer (NC-07) today issued the following statement: ‘I will be among those objecting to the Electoral College votes of several states January 6th. When more than a third of the American public — including 17% of Democrats based on a recent Reuters poll — do not believe in the integrity of the election, truth and transparency deserve to be heard,’ said Congressman David Rouzer. ‘When there are wide-spread and grave concerns, I do not believe our Founders intended Congress to be an automatic rubber stamp of approval of a state’s votes. Election integrity is a foundational matter that needs to be ensured.’” [[David Rouzer](#), Press Release, 1/4/2021]

Rouzer has been identified by election-monitoring organizations as an election denier.

5 ELECTION DENIERS *are sitting* MEMBERS OF CONGRESS *right now.*

Election Deniers make up **31 percent** of North Carolina's 16-member Congressional delegation. Members of Congress have a public platform to build up or tear down trust in our elections. And they have concrete responsibilities, too, such as determining federal funding for elections.

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R Greg Murphy

REPRESENTATIVE of NORTH CAROLINA, DISTRICT 3

Term started 2025

Term ends 2027

ELECTION DENIER

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R Virginia Foxx

REPRESENTATIVE of NORTH CAROLINA, DISTRICT 5

Term started 2025

Term ends 2027

ELECTION DENIER

[Expand](#) ↓

[Expand](#) ↓



R David Rouzer

REPRESENTATIVE of NORTH CAROLINA, DISTRICT 7

Term started 2025

Term ends 2027

ELECTION DENIER

[Expand](#) ↓

[[Election Deniers](#), accessed, 7/20/2026]

DEI

2025: Pierce called to eliminate the county's DEI office to save money. “On today’s show, I’m sitting down with Republican New Hanover County Commissioner LeAnn Pierce about her thoughts and goals as the county’s budget negotiations move forward. We asked Pierce, vice-chair of the Board of Commissioners, about her thoughts on where the tax rate should go — and ways to make the county more efficient, including calls to eliminate DEI and have The Endowment step in to support some previously county-funded programs.” [[WHQR](#), 9/12/2025]

EDUCATION

Pierce: “County commissioners must work closely with our local school board to ensure the success of our school system and safety of our students.” “Children are our future. County commissioners must work closely with our local school board to ensure the success of our school system and safety of our students. This is a priority to me and I am committed to working with school board members to find solutions.” [electleannpierce.com, accessed [7/6/26](#)]

Pierce said the district's students “deserve classrooms worthy of their potential.” “Board of Commissioners Chair LeAnn Pierce said that the district's students ‘deserve classrooms worthy of their potential.’” [Star News, 5/28/26]

ENVIRONMENT

Pierce: “Clean water is essential to all citizens and will be a top priority for me as commissioner. Those who pollute our waters should be fined and held accountable.” “Clean water is essential to all citizens and will be a top priority for me as commissioner. Those who pollute our waters should be fined and held accountable. Our environment is a treasure which we must protect. I believe in the

protection of our waterways, beaches, as well as the wildlife and the sea life which inhabit them. I will support the reduction of single use plastics and I believe in recycling programs. I believe in balanced tree preservation programs. We all deserve to live in a clean environment.” [electleannpierce.com, accessed [7/6/26](#)]

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2018: Pierce said she wanted to see a full dredge of the bottom of Carolina Beach Lake. “The town may resume its stalled project to dredge the bottom of Carolina Beach Lake after the town council decided Tuesday night to finish the job. ‘I personally want to see the full dredge,’ Mayor Pro Tem Leann Pierce said before the council voted to proceed at Tuesday night's meeting. The original project would have dredged the lake to a depth of up to 8 feet -- most of it was about 18 inches deep -- to provide more room for stormwater during heavy rains and prevent algae blooms.” [Star-News, 7/10/18]

2023: Pierce said balancing environmental, economic and political considerations when faced with a disappearing beach is a “complicated animal,” but the issue is a lot more than just safeguarding oceanfront property owners. “LeAnn Pierce is vice chair of the New Hanover County Commissioners. She also is the former mayor of Carolina Beach, and owns Drifters Reef Hotel in the beach town. While Pierce said balancing environmental, economic and political considerations when faced with a disappearing beach is a ‘complicated animal,’ she said the issue is a lot more than just safeguarding oceanfront property owners. ‘It's not only protecting homes and infrastructure, it's protecting the local economy and the local jobs in these communities,’ she said. ‘If there's no beach for the tourists to come to, they aren't going to come, and then you have a real economic disaster.’” [Star News, 6/27/23]

