



# Mathison Concludes Run Across PA to Raise Redistricting Awareness

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Paul Mathison set out on a 1,022 mile, one-lap test of human endurance on April 1st, jogging away among friends, press, and snowflakes. Mathison chose to jog across the state of Pennsylvania to inspire a reform of political redistricting, which is due to occur this year. Leaving from Philadelphia, Paul's tour took him across the edge of Pennsylvania up through Pittsburgh, Erie, then all the way back to Philadelphia on May 9th. It is obvious as to how passionately Mathison feels about political redistricting, but the question that comes to mind is, "Why?"

The answer comes in many forms, beginning with the gerrymandering that was done to his home township Radnor that opened his eyes to what he calls, "a conflict of interest." Through this process controlled by state legislators, Radnor Township is now a part of three Pennsylvania House Districts, the 161st, the 165th, and the 166th.

Math[i]son points to possible detriment of gerrymandering, including loss of voting power, low voter turnout, political polarization, and a deterrent to new, qualified candidates and more as the inspiration for his run. When asked why he chose to run 1,000 miles in order to raise awareness he replied, "Sometimes you have to do something outlandish to raise people's awareness of a topic."

Mathison did not choose to jog 1,022 miles across a state and back merely for improved cardio and a broken-in pair of sneakers, he wanted to inspire the citizens of Pennsylvania to vote for change in the political redistricting system. His PennUltimate Run advocates for a restructured system void of state legislator influence that has led to these, “serpentine and tentacled,” districts that Mathison is running against. The reform that Mathison and his supporters call for is an Independent Reform Commission to counter the system in place today. Change cannot possibly be made in time for the 2011 redistricting, but the PennUltimate Run hopes that Pennsylvania voters can inspire this change before the next ten years passes. Commission members to this new independent group must not have connection to state legislators to avoid the same, “conflict of interest.” The other focus, the main focus of change, is to provide transparency to this entire process for the benefit of Pennsylvania citizens.



Mathison stops at the Flight 93 crash site near Shanksville, PA.

Transparency and accountability will allow the Independent Reform Commission to map out the best looking districts to live and work in. As Mathison set out on his journey he exclaimed, “this is April, and I’m your fool!” He hopes the PennUltimate Run will show that all anyone needs to make change is to take the first step.