

Marine Veteran John Merhottein Announces Bid for State Senate

Pledges to Continue His Work Protecting Families and Taxpayers



By Committee to Elect John Merhottein
BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP, PA – Supported by his family, friends and neighbors, John Merhottein announced that he filed over 1,200 signatures in Harrisburg and is officially a candidate for the State Senate in Pennsylvania's 18th District. Merhottein, a Bethlehem Township Commissioner, U.S. Marine veteran and youth sports coach, is seeking the Republican nomination in the May Primary Election. The Senate district includes portions of Lehigh and Northampton counties.

"My decision to run for the State Senate was not taken lightly. However, as I

spoke to residents across the district, it was clear that people are looking for a change and a new direction," said Merhottein. "Throughout my career, I have prioritized service to country, our community, and local families. I see this as a continuation of my efforts to help make our community a better place to live, work and raise a family."

Merhottein is a longtime resident of Bethlehem Township in Northampton County who understands the opportunities and challenges our region faces. As a Bethlehem Township Commissioner, he is working to ensure township police have the tools and training they need to do their jobs and keep residents safe. Merhottein will be a strong leader in the State Senate, proactively fighting the crime and drug epidemic that threatens the future of far too many citizens.

"I support our police and first responders who bravely put their lives on the line every day to protect and serve our communities," Merhottein said. "I am tired of picking up the newspaper on a daily basis and seeing how crime and drugs are ravaging our communities. Working with law enforcement and community leaders across the Lehigh Valley, I am prepared to continue my work because current trends prove public safety must never be taken for granted." Asked what issues his campaign would focus on, Merhottein stressed: fighting crime and drugs to protect families,

giving parents more control of their

children's education, bringing fiscal discipline to Harrisburg to protect taxpayers, and supporting policies to help working families and seniors during these times of skyrocketing costs of gas, groceries, and other household needs.

"Too many people are hurting in today's economy. At the same time, too many of the politicians in Harrisburg are part of the problem, not part of the solution," said Merhottein. "I was raised in a working-class family, and I know

that many families and seniors cannot afford to pay more at a time when inflation is at a 40 year high. Now more than ever, government needs a new direction to better serve taxpayers and families."

Merhottein pointed to his own record as Commissioner as proof that he knows

how to reduce debt and control spending, as well as find innovative ways to bring community members together to meet the challenges we face. Through strong fiscal discipline and commonsense leadership, he is leading efforts to reduce township debt – cutting it by \$6.7 million dollars or nearly in half in just 4 years.

Working in a bi-partisan manner, the board has worked to control taxes, including this year's budget, during a time other communities across the region were seeing significant tax increases. "As a Commissioner, I've made the tough decisions to reduce township debt and control spending because I know local residents already pay enough of their hard-earned money toward taxes," Merhottein said.

"I also understand that residents deserve quality services. That is why I worked with fellow commissioners to bring a satellite branch of the Bethlehem Public Library to our township. I am running for State Senate to bring my commonsense leadership and new ideas to Harrisburg to help local families and senior while protecting taxpayers."

John proudly served our country in operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield as a United States Marine, where he earned the National Defense Service Medal & Kuwait Liberation Medal. John also was awarded the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Two Meritorious Masts, and the Good Conduct Medal during his service. Upon returning from his service in Desert Storm, John went back to school and earned a certificate in computer programming during a time when this field was quickly changing.

He has worked in the Information Technology field for more than 20 years as a Computer Programmer and EDI Analyst helping regional companies grow and better serve their customers and clients. John understands the importance of effective job training and re-training programs for local workers and as State Senator, he will support these important programs. "Government doesn't create jobs, but it can ensure our state is competitive when it comes to attracting employers and supporting the job-creating industries of tomorrow," said Merhottein. "But right now, taxes on job creators in Pennsylvania continue to be among the highest in the nation and the regulatory structure is among the most burdensome.

After the pandemic and the mandated shutdowns on many small businesses and restaurants, these employers and workers need help and as State Senator, I will work to get government out of the way so entrepreneurs and small businesses can do what they do best: create jobs and grow our economy." Echoing the views of many who live in the Lehigh Valley, Merhottein said he is also running because this job should be about, "Public service, not self-service."

He pledged to lead by example on reform and never forget who he answers to: the hard working men and women who call the Lehigh

Valley home. "It is not surprising that so many citizens have lost confidence in our elected officials when they vote themselves pay raises and increase their own pensions while the people they represent struggle to make ends meet," Merhottein said.

"I will lead on reform by maintaining an open and transparent office, so you know how your tax dollars are spent. I will not take the costly per diems, and you can trust that I will never

vote to increase my

own pay."

John and his wife, Michelle, are raising their son, John Joesph (JJ) in Bethlehem Township where he attends Notre Dame Elementary school in Bethlehem. Merhottein is active in the community and volunteers his time coaching JJ's baseball and basketball teams as part of the Freemansburg Bethlehem Township Athletic Association & Bethlehem Township Athletic Association.