- **Pierce: “If there's no beach for the tourists to come to, they aren't going to come, and then you have a real economic disaster.”** “LeAnn Pierce is vice chair of the New Hanover County Commissioners. She also is the former mayor of Carolina Beach, and owns Drifters Reef Hotel in the beach town. While Pierce said balancing environmental, economic and political considerations when faced with a disappearing beach is a ‘complicated animal,’ she said the issue is a lot more than just safeguarding oceanfront property owners. ‘It's not only protecting homes and infrastructure, it's protecting the local economy and the local jobs in these communities,’ she said. ‘If there's no beach for the tourists to come to, they aren't going to come, and then you have a real economic disaster.’” [Star News, 6/27/23]

Pierce on abandoned boats: “That is something that endangers other boaters, it endangers wildlife and the waterways and is something that is really important that we clean that up.”

“Commissioner LeAnn Pierce, who is a former mayor of Carolina Beach, said the community has had issues with abandoned vessels for years. ‘That is something that endangers other boaters, it endangers wildlife and the waterways and is something that is really important that we clean that up,’ Pierce said.” [Star News, 5/30/24]

Pierce: “We have decided that what we want to do is preserve open space and green space and mitigate some of the building that is going on in New Hanover County. This is the only way we can do it is by buying that property when it becomes available to us.” ‘We have decided that what we want to do is preserve open space and green space and mitigate some of the building that is going on in New Hanover County,’ Pierce said. ‘This is the only way we can do it is by buying that property when it becomes available to us.’” [Star News, 12/19/25]

ETHICS & GOOD GOVERNMENT

No findings identified.

HEALTHCARE

March 2020: While serving as mayor, Pierce announced the town was closing its beaches and park in the wake of COVID-19, saying “we are still pushing prepare, don't panic, but we need the ability to protect you.” “The Carolina Beach Town Council declared a state of emergency Friday afternoon during an emergency meeting at the Town Council Chambers. ‘We are still pushing prepare, don't panic, but we need the ability to protect you,’ Carolina Beach Mayor LeAnn Pierce said during the meeting. Later in the meeting, Pierce announced that Carolina Beach was also closing its beaches, town parking lots and Freeman Park to the public.” [Star-News, 3/20/20]

2020: As Pierce watched news of the spreading COVID-19, she was concerned by a surge of phone calls she received from people from across the country deciding they'd rather quarantine at the beach. “And Carolina Beach Mayor LeAnn Pierce understands the challenges faced by owners of vacation rentals as the community closes its doors. ‘In 25 years of business, we have been through hurricanes and all kinds of things, but I've never had to lay off all my [hotel] employees like I did last week,’ says Pierce, who owns the town's Drifter's Reef Hotel. As Pierce watched news of the spreading coronavirus, though, she was concerned by a surge of phone calls she received from people from across the country deciding they'd rather quarantine at the beach.” [CNN, 3/29/20]

- **Pierce: “My council believes that the only way to defeat the virus is to flatten the curve, and we're following the CDC guidelines. We're 6,500 year-round people in our community, and in the summertime we get 30-40,000. We can't manage that number of people in a pandemic.”** “‘My council believes that the only way to defeat the virus is to flatten the curve, and we're following the CDC guidelines,’ says Pierce. ‘We're 6,500 year-round people in our community, and in the summertime we get 30-40,000. We can't manage that number of people in a pandemic.’” [CNN, 3/29/20]

April 2020: After protests calling for a reopening, Pierce said “our current beach strand closure remains in effect” but that “we hope to implement some type of soft or tiered opening as soon as possible.” “Friday afternoon, Carolina Beach Mayor LeAnn Pierce sent out a letter saying ‘our current beach strand closure remains in effect’ but that ‘we hope to implement some type of soft or tiered

opening as soon as possible.’ Protesters in Carolina Beach on Friday called for the beach there to reopen. [Star-News, 4/17/20]

