**MEET JOHN FETTERMAN**

**Candidate Biography**



John Fetterman’s rise to political fame is due to more than just his clever tweets and cable news appearances, but rather it is a direct result of his dedication to his community. While teaching adults getting their GEDs in Braddock, PA, John saw a need. The city suffered from gun violence that took the lives of two of his students, it suffered from a depleted economy, and people that had largely been given upon. So in 2005, he ran for Mayor and never looked back. He takes the well-being of his city and its people to heart, and as a candidate for Pennsylvania Senate, he will continue doing just that.

John was born in York, Pennsylvania to teen parents in 1969. He attended Albright College, his father’s alma mater, playing football and studying finance.[[1]](#footnote-0) After college, his life changed forever when he lost a friend in a car accident. It was then that John decided to throw himself into his community becoming a Big Brother to an 8-year-old boy whose parents would both be lost to AIDS.[[2]](#footnote-1) It was his experience working with the Big Brother/Big Sister program that motivated John to quit his job and continue investing in his community. He taught GED classes to young parents before deciding to attend Harvard’s Kennedy School to get his Master’s degree.

Upon returning to Pennslyvania John moved to Braddock and began a GED program there, falling in love with the city's beauty and determination. Motivated to do something about the inequality he saw, John ran for Mayor in 2005 and won.[[3]](#footnote-2) From decreasing violence in Braddock, to bringing businesses back to the city, John revitalized the failing Pittsburgh suburb from the inside out.[[4]](#footnote-3) He began urban gardens, transformed downtown with the help of artists, and attracted new residents to the area. His wife Gisele, who is an immigrant with a story of her own, began the Free Store, where every item from food to clothing is free of charge to the people of Braddock. John’s success here gained him national attention that he used to launch a campaign for Senate in 2016.

After serving as Mayor for 12 years, John ran for Senate in a crowded PA primary. His campaign was fueled by grassroots, small-dollar donations and progressive values. John advocated for immigration reform, marijuana legalization, LGBTQ rights, and a $15 minimum wage.[[5]](#footnote-4) He fought for those incarcerated due to marijuana charges and pushed criminal justice reform on their behalf.

Although John did not win his first statewide race, in 2018 he was elected Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania. In this role, John has continued to advocate for progressive policies and has redefined the office by refusing to live in the Lieutenant Governor's mansion. Instead, he has opted to open up its swimming pool to children in the area dubbing it The Peoples Pool.[[6]](#footnote-5) He has been known to fly an LGBTQ flag and cannabis flag from the Lieutenant Governor's office balcony. John has also amassed a Twitter following for his honest, and often hilarious tweets about politics, Pennsylvania, and sometimes even his colleagues.

Most recently, John has defended the integrity of the PA election as President Trump attempted to have it overturned despite having no evidence. John is dedicated to continuing working for racial equality, helping the working poor, and ending the ineffective war on drugs. John is running for Senate because he seeks to affect policy on a larger scale. He ran for Mayor because the office allowed him to do more for his community than when he was a GED teacher. Now he seeks to do the same for all the people of Pennsylvania by representing them honestly in Washington.

John and his wife Gisele still reside in Braddock with their three children Karl, Grace, and August. The family lives in a converted car dealership with their dog Levi.

**On the Issues**

***Legalizing Cannabis:***

John believes that no one should be in jail or have a record because of marijuana. He sees legalizing marijuana as an issue that unites voters across the aisle and after a listening tour throughout the state he estimates that, **“65 percent of all Pennsylvanians are in favor of legalizing recreational marijuana”.[[7]](#footnote-6)** John has made pardon applications for marijuana more accessible and used his Twitter page to spread awareness about getting marijuana charges expunged. He penned an Op-Ed for the Washington Post where he discussed the irrationality of outlawing marijuana when it has never caused a single death nor overdose.[[8]](#footnote-7)

***Climate Change:***

In his effort to **revitalize the economy** of Braddock, John made green businesses and programs a key component of his plan. The Conservation Voters of PA endorsed John in his quest for Lieutenant Governor citing his green-jobs youth program in Braddock, green space for the community, and his success in bringing an **alternative energy company** to the town creating more **green jobs** in the process.[[9]](#footnote-8) John believes climate change to be one of the major issues of our time and has called for caps on carbon pollution as well as having testified in front of Congress in support of climate change legislation.[[10]](#footnote-9)

***Fracking:***

John believes fracking has the potential to act as **a bridge between gas and clean energy sources**. He does believe fracking can be done safely and sees the industry as **critical to the state economy and “union way of life.”**[[11]](#footnote-10) John has evolved on this issue since running for Senate in 2016 and while he still sees fracking as a complicated topic he believes politicians can’t take this livelihood away from Pennslyvannians without a suitable replacement.[[12]](#footnote-11)

1. <https://www.governor.pa.gov/about/lieutenant-governor/> [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. <https://web.archive.org/web/20160414141540/http://www.newsworks.org/index.php/local/ninetynine/86365-15-questions-for-behemoth-us-senate-candidate-john-fetterman> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. <https://ballotpedia.org/John_Fetterman> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. <https://www.cnn.com/2015/11/23/politics/senate-candidate-john-fetterman-braddock/index.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. <https://www.publicopiniononline.com/story/news/local/2016/09/16/mayor-john-fetterman-speak-local-democrats/90472466/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
6. <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/john-fetterman-pennsylvania-democrat-1089672/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
7. <https://www.post-gazette.com/news/politics-state/2019/06/05/Fetterman-s-marijuana-road-trip-is-over-and-he-shares-his-conclusions/stories/201906050141> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
8. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/12/08/john-fetterman-legalize-marijuana-democrats/> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
9. <https://www.conservationpa.org/news/conservation-voters-pa-endorses-governor-tom-wolf-re-election-mayor-john-fetterman-lieutenant> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
10. <https://www.conservationpa.org/endorsements/mayor-john-fetterman> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
11. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/27/us/politics/pennsylvania-democrats-fracking.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
12. <https://www.inquirer.com/opinion/commentary/fracking-pennsylvania-east-pittsburgh-merrion-oil-gas-john-fetterman-20210104.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)