

Community Issues

One of the major factors behind Joe's decision to run for State Representative of the 177th district is that he believes everyone needs a voice in their government. For the past three decades the 177th district has been represented by the increasingly-radicalized Republican party which has failed to be inclusive and effectively represent many of Joe's fellow citizens and neighbors. Joe is running because he wants to support everyone in the district where he has lived nearly all of his life, and to provide Philadelphia and the lower Northeast with leadership, not just another rubber stamp vote in Harrisburg.

Joe believes that it's time to restore the legislative voice of the 177th district to its people, to lead in a manner that reflects the values of the community, and to get back to common sense solutions for the issues and crises we face everyday.

Joe's platform focuses on:

- Providing excellent constituent services to our neighborhoods
- Ensuring that all Pennsylvanians have access to healthcare
- Leadership for a comprehensive plan to address the opioid crisis

Constituent Service

Once elected, Joe Hohenstein will dedicate himself to providing the very best in constituent services to those living in the 177th district. Joe has roots that go back 5 generations in Frankford. He was raised by parents who gave him a model for a life of service. His father was a teacher, his mother a social worker and both have served their communities for years: lecturing in church, coaching for the kids' sports teams and helping run a food co-op. Joe's parents are in their 80's and still provide meal deliveries to neighbors who are shut in. Joe is seeking to take the examples set by his Mom and Dad and put those lessons into action as a State Representative.

Joe stood up in 2016 because he believes that government is an ongoing conversation about community wants, needs, values, and rights. Joe is excited to be part of that all-important conversation, and to help the people of the 177th district make their voices heard in Harrisburg. He believes the first job of a State Representative is to make certain that the people of the neighborhoods are safe, healthy and happy in their lives 'on the block.' He will utilize old and new models to deliver services to people. He will establish as many offices as possible in the neighborhoods to provide traditional services for people to come and have their problems resolved by staff who will know their way around the federal, state and city services that can provide solutions. He will also follow the lead of other legislators and establish traveling 'pop-up' offices to reach directly to people who cannot easily travel to a neighborhood office.

Finally, he will establish an online platform that will make accessing information and asking for help as easy as possible.

Ensuring all Pennsylvanians have access to healthcare

Joe will fight in Harrisburg to expand healthcare access to our seniors, veterans, children, and all who are not covered by the current system. Joe believes that every person has the right to healthcare and supports the creation of a single payer healthcare system. He recognizes the empirical evidence that single payer healthcare systems deliver more health care to more people for less money. There are models which have worked in our country for state level single payer healthcare, which would fall under the General Assembly's jurisdiction. Starting in 2006 and with a Republican Governor, the Massachusetts state legislature has passed a series of major health care reform laws. The 2006 law mandated that nearly every resident of Massachusetts obtain a minimum level of insurance coverage and provided free health care insurance for residents earning less than 150% of the federal poverty level. In 2017, Massachusetts enjoyed major legislative victories which took concrete steps towards a single payer healthcare system.

Joe believes having private companies provide healthcare presents a moral hazard in which healthcare companies have a profit incentive to provide less health care to the people they serve. Joe will work to advance health care reform which will benefit all citizens of Pennsylvania by providing them healthcare for less money per capita than the current private system. Joe is prepared to stand up to the special interests in Harrisburg that may oppose his efforts and work with other legislators who want to help make sure all citizens of Pennsylvania have access to the healthcare they need.

Real Solutions for the Opioid Crisis

Joe has been hearing from neighbors throughout the 177th district of the disruption and dangers in their day-to-day life wrought by the opioid crisis. The area of the district around Lehigh Avenue in particular is facing a daily dilemma created by a policy failure from the City of Philadelphia's 'clean up' of the heroin camps on the Conrail railroad bed in mid-2017. The action failed because it did not provide a full wrap around solution to the problem. It pushed the people suffering from heroin and opioid addiction from the railroad to the streets of Fishtown, Old Richmond and Port Richmond. An opportunity to take the first steps at making everyone in the community safer by providing transitional housing and treatment was lost. People were displaced and are now literally wandering, camping out in tents, and residents live in greater fear than before.

Joe believes that a comprehensive solution is required: one that takes into account and the law enforcement and public health challenges of the problem, and focuses on safety for everyone.

This is not the time for half-baked policies or turning up our nose to uncomfortable suggestions and ideas. To Joe, one thing is clear: any solution will need to be funded. Any truly effective policy starts with making sure the big-pharma manufacturers pay for the crisis they started. Without adequate funding there cannot be a lasting resolution. The problems of addiction: physical and mental health issues, housing - both transitional and permanent, and reintegration while keeping the community safe will all take money. Joe will support efforts of our city and state government to sue the large pharmaceutical makers who foisted the pestilence of opioids onto our people and make them pay for horrors they have created.

True recovery from addiction begins with a personal decision to change. Joe believes we have to provide every person in the grip of addiction the opportunity to make the correct choices. He also believes we need to reduce the overall harm to our neighborhoods. The solutions to get people into recovery need to function in a way that makes the entire area safer, and they have to be worked out with transparent conversations in our civic meetings and with involvement and cooperation from law enforcement and public health providers. We have to use every tool available to us. The uncomfortable reality is that the dangerous open use and all the other problems that go with it need to be handled by creating solutions that have least risk of harm possible. We need to reduce property damage, exposure, and personal injury. Parts of the 177th are already drowning and we need to lend our neighbors all the help humanly possible.

The future of our city and neighborhoods requires leadership, vision and dedication to put together the funding and policies that will provide lasting solutions. Joe is ready to do whatever the neighborhoods need.