April 2020: Pierce announced a partial reopening of the beach, allowing only walking, jogging, swimming, and surfing/watersports. “After a month of closure, Carolina Beach will partially reopen its beach Monday for exercise purposes. The move comes less than a week after Wrightsville Beach’s partial re-opening, and mirrors its conditions. ‘This will be the first step in slowly rolling back into our new normal,’ said Carolina Beach Mayor LeAnn Pierce. ‘It will give our staff the opportunity to enforce the beach strand but abide by the Governor’s stay at home order, which has just been extended to May 8.’ In Carolina Beach, only ‘walking, jogging, swimming, and surfing/watersports will be allowed.’” [Star-News, 4/23/20]

April 2020: Pierce said “restaurants and parking lots are closed because we don’t want to attract tourists from everywhere.” “‘Restaurants and parking lots are closed because we don’t want to attract tourists from everywhere,’ said Pierce, adding that police, fire and ocean rescue departments are enforcing the partial re-opening.” [Star-News, 4/23/20]

HOUSING

Pierce: “Affordable workforce housing is a problem in New Hanover County. The desirability to live in New Hanover County and near the beaches has driven property values and rental prices to new heights.” “Affordable workforce housing is a problem in New Hanover County. The desirability to live in New Hanover County and near the beaches has driven property values and rental prices to new heights. Bringing higher paying jobs with a more sustainable living wage will help address our workforce housing needs. Government must also partner with the private sector and our state partners to address this issue.” [electleannpierce.com, accessed [7/6/26](#)]

- **Pierce: “Bringing higher paying jobs with a more sustainable living wage will help address our workforce housing needs. Bringing higher paying jobs with a more sustainable living wage will help address our workforce housing needs.”** “Affordable workforce housing is a problem in New Hanover County. The desirability to live in New Hanover County and near the beaches has driven property values and rental prices to new heights. Bringing higher paying jobs with a more sustainable living wage will help address our workforce housing needs. Bringing higher paying jobs with a more sustainable living wage will help address our workforce housing needs.” [electleannpierce.com, accessed [7/6/26](#)]

Pierce, 2022: “The lack of housing for those making less than 60% of the area median income is a serious problem that will require a deliberate plan with long-term strategies.” “Pierce: The lack of housing for those making less than 60% of the area median income is a serious problem that will require a deliberate plan with long-term strategies. The best way to improve this situation is to organically raise wages by attracting more businesses and providing more opportunities for residents. This is a supply and demand issue. The many nonprofits in New Hanover County know better than local government how to produce good outcomes. I plan to engage with outside organizations to address problems like homelessness, affordable housing and public transportation, rather than feeding the growth of government bureaucracy.” [Star News, 4/26/22]

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is a serious problem that will require a deliberate plan with long-term strategies. The best way to improve this situation is to organically raise wages by attracting more businesses and providing more opportunities for residents. This is a supply and demand issue. The many nonprofits in New Hanover County know better than local government how to produce good outcomes. I plan to engage with outside organizations to address problems like homelessness, affordable housing and public transportation, rather than feeding the growth of government bureaucracy.” [Star News, 4/26/22]

2022: Pierce said “We can only grow with the proper infrastructure to support it. If we are to navigate out of the affordable housing crisis, we must find creative housing options that also preserve our county’s natural character and beauty.” “As the county’s population climbs, how will you approach managing this growth? Pierce: We can only grow with the proper infrastructure to support it. If we are to navigate out of the affordable housing crisis, we must find creative housing options that also preserve our county’s natural character and beauty. New Hanover County has become such a desirable place to live because of this character. We need creative housing options in the locations that make sense, not in places where the traffic infrastructure is already strained. As new housing units are built, it must be a priority to make sure our roads and utility infrastructure are ready for that growth.” [Star News, 10/16/22]

