

This year's crucial mid-term elections will not only decide which party will control Congress, but also brings about an important decision for Pennsylvanians with the gubernatorial race. After a nasty democratic primary, former Philadelphia and Democratic National Committee Head Ed Rendell emerged victorious over opponent Robert Casey, Jr. On the Republican side, Pennsylvania former Pennsylvania House and Senate Member and Attorney General Mike Fisher ran unopposed in the primary.

Frontrunner Ed Rendell has run on a platform of Education reform by relying less on local taxes, and health care for the elderly. Rendell also proposes a cut in property taxes. He insists that his new initiatives can be paid for without raising current taxes by continuing efforts during the Ridge Administration to make the state government more streamlined and efficient as well as redirecting funds raised by the recent hike of the cigarette tax and opening slot machines on race tracks.

Mike Fisher proposes Education Reform in the form of stiffer standards for schools, students, and faculty; relaxed government regulation; and the use of school vouchers to provide choices to the students and create competition between schools for excellence. The Fisher proposal for expanded health coverage will be funded by the opening of slot machines at race tracks, and access to a Federal Waiver.

Early summer polls have Rendell leading Fisher by as many as 15 percent. Many experts do expect a closer race as the election draws nearer as Republicans who were disengaged from the race during a meaningless primary start to show interest. Although, many Republicans do lament the fact that the acting Governor Mark Schweiker is not running in light of his sudden celebrity status after the Miner Miracle earlier this summer.

There remains hope, however, for the GOP faithful even after immensely popular former Governor Tom Ridge left his position to head President Bush's Department of Homeland Security as former governors Dick Thornburgh, Bob Casey and Ridge all were trailing in early polls during their respective successful runs for the governorship.

Interested voters can gain access to more information on the candidates at the following web sites:

www.mikefisher.com

www.rendellforgovernor.com