

Friel announces second run for 26th District House seat

Evan Brandt – FEB 18, 2022 – The Mercury

EAST VINCENT — Owen J. Roberts School Board President Paul Friel has announced a second run for the state House of Representatives.

In 2020, Democrat Friel ran unsuccessfully against 15-term Republican incumbent Tim Hennessey for the House seat for the 26th District. Hennessey has not yet announced his intentions for this year's elections.

As a result of the redistricting that occurs every 10 years in the wake of the census, the district in which Friel runs will be configured differently than it was two years ago when it included part of Pottstown as well as the northern Chester County communities. The new map recommended by the Pennsylvania Legislative Reapportionment Commission keeps the 26th entirely in northern Chester County.

In a press release announcing [his candidacy](#), Friel said, "I am running for state representative because we need a leader who will focus on our local community issues; who will fight for small businesses and help build a strong local economy; who believes that access to a quality education should not be determined by your zip code and that affordable healthcare is a right."

Friel is the owner of PACE Environmental, a Mid-Atlantic environmental testing and engineering firm, and has served as on the Owen J Roberts since 2019. He and his wife Mary raised their four children in Northern Chester County, where they have lived since 1995.

He was previously CEO and President of Swiss Farms, Saxby's Coffee, and Agle Nutrition.

Friel grew up in Gilbertsville and Lower Pottsgrove. He graduated from St. Pius X High School and Temple University. Friel has also served on the executive boards of the Philadelphia Boys Choir and Camp Rainbow.

He has been a member of the Owen J. Roberts School Board since 2019.

"In order to represent a community, we first have to believe in it. We have to value each member and recognize the unique contributions each of us brings. Our representatives should be working for the common good, not eroding the democratic process that allows every voice to be heard," said Friel.

Friel may be referring to the fact that after the 2020 election, Hennessey was joined by 63 other state House Republicans in writing a letter to Pennsylvania's Congressional delegation, urging them to object to the certification of Pennsylvania's electors when the electoral votes for the hard-fought presidential election were counted in Congress on Jan. 6, 2021.

Hennessey [told MediaNews Group in January 2021](#) that he did not regret signing the letter because he does not consider the objections to be connected to the violence which erupted that day inside the Capitol by those who believe that Donald Trump won the presidential election.

In 2021, Friel criticized Hennessey's decision to sign the letter objecting to the certification of Pennsylvania electors.

"It's disingenuous for someone to accept the results of an election that returns them to office, but then seek to invalidate the part of the election that didn't go the way they wanted," Friel said at the time.

The letter that Hennessey signed laid out a number of technical objections to how the election was conducted in Pennsylvania.

In 2021, Hennessey reasoned that even if Pennsylvania's votes had been thrown out, "it would not be enough to change the results of the election. The election is over, Biden won," Hennessey said at the time.