2024: Pierce voted against a proposal to rezone a property to allow a townhome development, citing density concerns. “A proposed townhome development in the Seabreeze area of New Hanover County is inching closer to reality. In September 2023, the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners voted to rezone the property, and now the county's Technical Review Committee is set to review site plans at its July 3 meeting. Seabreeze Cottages will bring 46 multi-family townhomes to 7641, 7645 and 7647 Carolina Beach Road. The proposed development will be situated on about 7 acres of land between South Seabreeze Road and Roscoe Freeman Avenue right before crossing Snow's Cut Bridge onto Pleasure Island. During the rezoning process, LeAnn Pierce, vice chairwoman of the board of commissioners, and Commissioner Rob Zapple opposed the change citing density concerns, according to previous reporting from the StarNews.” [Star News, 6/24/24]

2024: Pierce voted against a proposed rezoning for an apartment complex, citing density and traffic concerns. “An applicant withdrew a proposed rezoning for an apartment complex on Carolina Beach Road after the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners pushed back on the proposal for a second time. The proposed Palm Grove multi-family residential rental community was proposed for a little over 4.5 acres of vacant land at 6634 Carolina Beach Road. The site plan included six multi-story apartment buildings with a total of 64 units. [...] Board members Dane Scalise, Rob Zapple and LeAnn Pierce voted in opposition before Wolf decided to withdraw the application. [...] Pierce, who was previously mayor of Carolina Beach, described the traffic as ‘horrendous,’ and to increase density and increase the people in that section of Carolina Beach Road would be a concern.” [Star News, 7/31/24]

2024: Pierce voted against proposed guidelines for infill development, expressing concerns that the guidelines could put developers and the board at odds with each other. “For some New Hanover County residents, growth and development may seem overwhelming, while some may welcome it. But one thing is certain, the growth is coming and the county is trying to address it. With more proposals coming in for higher density projects next to single-family homes, the county's planning department recently presented proposed guidelines for infill development to the board of commissioners. [...] Vice Chairwoman LeAnn Pierce expressed concerns that the guidelines could put developers and the board at odds with each other. ‘My concern there, is if they (developers) go by the document and we don't approve it, then they're still upset because they thought they did what they were told to do,’ she said.” [Star News, 8/5/24]

2024: Pierce said it would be good to fix blighted properties around the county instead of just new builds. “Commissioner Dane Scalise said he hopes the county will collectively prioritize projects with adaptive reuse and rehabilitation projects in the future. Vice Chairwoman LeAnn Pierce agreed, saying it would be good to fix blighted properties around the county instead of just new builds.” [Star News, 10/15/24]

2025: Pierce expressed support for including workforce housing requirements as a condition of approval of new developments. “Commissioner LeAnn Pierce expressed support for including workforce housing requirements as a condition of approval of new developments. While affordability was a point of discussion during hearings for the two residential projects presented at the meeting, no additional affordability requirements were added. The projects will bring a combined 152 townhomes to the county, with price estimates hovering around \$375,000.” [Star News, 8/15/25]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Pierce: “We must preserve areas for future generations to enjoy the outdoors of our great county. I will support parks, bike paths, multiuse paths and connectivity around our county.” “Planning for parks and open space is essential to a growing New Hanover County. We must preserve areas for future generations to enjoy the outdoors of our great county. I will support parks, bike paths, multiuse paths and connectivity around our county. The ability to enjoy a clean healthy lifestyle is crucial to the citizens of New Hanover County.” [electleannpierce.com, accessed [7/6/26](#)]

2013: Pierce said she supported the use of terminal groins on a “case-by-case basis” and believed it should be a last resort. “Beach town candidates in the upcoming November elections have varied opinions on terminal groins and other erosion control structures, according to the results of an environmental questionnaire released earlier this month by the Surfrider Foundation's Cape Fear chapter. [...] Gary Doetch and LeAnn Pierce, both candidates for town council, said they supported the use of the structures, with several conditions. ‘I can support (it) on a case-by-case basis,’ Pierce said. ‘I do believe these options should be used as a last resort.’” [Morning Star, 10/28/13]

Pierce on Carolina Beach’s increased parking revenue in 2014: “I think investing our increased revenues back in our parking is a great idea cause we need to improve our parking everywhere we can.” “‘I think investing our increased revenues back in our parking is a great idea cause we need to improve our parking everywhere we can,’ said Mayor Pro Tem LeAnn Pierce.” [Morning Star, 3/14/15]

