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THE LEAF-CHRONICLE

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Clarksville Rep. Jeff Burkhardt dies

Republican, 63, served in state House since 2022

Vivian Jones
Nashville Tennessean
USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

Clarksville Republican state Rep. Jeff Burkhardt has died, the House Republican Caucus confirmed on Nov. 14. The cause of Burkhardt's death is not

known. Burkhardt, 63, had served in the state House of Representatives since 2022. Because there is less than one year until the next election, the Montgomery County Commission will appoint an interim representative to succeed him until elections next year.



Burkhardt

"The Tennessee House Republican Caucus is deeply saddened by the passing of our dear colleague, State Rep. Jeff Burkhardt of District 75. He served with dedication, humility, and a genuine love for the people of Montgomery County and the great state of Tennessee," a statement from the House Re-

publican Caucus reads. Burkhardt attended Northwest High School, and earned a degree in fire science from Volunteer State Community College, according to his legislative profile. His career began at the Clarksville Fire Department in 1985, where he rose through the ranks to become assistant fire chief.

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Tinashe Mawondo departs from the Old Mutare Hospital's waiting mothers' shelter as she walks to have labor induced at the Old Mutare Hospital in Mutare, Zimbabwe, on Oct. 29. PHOTOS BY ANDREW NELLES/THE TENNESSEAN

THE WEEK IN POLITICS



Matt Van Epps, Republican nominee for the 7th Congressional District, speaks to reporters after casting his vote in Nashville, Nov. 12. VIVIAN JONES / THE TENNESSEAN

DNC says Republicans 'panicking' as Trump holds event for Van Epps

Vivian Jones
Nashville Tennessean
USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

Republican nominee **Matt Van Epps** says he's not nervous about his prospects in the Dec. 2 special congressional election against Democrat **Aftyn Behn** after a sweep of Democratic victories in other states this month.

But moves national Republicans are making are not typical for an election in a district that's been historically a Republican stronghold.

Tennessee's 7th District has historically been dark red. Even after redistricting in 2021 that diluted Republican power there, now-retired U.S. Rep. **Mark Green** overwhelmingly won re-election in the 7th District by 22 points last November. President **Donald Trump** won most counties in the district last November by three- or four-to-one.

"We've got incredible momentum," Van Epps told reporters after casting his ballot on Nov 12, citing endorsements from local officials and groups. "We're going to work hard every single day, and we're going to work hard like we've never earned it."

Democrats are overperforming in special elections this year. Capitalizing on momentum from big Democratic victories this month, national Democrats are looking at Tennessee's 7th District as a prime opportunity for an upset flip.

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A new day for Methodists in Africa

UMC split means diminished investment across globe

Liam Adams Nashville Tennessean | USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

MUTARE, ZIMBABWE – The expecting mothers ushered their roommate Tinashe Mawondo to the hospital at Old Mutare Mission center, mere paces from a ward where the pregnant women reside. • The group of 10 women surrounded Mawondo to pray for her and then picked up her belongings and sent her off to new beginnings. Those 10 other women will trace the same journey in a matter of weeks – many are due in mid-November.



Station Chair Rev. Tadeus Mwadiwa at the Old Mutare Mission in Mutare, Zimbabwe, on Oct. 29. The Mission includes the hospital, a church, schools and children's home.

"It's a very friendly environment," Charity Chimanimani, an expecting mother, said in an interview in Shona, a local language spoken in many parts of Zimbabwe. "We have taught each other unity and to give each other kind words." The women cook for one another and help teach each other sewing. They don't pay a cent for lodging or food. The ward for expecting mothers is the latest addition to the Old Mutare Mission, a nexus of United Methodist Church ministries that also include the hospital, a church, two schools and a children's home. The campus is sacred not just for its ability to serve many different community needs, but because it's the site of United Methodism's founding in Zimbabwe 128 years ago. "It tells people what the UMC is all about," Rev.

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