

Gordon Bryan, Navy Veteran and Retired FedEx Pilot, Enters Tennessee's 8th Congressional District Democratic Primary

Bryan is running on healthcare access, working family economics, and government accountability in the August 6 Democratic primary.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Gordon Bryan, a U.S. Navy veteran and retired commercial pilot, today announced his candidacy in Tennessee's 8th Congressional District Democratic primary. Bryan is challenging Rep. David Kustoff, who has served on the House Ways and Means Committee since 2017. Bryan is running on healthcare access, working family economics, and congressional accountability.

In May 2026, Tennessee Republicans redrew the 8th District, adding suburban Shelby County communities including Germantown, Collierville, and Bartlett to a district that already stretched through rural West Tennessee cities including Jackson, Dyersburg, and Paris. The new map faces three consolidated federal lawsuits; critics argue it was drawn to dilute Memphis's Black voting power. Kustoff faces no primary opposition. Bryan has called the Memphis area home since 1983.

No Level I or Level II trauma center operates within the district's boundaries. The region's only Level I trauma center, Regional One Health, is located in downtown Memphis, outside the district's borders. Residents of rural communities in Dyer, Henry, and Madison counties face emergency travel times exceeding an hour to reach trauma care. [Tennessee ranks second-worst nationally for rural hospital closures](#), with 15 since 2010.

Kustoff voted to repeal the Affordable Care Act in 2017 and supported the One Big Beautiful Bill. Independent analyses estimate the bill would cause 10 million Americans to lose health coverage, put nine Tennessee hospitals at risk of closure, and end Medicare eligibility for



Gordon Bryan TN-8 Headshot

approximately 20,000 households in the district. Bryan supports Medicare for All and caps on prescription drug prices. Insulin costs more than \$300 a vial in the United States; the same medication is available in Canada for approximately \$30.

"I flew for the Navy and for FedEx for 45 years. I have never walked away from a responsibility in my life. The 8th District deserves a congressman who shows up for working families the same way. The minimum wage has not moved since 2009. There is not a trauma center in this entire district. Those are not budget lines. Those are choices. I am running to make different ones. You have my word on that." — Gordon Bryan

Bryan did not initially plan to run for Congress. After completing cardiac rehabilitation this spring, he began attending Democratic Party meetings across West Tennessee. He says he heard consistent concerns in every county: rising grocery and gas prices, hospitals that have closed or face closure, residents traveling two hours or more for emergency care, and wages that have not increased in 15 years.

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*Gordon Bryan, Candidate for
TN-8 Congress Democratic
Primary*

Bryan has spoken publicly about how his father Max returned from the Battle of the Bulge with limited mental health support or resources, and about the long-term impact that had on his family. He says that experience shaped his belief in showing up for people when institutions fall short.

"I had four hours to move out of my home with my two toddlers and nowhere to go. Gordon Bryan had never met me in his life. He was just a friend of my family. He showed up anyway with his pickup truck, helped me move every box, and handed me the keys to a storage unit he had rented on my behalf. He did not know me from Adam. That

is the kind of man Gordon Bryan is, and that is the kind of congressman he will be." — Memphis-area constituent (name withheld at her request)

Bryan served seven years on active duty as a Navy aviator, flying the A-7E Corsair II, a single-seat



Gordon Bryan TN-8 Meets Hardin County Constituents

carrier-based ground attack jet, on three years of sea duty before spending three years instructing in the same aircraft at a training squadron in Jacksonville, Florida. He spent an additional seven years in the naval reserves. He joined FedEx in fall 1983 and flew for nearly 35 years before retiring. Drawing on his military background, Bryan has raised questions about the administration's handling of the Iran conflict, saying two carrier battle groups are currently deployed with no clear exit strategy and that the district's congressman has not addressed the matter publicly.

Bryan says two specific economic failures define his campaign. The federal minimum wage has not increased since 2009. Bryan argues that the congressman who has shaped tax and trade policy from the Ways and Means Committee for nine years has not acted to change it. On trade, Bryan argues that tariffs introduced in 2025 function as a tax paid by American consumers rather than foreign governments, and that their full impact on grocery, fuel, and goods prices across the district has not yet been felt. He supports raising the minimum wage and repealing those tariffs.

The Democratic primary in TN-8 is August 6, 2026.

Learn more about Gordon Bryan and his campaign [on his website](#) or [his Facebook page](#).

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Gordon Bryan TN-8 at North Shelby Democratic Club

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