2023: Pierce opposed New Hanover County’s eminent domain case to seize a strip club to build more parking. “North Carolina strip club patrons might not be able to touch the dancers, but nothing stops the government from seizing the building they work in. That's the revealing truth in an eminent domain case out of Wilmington, North Carolina, where the New Hanover County government (which contains Wilmington) is trying to seize the neighboring Cheetah Premier Gentlemen's Club to build what it claims is much-needed parking. [...] New Hanover County Commissioner LeAnn Pierce has come out against the use of eminent domain in this case. ‘I'm an advocate for private property rights. Eminent domain, in this case, is not something that I would be in favor of, and it absolutely should be a last resort at any time,’ Pierce told the local Fox station.” [Reason Magazine, 11/22/23]

- **Pierce: “I'm an advocate for private property rights. Eminent domain, in this case, is not something that I would be in favor of, and it absolutely should be a last resort at any time.”** “New Hanover County Commissioner LeAnn Pierce has come out against the use of eminent

domain in this case. ‘I’m an advocate for private property rights. Eminent domain, in this case, is not something that I would be in favor of, and it absolutely should be a last resort at any time,’ Pierce told the local Fox station.” [Reason Magazine, 11/22/23]

2024: Pierce said the county should encourage developers to build EV chargers, but she felt uncomfortable forcing the private sector to embrace something the market may not want yet.

“Commissioner LeAnn Pierce said the idea was something that the county should encourage developers to do, but she felt uncomfortable forcing the private sector to embrace something the market may not want yet. ‘Maybe years from now it’s something we should look at,’ she said. ‘But right now, I don’t think we need to require it.’” [Star News, 2/19/24]

Pierce said she would like to see Cape Fear Public Utility Authority’s services extended to the southern portion of Carolina Beach Road. “Pierce said there’s a gap in water and sewer service on the southern portion of Carolina Beach Road where Aqua stops and the beach towns begin. She said she would like to see Cape Fear Public Utility Authority’s services extend to that area.” [Star News, 10/16/24]

PHILOSOPHY & IDEOLOGY

Pierce claimed that thirty years of running a small business, managing budgets, and leading employees prepared her to run a town as Mayor and to serve as Chair of the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners. “LeAnn believes small business is the backbone of our country. Thirty years of running a small business, managing budgets and leading employees prepared her to run a town as Mayor. She now employs those same skills as Chair of the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners.” [electleannpierce.com, accessed [7/6/26](#)]

2019: Pierce said the biggest challenges facing Carolina Beach were “water quality and quantity, parking, Freeman Park issues, managing growth, environmental preservation, infrastructure needs, stormwater issues and attracting family-oriented businesses.” “LeAnn Pierce: The biggest challenges facing our community is water quality and quantity, parking, Freeman Park issues, managing growth, environmental preservation, infrastructure needs, stormwater issues and attracting family-oriented businesses. I have gained experience on these issues over the last 6 years and will continue to find solutions to them as mayor.” [Star-News, 10/13/19]

2019: Pierce said she made the best candidate for mayor due to her 30-year residency, 25 years of business ownership, and 6 years of town council experience. “Pierce: My experience makes me the best candidate for mayor. I am a 30-year resident and business owner of 25 years in addition to my 6 years on council. I know what is involved to be successful in the mayor's position.” [Star-News, 10/13/19]

2020: Pierce said the most pressing issues for Carolina Beach to address were beach preservation and parking. “The new mayor said the most pressing issues to address are beach preservation and parking. Continuing to put sand on the beach and protecting the dunes is so important because no beach means no tourists. In terms of parking, with little open space remaining, Pierce said the town is looking to expand its bike route network in hopes that more people walking and biking will alleviate some of the parking issues.” [Star-News, 1/1/20]

2022: Pierce said “top issues facing New Hanover County are balancing smart growth with proper infrastructure and open space, lack of affordable housing and issues within our school system.”

