Who’s Running for Florida’s 19th Congressional District in the 2026 General Election

By Sandy Parker | Sparker's Soapbox | Published 2026-09-09; Updated 2026-10-27

Republican Jim Schwartzel, Democrat Victor Arias, one NPA candidate, and one write-in candidate are competing for Florida’s 19th Congressional District seat, which covers parts of Lee and Collier counties, in the Nov. 3, 2026, general election. Registered voters in the district will decide the race. The winner will serve a two-year term in the U.S. House of Representatives.

In this post, I summarize the backgrounds and stated priorities of the two major party candidates seeking this seat, along with their endorsements, recent news coverage, and campaign finance data, to help voters prepare to cast their ballots. I also include links where you can research each candidate further.

- Jim Schwartzel (Republican)
- Victor Arias (Democrat)
- Minor Candidates
- The Race in the News
- Campaign Finances

Jim Schwartzel

Republican Jim Schwartzel is a lifelong resident of Southwest Florida who graduated from Bishop Verot High School. He is President of Sun Broadcasting, Inc. and Gulfshore Life Media, LLC. The two media organizations own and operate numerous local radio, TV and publishing businesses. These include 92.5 FOX News, a conservative talk radio station, Gulfshore Life Media, which publishes Gulfshore Life and Gulfshore Business magazines, and The Naples Press. He is married to Carly Schwartzel, his high school sweetheart; they have two children, one attending Stetson University and the other enrolled at Florida SouthWestern State College. (jimforcongress.com; Press Club of Southwest Florida)

Platform

Schwartzel's campaign website has a main "Issues" page with eight named priorities (campaign site):

- Putting America First and Supporting President Trump
- Fighting for Term Limits
- Protecting Southwest Florida's Water Quality
- Strengthening the Economy and Creating Jobs
- Improving Infrastructure and Easing Traffic
- Defending Constitutional Liberties
- Securing the Border and Stopping Illegal Immigration
- Protecting Family Values and Pushing Back on Woke Ideology

Endorsements

From his campaign website, current as of Oct. 26, 2026: President Donald Trump, House Speaker Mike Johnson, Gov. Ron DeSantis, House Majority Leader Steve Scalise, Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Jordan, U.S. Rep. Mike Haridopolos, former U.S. Sen. Connie Mack III, and former U.S. Rep. Connie Mack IV.

Trump gave Schwartzel his "complete and total" endorsement on Sept. 2, 2026, calling him a "MAGA Warrior." (Gulf Coast News and Weather)

In the News

- Jim Schwartzel starts 2026 with $1.28 million war chest in race for Florida's 19th District. (Florida's Voice, 2/2/26)
- Steve Scalise, Jim Jordan line up behind Jim Schwartzel in CD 19 primary dogfight. (Florida Politics, 8/10/26)
- Connie Mack III, Connie Mack IV both endorse Jim Schwartzel in CD 19 primary. (Florida Politics, 8/11/26)
- Florida Democrat Victor Arias to face Republican Jim Schwartzel for US House District 19 seat in Nov. (Gulf Coast News and Weather, 8/18/26)
- Trump endorses 2 candidates in Southwest Florida Congressional races. (Gulf Coast News and Weather, 9/2/26)

Further Research

Campaign website: jimforcongress.com

Active social media: Facebook, X, YouTube, Instagram, Truth Social

Victor Arias

Democratic Victor Arias received a Bachelor of Arts from Hamilton College in Clinton, NY, and a Juris Doctor degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo. He has been the owner and managing attorney of Arias Law Firm since 1992, representing working families in personal injury, workers' compensation, and school law cases in Southwest Florida. He ran unsuccessfully for Lee County Superintendent of Schools in 2024. He is a member of Leadership Florida (Class XIII), Leadership Lee County, Leadership Cape Coral, and Leadership Estero, and has been a member of Covenant Presbyterian Church since 1999, where he serves as an Elder and on the Board of Trustees. He has been married to his wife Angelette for 32 years; they have twins, each attending university. (Arias for Congress; Ballotpedia Candidate Survey; LinkedIn)

Platform

Arias's campaign website presents a five-part "UNITY" platform (campaign site):

- Unifying Our Community
- Negotiating Bipartisan Reform
- Improving Our Environment and Economy
- Transforming Healthcare
- Yielding Results for Veterans

Endorsements

The Florida Democratic Party congratulated Arias as the Democratic nominee following the primary, and Lee County Democrats also endorsed him. (FlaDems on X)

In addition, the Democratic Environmental Caucus of Florida endorsed Arias, citing his commitment to clean water, Everglades restoration, and protecting Southwest Florida's environment. (Arias for Congress)

In the News

- Florida Democrat Victor Arias to face Republican Jim Schwartzel for US House District 19 seat in Nov. (Gulf Coast News and Weather, 8/18/26)
- Arias, Cape Coral attorney, wins Democratic congressional primary. (Cape Coral Breeze, 8/20/26)

Further Research

Campaign website: ariasforcongress.us

Active social media: Facebook; LinkedIn

Minor Candidates

One No Party Affiliation candidate and one write-in candidate also qualified for the Nov. 3, 2026, general election ballot:

- Seth Haskin (NPA)

In Florida, the name of a qualified write-in candidate does not appear on the printed ballot.

The Race in the News

- Tradition, change on ballot in Dist. 19 congressional race. (Naples Press, 10/23/26)

Campaign Finances

Jim Schwartzel had less than 1 percent of receipts from small-dollar contributions of less than $200, the FEC threshold for itemized donor disclosure. Eighty-six percent of his itemized individual contributions came from Florida donors; 14 percent came from out of state.

Separately, 19th Hole PAC, a leadership PAC he sponsors, has raised $6,500 since its formation, with $6,500 available.

Victor Arias had 13 percent of receipts from small-dollar contributions. Ninety-four percent of his itemized individual contributions came from Florida donors; six percent came from out of state. Arias's receipts also included $8,500 in contributions from the candidate.

As of Oct. 26, 2026, four outside groups spent about $58,000 against Jim Schwartzel, with no group above $19,000, and none spent for him. No independent expenditures were identified for Victor Arias. Independent expenditures are not coordinated with candidates and are not included in the campaign finance totals above.

For complete campaign finance data, see the Congressional District 19 race page on OpenSecrets. For more on how to read these figures and what this information does and does not tell us, see the Sparker's Civics primer, Understanding Campaign Finance Data.

Campaign finance data is from Federal Election Commission filings, cross-checked against source records. Percentages are calculated from the candidates' FEC reports, and independent expenditure totals combine committees' 24-hour, 48-hour and periodic FEC reports. 19th Hole PAC data was compiled separately from its own FEC committee filing (ID C00960666), through Sept. 30, 2026. See the FEC's committee filings search for complete records.

This post was researched and drafted with the assistance of Claude (Anthropic AI). The content was reviewed, edited, and fact-checked by the author. Both humans and AI can make mistakes. Please let us know if you spot one.