

# Operation Wildfire: Good Things Happen When YOU Vote

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Issue Eleven

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## REDISTRICTING AND YOUR PRIMARY BALLOT

Redistricting changes the legislative district boundaries in Pennsylvania, based on the 2020 census, for the next 10 years. Your polling place has not changed, unless the county elections board changed your polling place for reasons unrelated to redistricting. But the boundaries of your Congressional (U.S. House of Representatives only), State Senate and State Legislative districts will change.

Your current representatives will remain the same until January, 2023. Members of the U.S. Congress (Senate and House) are tentatively scheduled to be sworn in on January 3. The Pennsylvania General Assembly (State Senate and State House) swearing-in ceremonies are tentatively scheduled for January 4. So how has redistricting affected Centre County?

### **Congressional Redistricting**

Centre County will no longer be split into two congressional districts following approval of a new congressional map by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. In a 4-3 decision, the Court selected the 17-district map after the Republican-controlled General Assembly and Democratic Governor Tom Wolf deadlocked on how to apportion the Commonwealth's seats in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Centre County is now entirely within the 15th District, currently represented by Rep. Glenn Thompson. Since 2018, the county had been split into the 15th and the 12th districts. The 15th covered the majority of the county's land area, while the 12th, currently represented by Rep. Fred Keller, covered the southeastern part of the county, including State College and the Penns Valley Area.

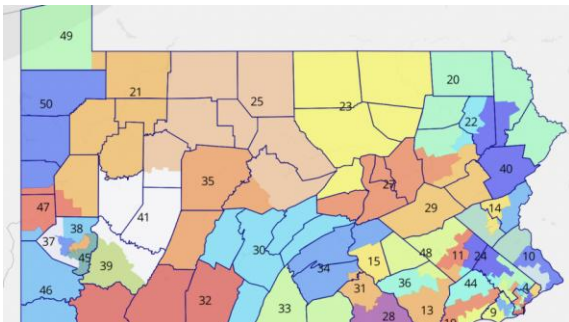
As of this writing, Representative Glenn Thompson has no opposition to his re-election bid.

### **Pennsylvania Senate Redistricting**

Under the 2022 Pennsylvania Senate map, Senate District 34, which includes all of Centre County and parts of Huntingdon, Mifflin and Juniata counties, was eliminated and is, instead, split into two odd-numbered districts, 25 and 35. Senator Jake Corman, R-Centre, who has represented District 34 for more than twenty years, announced he would not be running for re-election and, instead, would concentrate his efforts on his campaign for Governor.

Senate District 25 is currently represented by Sen. Cris Dush, R-Jefferson, and Senate District 35 is represented by Sen. Wayne Langerholc, R-Richland Township, both of whom are not up for election until 2024.

Not living in Centre County? Visit <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Pages/Pennsylvania-Redistricting-State-Senate.aspx> to determine your State Senator.



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## **Pennsylvania House Redistricting**

As a result of state legislative redistricting, State Representatives Stephanie Borowicz (PA-76) and Rich Irvin (PA-81) will no longer represent Centre County. Below you'll find information on candidates who wish to represent our county in Harrisburg. More detailed information will be provided closer to the November election.

### **District 77**

Incumbent: Scott Conklin

Challenger: Steve Yetko

The 77th legislative district will consist of the Townships of Ferguson, Halfmoon, Huston, Patton, Rush, Taylor and Worth; and, the Boroughs of Philipsburg, Port Matilda and State College (Part of Districts East Central and Part of Districts West and West Central). Total Population: 61,876

About the Candidates:

State Representative Scott Conklin represents the 77<sup>th</sup> legislative district. Representative Conklin was first elected in 2006. Representative Conklin serves as Democratic Chair of the House State Government Committee and the Gaming Oversight Committee. To learn more about Representative Conklin, visit <https://www.facebook.com/ConklinForPA/>

Steve Yetko is a 20 year resident of Julian and is a graduate of Penn State. Mr. Yetko supports local decisions by our elected school boards, believes our community should make decisions impacting our lives, businesses and economy, supports our veterans, faith based and community organizations and backs our local first responders. To learn more about Mr. Yetko, visit <https://letsgowithyetko.com/>

### **District 82**

New District

Open Seat

Democrat: Paul Takac

Republican: Justin Behrens

This legislative district consists of the Townships of Benner, Boggs, Burnside, College, Curtin, Harris, Howard, Liberty, Marion, Snow Shoe and Union; and, the Boroughs of Howard, Milesburg, Snow Shoe, State College (Part, Districts East, East Central; North, Northeast, Penn State University (HUB), South (Part), South Central and Southeast and Unionville. Total Population: 62,294 (about 30,000 of which are PSU students)

About the Candidates:

Paul Takac has worked in education technology sales for three decades. He was elected to the College Township Council in 2019, and currently serves as Vice Chairman of both the Spring Creek Watershed Commission and Centre Region Council of Government's Public Safety Committee. Mr. Takac's key issues include: equity in education, including "crushing" student loans, investment in infrastructure, investing in the economy and the environment. His website also lists gun safety, healthcare, LGBTQ+ rights, raising the minimum wage and reproductive rights. To learn more, visit <https://www.paultakac.com/>