“Pierce: Top issues facing New Hanover County are balancing smart growth with proper infrastructure and open space, lack of affordable housing and issues within our school system. I would also add that we must continue to address crime in our county and restore the confidence of our citizens with our county commission. Our county commission must work as a team with all municipalities of New Hanover County, its school board, and citizens to address these issues for the betterment of our county.” [Star News, 10/16/22]

After being elected as the first female mayor, Pierce said being a woman in politics is different, as men and women bring different qualities to the table. “She said that being a woman in politics is different, as men and women bring different qualities to the table. Though it may take a little more time as a woman, you have to earn the respect of those around you and eventually they will accept you and your place, Pierce said of her experience in government.” [Star-News, 1/1/20]

- **Pierce said it may take a little more time as a woman, as you have to earn the respect of those around you but eventually they will accept you and your place.** “She said that being a woman in politics is different, as men and women bring different qualities to the table. Though it may take a little more time as a woman, you have to earn the respect of those around you and eventually they will accept you and your place, Pierce said of her experience in government.” [Star-News, 1/1/20]
- **Pierce: “Woman can be married and they can have families and have children and run businesses, but they can also do other things, too. They can be in politics and they can be mayors and they can do anything that they want to do. There's no limit.”** “Overall, Pierce is happy with the direction the town is headed and hopes to use her platform to inspire girls and women to do and be whatever they want to be. ‘Woman can be married and they can have families and have children and run businesses, but they can also do other things, too,’ she said. ‘They can be in politics and they can be mayors and they can do anything that they want to do. There's no limit.’” [Star-News, 1/1/20]

2025: New Hanover County Republican Party Chair John Hinnant said Pierce was “wildly popular among Republicans” and “one of the most solid conservative politicians in New Hanover County.” “Hinnant said Commissioner Pierce is “wildly popular among Republicans” and “one of the most solid conservative politicians in New Hanover County.” The party is recruiting another candidate to run alongside Pierce in 2026 that it hopes will be announced soon.” [Star News, 10/29/25]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Pierce: “We all deserve to live in a safe community and I believe in supporting and funding law enforcement. ... I believe in being tough on crime.” “We all deserve to live in a safe community and I believe in supporting and funding law enforcement. We rely on the law, our court system and our police to enforce safety. As your county commissioner, I will make this a top priority. I believe in being tough on crime. We must have a county that is safe for our children to live and grow, knowing that they are protected” [electleannpierce.com, accessed [7/6/26](#)]

- **Pierce vowed to make public safety a “top priority.”** “We all deserve to live in a safe community and I believe in supporting and funding law enforcement. We rely on the law, our court system and our police to enforce safety. As your county commissioner, I will make this a top priority. I believe in being tough on crime. We must have a county that is safe for our

children to live and grow, knowing that they are protected” [electleannpierce.com, accessed [7/6/26](#)]

2013: Pierce said “If there's gang activity (in Carolina Beach), I'm personally not aware of it. We need to be careful about labeling people.” “Pierce, a hotel owner, agreed. ‘If there's gang activity (in Carolina Beach), I'm personally not aware of it. We need to be careful about labeling people,’ she said.” [Morning Star, 10/31/13]

2016: Pierce voted against allowing Carolina Beach residents to keep chickens as pets, over fears changing the town's ordinance would lead to other banned animals being kept as pets. “Going before the town council Tuesday, Wind s amendments to the ordinance were adopted 3-2, with Councilman Gary Doetsch and Mayor Pro Tem LeAnn Pierce voting against over fears changing the ordinance would lead to other banned animals being kept as pets.” [Star-News, 8/16/16]

Pierce said Carolina Beach's town attorney “realized that we may need to revisit” the town's public nudity ordinance after a citizen complained about that female lifeguards bathing suits were too revealing. “Carolina Beach leaders amended the town's public nudity ordinance Tuesday night after a resident recently felt uncomfortable while at the beach. The changes, however, were minimal. ‘Only change is to strike 'buttocks' from the ordinance, which means buttocks is no longer indecent,’ said Carolina Beach Mayor, Joe Benson. ‘Point worth making — we're aligned with State statute.’ The public nudity ordinance was brought into question when a resident contacted the council and town staff expressing concerns over beach attire. ‘Our council and staff received an email, that a citizen felt like the female lifeguard bathing suits were too skimpy and revealing,’ said Carolina Beach Councilwoman LeAnn Pierce. ‘The town attorney realized that we may need to revisit the ordinance.’ Carolina Beach's public nudity ordinance states that ‘it is unlawful for any person to appear on any public beach, any public street or any public park in a state of dress or undress so as to expose to the view of others the human male or female pubic area, pubic hair, anus, vulva or buttocks with less than a fully opaque covering.’ ‘Our ordinance mentions buttocks, and that probably is what will be removed from that,’ Pierce said before Tuesday night's meeting.” [WNCN, 8/14/19]

