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FEATURED

WATCH VIDEO: House hopeful aims to ‘reboot Johnstown’

By Dave Sutor

dsutor@tribdem.com Jan 17, 2018



Justin Capouellez, of Stonycreek Township, announces his candidacy in the 71st Legislative District on Tuesday, Jan. 16, 2018, at the Community Arts Center of Cambria County in Westmont.

By Dave Sutor

dsutor@tribdem.com



Justin Capouellez wants to “reboot Johnstown.”

On Tuesday, Capouellez, 25, of Stonycreek Township, spoke about transforming a city – and region – that once “left an indelible impact on world history,” but that now struggles with issues, such as an opioid epidemic, violence, unfunded mandates, and undermanned volunteer fire companies.

He hopes to help find solutions to those challenges as a member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives.

“We need a change in our community,” Capouellez, a Republican, said when officially announcing his candidacy in the 71st Legislative District.

“We need to reboot Johnstown. It’s a time for change, here in Johnstown and in Harrisburg. Tonight, I am here to declare that it is no longer acceptable for our state government to continually give us a false sense of hope that the future is going to improve, while politics as usual continues.”

Capouellez outlined some of his plans during the announcement held at the Community Arts Center of Cambria County in Westmont.

“As your next state representative, I will work to reduce government spending, cut taxes and unnecessary regulations, and identify sustainable sources of revenue, not based on gambling, smoking or drinking,” he said.

“I will work to empower stronger communities through collaboration to curtail violence, homicide, and drug overdose rates.”

A Johnstown native, Capouellez is active in Vision 2025, a project designed to reinvent the city and the surrounding region in the upcoming years. He attended the 2016 Republican National Convention, interned for state

Sen. Don White, founded Pennsylvania Highlands Community College's Campus Crusade for Christ, led an effort to repair potholes on Theatre Drive and worked to assist less-fortunate individuals in cities where he has spent time.

"Each of these activities helped me to recognize that I'm an articulate leader able to work with and lead anyone on the pendulum from a college president to a homeless person on the streets of Seattle, Pittsburgh, or Johnstown," Capouellez said.

The 71st District, which includes almost two dozen municipalities in Cambria Somerset counties, is currently represented by state Rep. Bryan Barbin, D-Johnstown.

"I, unlike Rep. Barbin, will not stand in the way of progress," Capouellez said. "Sadly, I believe Rep. Barbin, has, too often, been an obstacle to development. And, frankly, he seems bored of his position."

Dave Sutor is a reporter for The Tribune-Democrat. He can be reached at (814) 532-5056. Follow him on Twitter [@Dave_Sutor](#).



[Capouellez announces run in 71st](#)

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