Justin Behrens is an Iraq war veteran, social worker and CEO of Keystone Mission. He is the former chairman of the Luzerne County Republican Party. Mr. Behrens received a Bachelor's degree in Social Work from Misericordia University and a Master's degree in Social Work from Temple University. He has identified the following key issues: promoting a quality education for all, advocacy for vocational and trade school programs, investing in the economy, fighting for good-paying jobs, and infrastructure, including creating safer roads,

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strengthening our electric grid and enhancing the diverse energy portfolio in the Commonwealth. To learn more, visit <https://behrensforscentrecounty.com/>

## District 171

Incumbent: Kerry Benninghoff

Challenger: Robert Zeigler (Millheim Borough Council member)

The 171<sup>st</sup> legislative district consists of the Townships of Gregg, Haines, Miles, Penn, Potter, Spring and Walker; and, the Boroughs of Bellefonte, Centre Hall and Millheim. This district also includes part of Mifflin County consisting of the Townships of Armagh, Bratton, Brown, Granville, Menno, Oliver, Union and Wayne; and, the Boroughs of Juniata Terrace, Kistler, Lewistown, McVeytown and Newton Hamilton. Total Population: 65,554

About the Candidates:

State Representative Kerry Benninghoff has represented the 171<sup>st</sup> legislative district since 1996. In June 2020, he was elected by his colleagues to serve as Majority Leader. Prior to serving as Majority Leader, Representative Benninghoff served on the Leadership team as Majority Whip and for two terms as the House Majority Policy Committee chairman. Representative Benninghoff previously served as chairman of the House Majority Finance and State Government committees. He is the founder and former chairman of the bipartisan Cancer Caucus. For additional information, visit <https://www.kerrybenninghoff.com/>

Robert Zeigler

A graduate of Penn State, Mr. Zeigler received a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and a Master's degree in Business Administration and Public Administration. He was appointed to the Millheim Borough Council in 2018, was elected in 2019, and has served as Council President for the past two years. Mr. Zeigler identifies the following key issues: criminal justice and police reform, economic justice, campaign, election and legislative reform, and environmental justice. For additional information, visit <https://zeiglerforpa.com/>

*Sources: TribuneLive, Ballotpedia, Inquirer, PennLive, Erie Times-News, StateCollege.com, Candidate Campaign Websites*

## Why Vote in the Primary Election?

A primary election is held to see who will receive the nomination from his or her political party. The candidate who receives the nomination will run against the candidate nominated by the other party — or parties, as the case may be. The primary is one of the most important phases of an election. This is when each vote counts the most, because it gives registered voters of the Democratic and Republican Parties the ability to choose who they believe is the best candidate to compete – and win – in November.

Nationwide, primaries only see an average of 20% turnout. Instead of delving into why people don't vote in the primaries, let's talk about why people SHOULD vote in the primaries:

- With fewer people voting, every vote carries more weight.
- Primaries separate the stronger candidates from weaker ones.
- Voter turnout at primaries helps determine where campaigns and parties will put more (or less) effort towards the general election. More voting often means more attention and resources.
- Even if your favorite candidate loses the primary, if she/he gets a good percentage of the votes, there is a good chance the winning candidate will adopt some of their platform to appeal to the broader group of voters.
- Every time you vote, it becomes more of a habit.

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- Vote in the primary because it is one part of being in a participatory democracy. It's your duty you're your right. Use it.

Now that you're fired up to vote in the Primary Election, make sure you put Tuesday, May 17 on your calendar and make a plan to vote!

## Review Your Sample Ballot

Sample ballots identify the candidates running for office. Reviewing them before Election Day can help you decide for whom you will vote. There are several ways to find your Sample Ballot:

- Visit <https://centrecountyvotes.gov/> and click on 'Sample Ballots'.
- Choose either a Democratic or Republican Ballot to view.
- Click on the Sample Ballot for your Precinct.
- To be sure that you have the correct Sample Ballot, check the precinct number and name located in the upper left corner of the Sample.
- Directly beneath that box, you'll find a reminder that shows how to mark your ballot when you go to the polls.

If you don't remember your Precinct number:

- Visit <https://centrecountyvotes.gov/> and click on 'Confirm Your Polling Location'.
- Click on "look up your polling location by address"
- A new screen (Find Your Polling Place) will appear.
- Complete the information requested, then click 'Search'.
- The next screen will identify your Precinct and Polling Location.

You can also find your Precinct number and Polling Location by visiting <https://centrecountyvotes.gov/> and click on 'Confirm Your Polling Location'. The next screen will identify Centre County polling locations and precinct numbers. Scroll down until you find your polling location.

Your Voter Registration card also contains your Precinct number and Polling Location. That might be the easiest way to get you to your sample ballot.

## What's Next?

Operation Wildfire will discuss the many ways in which to make a plan to vote. Then, right before the Primary Election, we'll review what to expect when you arrive at the polls to vote.