

Robert Allen Mansfield  
Formal Announcement of Candidacy for Governor of Pennsylvania  
Saturday, November 14th, 2009  
Harrisburg, PA

Good Afternoon. Thank you for coming today. My name is Robert Allen Mansfield, and I stand before you today to declare my candidacy for the Governorship of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

I have served our country faithfully in the Army and on the battlefields of Iraq, but I know in my heart that my service to this country is not yet complete. When you travel around the world to fight in the back alleys of lawless lands in defense of freedom, one comes to the profound realization that America occupies a very special place in the world. You come to understand just how blessed we are to be living in a land of freedom— a land with the rule of law, widespread prosperity, and endless opportunity – blessings that are in such short supply in many forgotten parts of the globe.

It is my heartfelt intention to make my campaign an unapologetic stand for the principles and ideas that I believe will reinvigorate our state, and I will be taking these principles and ideas without compromise directly to the citizens of Pennsylvania to advocate on their behalf.

Pennsylvania has 67 beautiful counties within its borders, each with its unique story and importance dating back to the colonial period. But in spite of our state's unique beauty and heritage, I am here today to issue a challenge and a warning to all Pennsylvanians – a warning which states that Pennsylvania will not continue to remain as an attractive state for the next generation of taxpayers to live and work in if we do not make substantial reforms to our tax structure as well as to the state's public pension and retirement medical plans.

Until now, politicians have either done one of three things to address these issues- either they've paid them lip service only, or they've made some cosmetic changes and then claimed "success", or they've managed to exacerbate the problem entirely. Regardless of which tactic was chosen, all three are a form of cowardly governance that only serves to disrespect taxpayers and the fuel bitterness and divide between Pennsylvanians.

There is no doubt that challenging entrenched interests and establishment thinking is not an easy endeavor. But if we are honest with ourselves and exercise a little bit of foresight, we will recognize that any further inaction on our part will cause our young and mobile citizens to simply say "No thanks" for footing the bill for punitive taxes and unsustainable public sector employee pensions. We cannot continue to put our state on a path that will cause it to lose its most valuable commodity- its people. If a state does not keep its fiscal house in order, all of those generous population projections that Pennsylvania lawmakers base their decisions on will never come to fruition.

When comparing Pennsylvania's tax system to other states, we see that some states only have a sales tax, others have an income tax, and still others a property tax, but we here in Pennsylvania are saddled with all three. The non-partisan Tax Foundation recently announced that Pennsylvania shoulders the 11th highest per capita tax burden of any country, and yet there are too many legislators who continue to act as if Pennsylvanians are not overtaxed. There are 49 other states that Pennsylvania must compete with to attract entrepreneurs and businesses- we must strive to do everything possible to make Pennsylvania the most attractive state in the country to live in and do business in.

Our property tax actually serves as a never-ending government lease on our private property. There are Pennsylvanians who are now paying more to the government per month to keep their property than they originally paid to the bank to buy their property.

And while we're talking about property taxes, we need to be talking about the public school system, which is what our property taxes fund. While per pupil school spending and property taxes have increased, outcomes for students haven't. I stand as a strong advocate of curriculum reform that will challenge our children to achieve in a highly competitive 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

Anyone with a shred of common sense knows you don't get something for nothing. Except, of course, too many of our elected officials in the state. In Pennsylvania, government at every level – the State legislature, municipalities, and local school boards have given pay increases and enhanced retirement benefits away as if the gravy train would never end. Why? Whether it's at the behest of a special interest group, or a public sector union, incumbent politicians almost always put the interest of these groups ahead of the most important special interest group- the taxpayers of Pennsylvania- who ultimately foot the bill.

At the end of the day, it's the citizens of Pennsylvania, who pay for our leaders' lack of fiscal discipline. For too long, our state's leaders have not exercised responsible oversight over our state and local budgets. We've had too many failed municipal governments, including those in Scranton, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Johnstown which have been placed into receivership due to financial mismanagement. And again, it's the Pennsylvania taxpayer that is left on the hook to pay the bill- both for the supervision of these failed governments to prevent them from wasting any more money, and even higher taxes keep these failed governments afloat.

Short-sighted leaders think they can get away with almost any giveaway because they know that they will never be held accountable for its long term consequences. Whether they've lost touch with what they are doing to your family pocketbook or whether they simply just don't care almost doesn't matter anymore. What does matter is that we bring this business-as-usual approach to an end. This state of affairs simply cannot continue if we expect to remain a competitive state that attracts people rather than encourages them to leave.

The tide is changing. The taxpayers of Pennsylvania are starting to say "enough is enough" to wasteful government spending. Recently, Monroe County recently rejected two referendums on the ballot that called for increases in county property taxes. This victory for taxpayers shows lawmakers that the Initiative and Referendum process is a much more responsible way to decide which projects should and should not receive taxpayer monies. By letting citizens, not spendthrift bureaucrats, decide which projects they deem worthy of their hard-earned tax dollars, we can better hold the line on wasteful spending initiatives that are almost always justified "in the name of the public good." As Governor, I will strive to place more discretion in the hands of the citizenry through taxpayer protections rather than continue to allow conflicted bureaucrats too much power over important budgetary appropriations, and protect the principles of a Constitutional republic on which we are founded.

We are only punishing personal savings, entrepreneurship, and economic growth if we continue to see government taxation and regulation as the solution rather than the problem. How long will it be before we the people take to heart the following immutable lesson- the more you increase taxes, the greater likelihood people will leave your jurisdiction. This also results in lower tax revenues to the state. And take note that the people who are most likely to leave are those that can afford to leave- thereby making life worse for those on the lower rungs of the economic ladder. It is a vicious cycle, and if I have anything to say about it, I will bring reckless tax and spend practices to an end.

Let me be clear- I am not running for Governor simply to be yet another establishment politician or placeholder that will not challenge the status quo once I am elected. I will effectively challenge the dominant but misguided assumptions pertaining to the proper role of government that have become entrenched in Pennsylvania government for far too long. I am running for Governor to effect real change in the state- the type of change that will roll back the intrusiveness of government in people's lives and in people's pocketbooks. The type of real change that will serve as a catalyst for growth, ensure prosperity for our citizens, and put us on a path towards a more sound financial future. To these ends, I will remain faithful, and I will not be deterred.

In closing, it has become astoundingly clear, that our freedom and liberty are under attack. There are forces in place to unravel the very foundation of our Constitution and circumvent our Bill of Rights. I took an oath to protect our Constitution

against all enemies, be they foreign OR domestic. I take this oath to heart. Our country IS the last beacon of hope for the world. That light is flickering and growing dimmer every day. The States will be playing a new role, as the last line of defense to protect us all from those forces.

I invite you to visit my website at [www.mansfield4pa.org](http://www.mansfield4pa.org) to share your ideas and your solutions to the problems that our state cannot continue to ignore. It's time to usher in a new era of responsible governance in the state of Pennsylvania.

My name is Robert Allen Mansfield, and I would be honored by your support of my candidacy for Governor of our blessed state, Pennsylvania.

Thank you for attending.