

Race in the Spotlight: U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania

The November election for U.S. Senator will not have an incumbent candidate due to the retirement of U.S. Senator Pat Toomey. In this issue, Operation Wildfire takes a brief look at the candidates, their backgrounds and their positions on the issues that, in poll after poll, matter most to Americans.

The Candidates

Lt. Governor John Fetterman (D)

www.Johnfetterman.com and <https://www.facebook.com/JohnFettermanPA/>

Lt. Governor John Fetterman grew up in York, PA. He received a Bachelor's Degree from Albright College, an MBA from the University of Connecticut and a Masters Degree in Public Policy from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. Mr. Fetterman served as Mayor of Braddock, PA for 13 years, where he worked to rebuild the community by creating jobs and getting youth engaged. To learn more about his role as Mayor, we found information at this link: <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/john-fetterman-pennsylvania-mayor-hell-allegheeny-county-100493/> As Lt. Governor, Mr. Fetterman used his position as a bully pulpit to support raising the minimum wage, legalizing cannabis nationwide and reforming criminal justice laws. He lives in Braddock, PA.

Dr. Mehmet Oz (R)

<https://doctoroz.com/> and <https://www.facebook.com/droz>

Mehmet Oz, known professionally as Dr. Oz, is a Turkish-American television presenter, author, professor emeritus, and retired cardiothoracic surgeon. Born in Cleveland, OH, the son of Turkish immigrants, Dr. Oz was raised in Wilmington, DE. He received his undergraduate degree in Biology magna cum laude from Harvard University. He obtained a joint MD and MBA from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and The Wharton School of Business. Dr. Oz was the host of the Emmy award-winning "The Dr. Oz Show" and an Attending Physician at NY Presbyterian-Columbia Medical Center. He serves as Professor Emeritus at Columbia University. He has performed thousands of heart operations and invented life-saving devices to repair heart valves – all while practicing medicine simultaneously while hosting his TV show. He lives in Bryn Athyn, PA.

Minor Party Candidates

Minor parties arise when the two major parties fail to represent citizens' demands or provide the opportunity to express opposition to existing policies. Citizens often form a minor party by uniting behind a leader who represents their interests. Sometimes, you may even hear that the minor party candidate, simply by running for office, is "sending a message" to one or both of the major parties. Yes, minor parties can invigorate voter interest, but they can also be spoilers in elections by taking away enough votes from a major party candidate to influence the outcome without winning – and the least desirable might win if you vote for a third party.

In November there are three minor party candidates on the ballot for the U.S. Senate seat. To learn more, visit the websites listed below each name. The candidates will not be covered in detail by Operation Wildfire due to the high stakes race that is the Pennsylvania U.S. Senate seat. One of the two major party candidates will win this race.

Erik Gerhardt, Libertarian

<https://erik4pa.com/>

Richard Weiss, Green Party

https://www.greenslate2022.com/us_senator

Daniel Wassmer, Keystone Party.

<http://www.wassmer4pa.com/>

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On The Issues

As Operation Wildfire completed its research and began writing this issue paper, we realized we could have six or more pages. Considering your time and availability, we included only those issues that appear at the top of poll after poll on the priorities of the American voters. Those priorities include inflation, the economy, crime, immigration and education. Let's see where the candidates stand.

Lt. Governor John Fetterman

Inflation/Economy:

- Make more stuff (his word, not ours) in America;
- Cut taxes for working people;
- Ban Congress from trading stocks;
- Slash "out of pocket" health care costs; and,
- End immoral price gouging.

Crime:

- Ensure a criminal legal system where everyone is equal in the eyes of the law;
- Establish effective diversion programs for nonviolent offenders;
- Reform sentencing; and,
- Establish common sense gun safety measures to include universal background checks and red flag laws.

Immigration:

- Ensure strong borders and prevent the flow of illegal drugs;
- Ensure a humane immigration system;
- Modernize the U.S. visa system and asylum programs; and,
- Provide a pathway to citizenship for frontline workers, small business owners and young people.

Education:

- Universal pre-k and childcare;
- Fully funding public schools;
- Increase investments in career and technical programs;
- Tuition-free community colleges; and,
- Reduce the burden of student loan debt.

Dr. Mehmet Oz

Inflation/Economy:

- Rebuild the middle layers of society – institutions like family and community – that have been hollowed out by failed policies, narrow thinking, and toxic culture wars;
- Dismantle policies that lead to more expensive prescription drugs;
- Cut wasteful spending;
- Modernize health care so it's more affordable and accessible;
- Make the U.S. energy independent once again;
- Eliminate government regulations that stifle small business growth and opportunity; and,
- Create jobs in America and rebuild its supply chain.

Crime:

- Ensure law enforcement always has the resources they need to do their job and keep our communities safe;
- Fund mental health resources;
- Opposed to "anti-law" proposals like "cashless bail" that make it tougher for police to do their jobs; and,
- Opposed to anti-gun measures like red flag laws and liberal gun grabs.

