



RuralPower

Iowa's electric cooperatives | Energizing rural economic growth

**2020**

**CONGRESSIONAL  
VOTER GUIDE**

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Iowa Rural Power is a grassroots campaign run by member-consumers of Iowa's electric cooperatives. The **2020 Congressional Voter Guide** is intended to provide information for Co-op Voters on congressional candidates' plans for rural Iowa and the future of energy in the United States. The information in this Voter Guide is based on candidate questionnaires that were made available to all candidates and information from each candidate's website.





**DEMOCRAT - WHEATLAND**

## RITA HART

**FORMER STATE SENATOR**

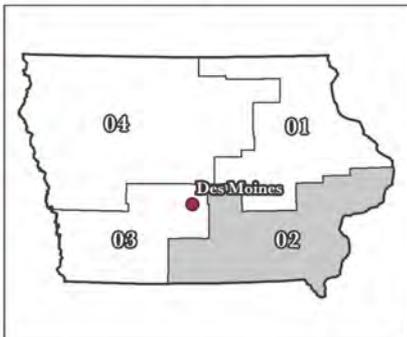
Rita Hart is a lifelong Iowan, farmer, and 20-year educator.

She served as a State Senator from 2013 to 2019 and was the Democratic nominee for Lieutenant Governor in 2018.

She grew up in Charles City and earned degrees from North Iowa Area Community College, University of Northern Iowa, and the University of Iowa.

She and her husband have five children and reside in Wheatland.

Iowa  
Congressional District  
02



[ritahart.com](http://ritahart.com)



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## ***How will your energy plans provide affordable and reliable power to rural Iowa?***

We need a strategic plan to transition us to a more carbon free environment. We've got to work together to meet our climate and energy goals and create a cleaner and brighter future for our children and grandchildren. Iowa is a leader in renewable energy. We need to build on that to reduce our carbon footprint. Keeping costs low means that we need to support our energy producers and invest in innovation that will reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and create jobs here in Iowa.

We also need to get serious about passing an infrastructure package and making sure that the rural electric cooperatives are a part of that conversation. We need an infrastructure bill that

adequately funds our roads and bridges, locks and dams, and our parks and outdoor spaces. We also need to make sure that we are investing in and updating power grid and energy production systems, and any infrastructure bill must include a plan that provides rural broadband internet. Iowa is a great place to live. We just have to ensure our communities, workers, and small businesses have what they need to compete and build a sustainable economy.

## ***Iowa's electric co-ops are successful proponents of renewable energy resources. However, obstacles still remain for shifting to a 100% renewable portfolio. How will your energy plan compensate for electricity needs on days when the sun isn't shining, wind isn't blowing, and cold temperatures limit energy storage?***

I am a life-long rural Iowan. I grew up on a dairy farm in Charles City and my husband, Paul, and I are farmers to this day. My dad taught me to never underestimate the ingenuity of the American farmer. One of the policies I'm most excited about working on is how we unleash that ingenuity and let the American farmer charter the path forward to a cleaner and more energy renewable future.

That being said, I have been clear in my campaign that as we work to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, we need to have an all of the above energy approach and a realization that we must have a pragmatic transition plan in place that will protect consumers from increased energy costs. As a state senator, I was proud to be a leader on renewable energy issues, working to strengthen Iowa's solar, wind, and biofuels industries that power our homes and businesses and create thousands of jobs in this state. I believe strongly in innovation and taking advantage of new technologies that consumers want and that are more and more viable every day without. However, as we move in that direction, we have to make sure that we do not jeopardize the affordable energy that rural America needs to be reliable and competitive. A one-size fits all mandate from Washington is not an approach that I support. I want to work with our local rural electric cooperative leaders to keep the power on and costs low.

***Click here to view Rita Hart's complete Candidate Questionnaire.***



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# MARIANNETTE MILLER-MEEKS

STATE SENATOR

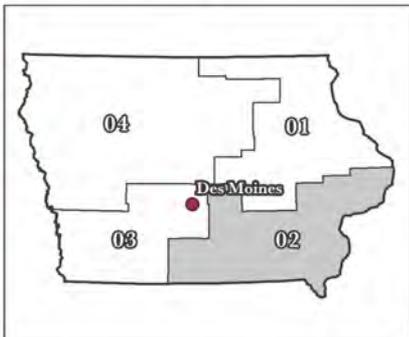
In 2018, Senator Miller-MEEKS was elected to Senate District 41 of the Iowa State Senate.

Prior to her role in elected office, she enlisted in the United States Army at the age of 18, where she served for 24 years as a private, nurse and doctor. She went into private practice in Ottumwa in 1997 and has remained there with her husband, Curt.

In 2010, Governor Terry Branstad appointed her as the Director of the Iowa Department of Public Health where she served for three years.

**REPUBLICAN - OTTUMWA**

Iowa  
Congressional District  
02





***How will your energy plans provide affordable and reliable power to rural Iowa?***

Iowa has been on the forefront of providing renewable energy sources to our state with wind, and solar as well as ethanol and biodiesel. However, we know that we need to have a continual source of electricity as a base load. We do have a nuclear power plant in Palo, but we are rapidly losing the engineering capabilities both at our research and educational institutions as well as within our workforce, as this carbon neutral source of energy has not been supported. I will continue to support initiatives that promote wind and solar, but also nuclear energy and cleaner sources of coal and natural gas. Given our agricultural economy and our research at Iowa State University, we also have tremendous opportunities for carbon sequestration, such as bio-char, which can also help to improve the soil as well as reduce CO2.

***Iowa's electric co-ops are successful proponents of renewable energy resources. However, obstacles still remain for shifting to a 100% renewable portfolio. How will your energy plan compensate for electricity needs on days when the sun isn't shining, wind isn't blowing, and cold temperatures limit energy storage?***

Weather patterns and sourcing intermittency are obstacles for both wind and solar energy. Additionally, large solar panel installations that occupy usable farm land are also a concern. We do need to address environmental concerns when it comes to disposition of both wind blades, wind turbines and solar panels when they are no longer functional. This has yet to be addressed when we consider renewable energy.

Source intermittency or a continual baseload, is not provided by wind and solar and continues to be a problem. We have made advances in storage capacity with batteries. Tesla is on the forefront of this. Ideal Energy in Fairfield has been able to partner with Agri-Plastics to provide solar energy to redo start intermittent peaks with the Tesla battery storage. It's also interesting research that has been renewed with hydrogen fuel cells, which once paired with our agricultural economy, could make tremendous advances. Hydrogen fuel cells seem to have been abandoned about 15 years ago but this technology is making a resurgence.

To power our economy, manufacturing, businesses, farms and residences, we need to continue to promote clean sources of coal and natural gas while working towards storage options for current renewable sources such as wind and solar and research and development and two other clean energy options for the future.

***Click here to view Maria M. Miller-Meeks' complete Candidate Questionnaire.***



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