

PERSONALITY PROFILES

Pundits call Pennsylvania's race for Republican incumbent U.S. Sen. Pat Toomey's seat one of the top five Senate races in the country. "It is inconceivable to think Democrats could win control of Senate without winning this seat," says Franklin & Marshall College political professor G. Terry Madonna. And while the three candidates in the Democratic primary, John Fetterman, Katie McGinty and Joe Sestak, all agree on many liberal policies (i.e. bringing jobs that were shipped overseas back to the U.S.), they differ starkly on how they convey those policies to the public.

{ COMPILED BY RYAN DETO }

CANDIDATE	JOHN FETTERMAN	KATIE MCGINTY	JOE SESTAK
BIOGRAPHY	<p>Braddock mayor since 2005, Fetterman proudly speaks of his experience working toward revitalizing one of the poorest boroughs in Allegheny County. Before becoming mayor, he had worked with AmeriCorps in the Hill District and launched a GED program in Braddock. He tends to speak in an off-the-cuff style and has focused his campaign on inequality. Some have called him a "wild card" in the race, and he has publicly endorsed presidential candidate Bernie Sanders.</p>	<p>A former Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection secretary, McGinty is a longtime Eastern Pennsylvanian. Served as an environmental adviser to President Bill Clinton and as Gov. Tom Wolf's chief of staff. Has received the backing of Democratic Party leadership, including endorsements from President Barack Obama and major party financial support. She stays on message during press events and has focused her campaign mainly on bringing back manufacturing jobs to the country.</p>	<p>A retired Navy Admiral and former Congressman, Sestak lost by two points to Toomey in 2010. Served as defense director for the National Security Council under President Clinton and is the only candidate in the primary race with previous experience in the U.S. Congress. Sestak has been called a "maverick," and many in the party fear his independent streak, like when he faced and defeated Arlen Specter in 2010.</p>
GUN CONTROL	<p>Criticizes politicians who discuss gun control only directly after a mass shooting. Says this leads to unproductive decisiveness that stalls efforts to reform gun laws. Favors universal background checks and closing existing loopholes, like the "boyfriend loophole" that allows individuals who were convicted of domestic assault to purchase guns, if they are not married to their victim. His website says he has owned a Smith & Wesson revolver for the past 10 years.</p>	<p>Wants to establish background checks loopholes to ensure that only the lawful owner can have access to a firearm. Also favors background checks for ammunition sales. Opposes state legislation that allows organizations like the National Rifle Association to sue local municipalities over gun-related ordinances. Believes that investing in schools will have a positive effect on communities and could lead to a decrease in gun violence.</p>	<p>Says making mental-health and education reform more of a priority could have a positive effect on gun violence. He supports President Obama's recent executive action on gun-violence prevention. While in Congress he supported an assault-weapons ban, closing the gun-show loophole and initiating instant background checks; he would continue to support these measures. He also says his time in the Navy gives him a deeper understanding of the importance of gun safety.</p>
STUDENT DEBT	<p>Says "no one should have to rule out pursuing a college degree because they can't afford it." Would call for every public university to be free, or as low-cost as possible, and for student borrowers to have the opportunity to refinance student loans. Fetterman has derided the payday-loan industry for luring desperate, mostly poor customers with the promise of quick money, and says student-loan companies also fit in that equation.</p>	<p>Says students should be able to refinance their student loans. Supports giving colleges that freeze tuition hikes preferential treatment for federal grants. Favors Obama's initiative to make data available on the employment and earning outcomes of college graduates. Would work to expand tax credits for middle-class families who are paying for college, and restore funds to trade schools and other apprenticeship programs. "It is about making sure that we are easing that burden of college debt."</p>	<p>Supported efforts while in Congress to increase Pell grants and tax credits for higher education. Says Pennsylvania had the third-highest average student-debt of any state, at about \$33,000. He believes that government assistance to colleges should be tied to their level of transparent accountability, and that increases to tuition and fees should remain at or below inflation rates.</p>
FRACKING	<p>Calls for a severance tax on natural gas of 5 to 7 percent. Wants an increase in the number of state enforcement officers. Proposes a moratorium on fracking in the state until these conditions are met. Believes fracking should be "restricted to areas that aren't parks and recreation centers, or areas that could contaminate our drinking water." Has been critical of McGinty's oversight of Pennsylvania's fracking industry while serving in the DEP.</p>	<p>Believes her time in the DEP puts her ahead of her opponents on environmental issues. Though fracking in Pennsylvania began during her tenure, says she instituted a fracking ban in state parks, proposed regulations to cut methane emissions and empowered DEP staff to enforce fines on the spot. She is not calling for a moratorium, but backs a severance tax of 5 percent and an additional 4.7 cents per 1,000 cubic feet of gas produced.</p>	<p>Sestak supports a fracking moratorium until protections for the environment and public health are set up, oversight agencies are properly staffed, and a 4.5 to 5 percent severance tax is put in place. Sestak says Pennsylvania governors to date have not ensured that the DEP was sufficiently prepared before supporting fracking in the state. He says fracking should not occur on public land and that children "should not see [drilling rigs] as they walk out of school."</p>
FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS	<p>The Braddock mayor has received hometown support, especially among the Mon Valley community. Former Maryland Governor and former Democratic presidential candidate Martin O'Malley has publicly endorsed Fetterman. Fetterman has also been linked to Vermont Senator and presidential candidate Bernie Sanders (Fetterman endorsed Sanders in January), but Sanders has yet to publicly endorse Fetterman.</p>	<p>Has received dozens of endorsements, including Vice President Joe Biden, Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto and Gov. Tom Wolf. She has also received many labor endorsements, including the Service Employees International Union and United Steelworkers. The Democratic Party has poured millions into her campaign recently. Has received contributions from high-ranking employees of drilling companies.</p>	<p>Even though Sestak has Congressional experience and a liberal voting record, he has not received big endorsements. However, Democratic committees from Delaware County (his home county) and Chester County (McGinty's home county) have backed him, as has the veterans-rights PAC, VoteVets. He has the lowest average campaign contribution figure at \$244 per donation. Also endorsed by Jim Burn, the former state party chair, and the Philadelphia Inquirer.</p>