



The
PennUltimateRunSM

That which precedes something big

PRESS RELEASE

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(Please also join us in-person, during the Run)

PENNSYLVANIA MAN SETS OUT ON ONE-LAP RUN AROUND THE STATE TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT POLITICAL REDISTRICTING / INSPIRE REFORM

He Can Be Tracked Via GPS Technology and Will Post Updates On Facebook & Twitter

RADNOR, PA – A suburban Philadelphia man today in foul weather set out on the PennUltimate Run, a 1,000-mile human trek around Pennsylvania to raise awareness about political redistricting and to inspire reform in this once-a-decade process.

April 1 is the deadline for the U.S. Census Bureau to release all the data required for this decade's nationwide redistricting of government at all levels.

After a brief ceremony and press conference at the war memorial in downtown Wayne across from Radnor Middle School, Paul Mathison, the lead runner, began pushing a customized fully-loaded jogging stroller west on Route 30 (Lancaster Ave) towards Pittsburgh. Then, it's off to Erie, Scranton, the Liberty Bell in Philly, and back to Radnor.

Mile upon mile Mathison will symbolically offer a crimson relay baton -- on loan from Radnor High School's track team -- to those who would help fulfill the Run's dream.

Participation by others to any degree along the route will be welcomed. Inquiries have reached into the thousands. No sign-up method exists for the Run.

Standing at the memorial, Mathison started: "Etched here are names of those who paid the ultimate price for the freedoms we enjoy, yet so often take for granted."

“Elsewhere in the world today people are struggling for the right to free and fair elections; here in Pa., birthplace of American democracy, we face a similar struggle during the redistricting process,” Mathison said.

In Pa., under current law, redistricting is controlled by state legislators. Allowing elected officials to draw their own districts is a conflict of interest. Pa. is one of the most “gerrymandered” states in the nation. Gerrymandering is the process by which elected officials draw district boundaries to protect their interests rather than the interests of voters.

One ultimate goal of the Run and allied efforts is to replace Pa.’s current Legislative Reapportionment Commission approach with an independent commission in future decades. For 2011, the goal is to do redistricting right...now.

“The over-arching goal of 2011 Pa. redistricting should be *independence* and *transparency* in the process,” Mathison declared.

“What better way is there to draw attention to such an important topic like this than by demonstrating its scale and breadth through the Run?” Mathison asked.

“Strengthening our political system is arguably the most important action we can take to assure success in a globally competitive society where labor, capital and citizens are free to locate virtually anywhere,” Mathison said.

Redistricting reform is a forerunner to progress on many fronts: reduction in / rightsizing of government; greater trust in government and the political process; enhanced, more cost-effective public services; and better-qualified candidates for elected office.

Several Pa. lawmakers have contacted the Run to express support.

Concluding his remarks, Mathison thanked volunteers nationwide who are assisting with the Run in such areas as logistics, social media, technology, and supplies.

Stroller contents include a smartphone, solar-powered battery charger, auxiliary batteries, camping gear, emergency lights, spare inner tubes, all-weather clothing, spare running shoes, maps, fuel (food & liquids), calling cards, and aspirin. A box of supplies was pre-shipped to a post office at the halfway point near Erie.

The Run will consist of an estimated two million steps around the state. “I view it, however, as only one million steps to Erie, and one million steps back,” said Mathison.

In the absence of RMS students, who were not able to participate at the start due to the inclement weather, Mathison posted the official first Tweet of the Run: “We’re off!” Attendees then watched as the sleet-covered runner leaned into the wind, splashed through puddles, and faded into the horizon.

The partially pre-mapped-out route will include daily jogs, situated along the shoulders & berms of public roads, passing through hundreds of communities, with overnight stops determined by fate and fatigue. The Run is roughly routed along historic Route 30 in the south, the great Steel Valley corridor in the west, scenic Route 6 in the north, and the Pocono Mountains and Delaware River Valley in the east.

Long periods of exposure to heavy traffic, distracted drivers, steep mountains, extreme weather, grimy roads, errant pets, wild game (maybe), and other hazards are expected.

Not among the Run’s volunteer crew is an in-run support team & vehicle, so Mathison expects to camp out under the stars and he hopes to benefit from benevolent motel proprietors, sympathetic homeowners, and lenient peace officers.

About The Lead Runner

Paul Mathison, 51, is CEO of **pjmathison**, a government affairs and management consulting firm he founded in 1990. He holds an MBA from the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School and a BS from Purdue University. Mathison previously attempted a 100-mile-plus two-day run from the State Capitol steps in Harrisburg to City Hall in Philadelphia but fell short a few miles of his goal. The Run is NOT a 501(c)3 charity or the like, it is an upbeat professional activity of Mathison’s firm.

Follow The Run

The web site for the Run is www.pjmathison.com/pennultimaterun. Resources include the GPS-tracking tool, news feeds, a “blue paper” on redistricting, a route map, FAQs, photographs, and ways to support the Run.

Photographs and news during the Run will be posted on the Run’s Facebook & Twitter pages, probably with assistance from a nearby middle-schooler.

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