

PA STATE HOUSE DISTRICT 36

Pennsylvania's 36th State House District covers many southern Pittsburgh neighborhoods, including South Side Flats, South Side Slopes, Arlington, St. Clair, Bon Air, Carrick, Overbrook, Mount Washington, and Brookline. Also includes Mount Oliver borough, Brentwood, and parts of Baldwin Borough. This race is to replace incumbent state Rep. Harry Readshaw, who is retiring.

BY AMANDA WALTZ



JESSICA BENHAM



MARK JOHNSON



HEATHER KASS



ED MOELLER

BIOGRAPHY

South Side Slopes resident with background in community organizing and advocating for the rights of workers and people with disabilities. Member of the Zone 3 Public Safety Council since 2016 and Judge of Elections since 2018. Has degrees from Bethel University, Minnesota State University, and University of Pittsburgh.

An attorney who earned his law degree from the University of Pittsburgh. Also earned degrees at the University of Iowa. Worked in Washington, D.C. as legislative counsel for former U.S. Rep. Bruce Braley (D-Iowa). Now lives in Brookline and works at an employment rights law firm.

Lifelong South Hills resident who served as a committee member on the 29th Ward Democratic board for two years. Medical professional with an associate's degree from the Western School of Health and Business and a total of over 26 years in the field.

Grew up in Arlington Heights, now lives in Baldwin Borough. Accountant with a degree from St. Vincent's College. Active community member who served on the Baldwin Borough Council and Baldwin-Whitehall School Board, and as a Board of Director for Economic Development South. Also assisted with the borough's Parks and Recreation committee.

HEALTH CARE

Supports the expansion of Medicaid and health care that is free at the point of access. Helped with the passage of Paul's Law, a package of bills that protects people with disabilities from discrimination in organ transplant cases. Believes the state must invest in evidence-based solutions to addiction in order to tackle the opioid epidemic.

Wants to "ease the burden of medical costs on Pennsylvanians," possibly through a medical program that would provide health care for all state residents. Supports removing tax-exempt status from health-care giants like UPMC, and the legalization of marijuana for recreational use.

Wants to find workable solutions to creating affordable, quality health care and combating the opioid crisis. In 2015, criticized Obamacare on Facebook posts that also expressed her support for President Donald Trump. Has also been endorsed by the Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation and Life PAC of Southwestern Pennsylvania, a group that supports defunding Planned Parenthood, which provides reproductive health services to women in the region.

Wants to expand on current efforts to combat the opioid epidemic by working with education and health-care workers to eliminate addiction triggers and educate youth on the dangers of opioid use.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Wants to prevent chronic flooding and landslides in south Pittsburgh neighborhoods. Believes in reducing fossil-fuel pollution to combat climate change. Backed by the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 66, which stated that Benham will advocate for union workers in the natural gas industry and include them in "conversations about jobs and the environment."

Seeks to invest in a renewable energy grid. Would like to create a tax credit to make solar panels more affordable and accessible to homeowners. Wants to invest more in urban transportation systems, and explore the creation of a high speed rail. Supports ending toll road systems, which provide large sums to support public transit in Pa.

Supports investment in sustainable infrastructure, that she says will contribute clean air, water, and energy, but has yet to divulge further details.

Posted about flooding issues on his campaign's Facebook page, citing work with borough council to identify lots for green storm management projects. Says improving infrastructure is a top issue for the district.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Supports ban on gifts to elected officials, limits on political contributions, and transparency of all spending related to election outcomes. Has vowed on social media to not accept contributions from corporations, favoring only small, individual donations.

Wants to prohibit the practice of lobbyists making gifts to legislators.

Has vowed not to be influenced by "special interest groups." Supports limiting campaign contributions to candidates, getting rid of state lobbyists, banning gifts to all state employees, and eliminating super PACs, which are protected by the U.S. Supreme Court's Citizen United decision.

Candidate did not return requests for information by press time.

FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS

Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto, UNITE PAC, Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, Conservation Voters of Pennsylvania, Steel City Stonewall Democrats, Pennsylvania AFL-CIO Executive Council, State Rep. Sara Innamorato, Emily's List, State Sen. Wayne Fontana, Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers, SEIU PA State Council, Planned Parenthood, Working Families Party.

Candidate did not return requests for information by press time.

Allegheny County Democratic Committee, Life PAC of Southwestern Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation, Firearm Owners Against Crime, NRA, Gun Owners of America.

Pittsburgh Fraternal Order of Police, Pittsburgh Fire Fighters, Pittsburgh Plumbers Union Local 27, Steamfitters Local Union 449, Laborers' Local 373, Boilermakers Union Local 154.