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Immigration:

- Keep America safe;
- End illegal immigration and stop the flow of illegal drugs; and,
- Secure our border with a barrier – whether that is a physical wall, one patrolled by technological advances or both.

Education:

- School choice;
- Empower students to make their own career choices;
- Stop indoctrination of our children;
- Incorporate financial literacy from an early age; and,
- Stop wealthy universities from raising tuition every year while sitting on millions of dollars in tax-protected endowments.

Omissions & Flip-Flops

If a candidate changes his or her stance on a core issue in order to attract more voters, you could say that they now better represent public opinion. While a change of opinion may be positive, when a candidate changes their position on a core issue it might signal dishonesty. If a candidate changes fundamental beliefs then we begin to seriously doubt that they will govern on the policies they supported while running. Here are a few examples:

- Amid criticism for being soft on crime, Lt. Governor Fetterman removed a reference to Black Lives Matter on his campaign website. Archived versions show a section under the “issues” category that touted his commitment to BLM. “John served as mayor of a city that’s more than 80% Black, and has championed the idea that Black lives matter since long before it became a hashtag,” the site previously read. His campaign said the section was removed during an overhaul of the campaign site. (*Townhall*, 9/20/22)
- Lt. Governor Fetterman says in a new ad that Dr. Mehmet Oz’s claims about him supporting the release of a third of Pennsylvania’s prison population have been “proven false,” but the Republican National Committee provided a collection of videos, reminding the Democrat of 11 times he’s on video advocating for just that. Releasing one-third of Pennsylvania’s prison population would amount to 12,000 convicts back on the streets. (*Townhall*, 9/8/22)
- In a 2014 syndicated column, Dr. Oz expressed concern over possible health effects of fracking and suggested it be put on hold until a Department of Health Study becomes available. Today, Dr. Oz supports an all-of-the-above energy approach, stating “We must invest in natural gas, a workable, clean solution for mass energy production while renewables continue to innovate.” (*Vice.com*, 4/8/22)

Setting the Record Straight on **Residency Requirements**

Much has been said about residency requirements to run for a U.S. Senate seat, so Operation Wildfire will set the record straight:

“No Person shall be a Senator who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty Years, and been nine Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State for which he shall be chosen.” [U.S. Constitution, Article I, section 3, clause 3]

In other words, a candidate for the U.S. Senate does not need to reside in the state until he or she is elected. As noted earlier, Dr. Oz lives in Bryn Athyn, PA. (Alternately, a candidate for the Pennsylvania State Senate must have lived in the state for four years.)

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What's at Stake and Why it Matters

The Democrat Party controls the White House and its agencies, the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives. Legislation can pass without a single Republican vote. On November 8, Pennsylvania voters will elect a U.S. Senator to replace retiring Senator Pat Toomey. As a quick reminder, we've outlined the responsibilities of a U.S. Senator below.

- Represent the constituents in their individual state;
- Propose and consider new laws;
- Provide advice and consent on international treaties;
- Serve as the high court for impeachment trials; and,
- Approve the President's appointments, including members of the Cabinet, justices of the Supreme Court, other federal judges and ambassadors.

The Mid-Term Cabinet Carousel

Historically, following a mid-term election, a few members of the President's Cabinet will depart. When that happens, the appointment process begins anew, and the U.S. Senate is required to approve or disapprove the President's nominee(s).

White House officials have begun preparing for the potential departure of Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, the first and most consequential exit in what could be a broad reorganization of President Biden's economic team. Multiple sources stressed the outcome of November's election, including which political party controls the Senate, will factor into whether she stays. (www.axios.com/2022/09/28/janet-yellen-treasury-midterms-shuffle)

What's Ahead if Democrats Retain Control of Congress

Democratic strategist Jamelle Boule opined, "If the legislative story of the past two years is the return of industrial policy, then the story of the next two years – presuming Democrats maintain control of both houses of Congress – will be the return of social policy, as well as an all-out effort to protect and secure the rights that are under assault by the Republican Party and its allies on the Supreme Court."

Looking ahead, Boule specifically mentions a robust permanent child-tax credit, abortion rights, voting rights and union rights. He does acknowledge that "To pass any of these laws, Democrats will have to kill the legislative filibuster. Otherwise, this agenda, or any other, is dead in the water. If Democrats win a Senate majority of 51 or 52 members, they might be able to do it. And they should ... ruthlessly exploit it to get things done."

If you believe the country is on the wrong track, if you do not share the Democratic vision of our nation, why would you vote for a U.S. Senator who will only rubber-stamp President Biden's nominee(s) without asking the hard questions? Why would you vote for someone who will only enable President Biden and his Administration to continue the country's current trajectory? The choice is yours.

Operation Wildfire has made its choice: Dr. Mehmet Oz for U.S Senate

Sources: The University of Minnesota Libraries, American Government & Politics in the Information Age; Axios; PennLive; Candidate Websites; History.com; RealClear Pennsylvania; Delaware Valley Journal; The Democratic Strategist