- **The town council amended the ordinance to remove “buttocks” from the defined indecent body parts.** “Carolina Beach leaders amended the town's public nudity ordinance Tuesday night after a resident recently felt uncomfortable while at the beach. The changes, however, were minimal. ‘Only change is to strike 'buttocks' from the ordinance, which means buttocks is no longer indecent,’ said Carolina Beach Mayor, Joe Benson.” [WNCN, 8/14/19]

2024: Pierce said she was concerned about funding for Port City United, a county-funded initiative aimed at curbing community violence, and questioned the use of violence interrupters as a job title for its outreach coordinators. “In the wake of a recent shooting, the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners appears at odds over the fate Port City United, a county-funded initiative aimed at curbing community violence. [...] Commissioner Jonathan Barfield spoke in support of the work being done by Port City United. The mediation and outreach coordinators, also known as violence interrupters, are doing dangerous and important work, he said. [...] Vice Chairwoman LeAnn Pierce said she also has concerned about funding. And she questioned the use of violence interrupters as a job title.” [Star News, 4/1/24]

- **Pierce said she'd like the board to have further discussions about the budget and whether some facets of the program are worth keeping.** “She said she'd like the board to have further

discussions about the budget and whether some facets of the program are worth keeping.” [Star News, 4/1/24]

- **Pierce was adamant that she would not support continuing to fund Port City United.** “Funding for Port City United remains in jeopardy as the New Hanover County Commissioners begin budget discussions for the 2024-25 fiscal year. During a budget work session on April 11, two commissioners – Dane Scalise and LeAnn Pierce – were adamant that they would not support continuing to fund the controversial department.” [Star News, 4/13/24]

Pierce on New Hanover’s two new fire stations: “With two new stations opening this year, we are delivering on our commitment to modern, effective public safety infrastructure.” “New Hanover County Fire Rescue celebrated the opening of its second new fire station this year. Local leaders attended a dedication and grand opening for the new Gordon Road Fire Station on April 29. The station, located at 5000 Gordon Road near the intersection with Harris Road, will house the administrative headquarters for county fire services and improve coordination across New Hanover's nine stations. ‘This station is an investment in the safety of our community and the well-being of the firefighters who serve it,’ said Board of Commissioners Chair LeAnn Pierce. ‘With two new stations opening this year, we are delivering on our commitment to modern, effective public safety infrastructure.’” [Star News, 5/1/26]

LINKS

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PUBLIC RECORDS

Pierce faced several criminal filings over the years, including a misdemeanor for obtaining property by worthless check. According to a public records aggregator, Pierce has faced several undisclosed criminal filings including: an unspecified offense in North Carolina in 1990; a “obtaining property by worthless check” misdemeanor offense in Florida in 1994; an unspecified misdemeanor in Florida in 1994; an unspecified offense in North Carolina in 2009; an unspecified offense in North Carolina in 2015; an unspecified offense in North Carolina in 2018. [Lexis Nexis Public Records, accessed 7/8/26]

- **2018: Pierce was charged with “PG improper equipment.”** “The following cases were adjudicated over four days of District Criminal Court on April 17, 18, 19 and 20 in Bolivia. [...] Amy Leann Pierce, PG improper equipment.” [Brunswick Beacon, 5/1/18]

Pierce faced several tax liens and judgments in the 1990s. According to a public records aggregator, Pierce faced several civil judgments and tax liens including: a 1995 civil judgment in Florida for \$5,789; a 1995 federal tax lien release in Florida for \$25,499; a 1995 federal tax lien released in Florida for \$44,132; a 1994 judgment in Virginia for \$703; a 1992 judgment in North Carolina for \$289; a 1992 judgment in North Carolina for \$108. [Lexis Nexis Public Records, accessed 7/8/26]

