

This is an open seat due to Pat Toomey's retirement. It's also an election that could go either way, though there are some signs that the Democrats may have an edge. And finally, it's probably also the Democrats' best pickup opportunity. Neither candidate comes from central casting, which makes it an especially interesting race.

John Fetterman (D). The front page of Fetterman's campaign website says: "A different kind of Democrat. John doesn't look like a typical politician, and more importantly, he doesn't act like one." In fact, he looks a lot more blue collar than most politicians, and his background is also atypical: the son of teenage parents, he played football at a small college and later moved to a steel mill town outside of Pittsburgh to found a GED program. He became mayor of a town that's over 80% black, and the the state's Lieutenant Governor.

His website has a heading for "Climate Justice" and says, "Climate change is an existential threat. We need to transition to clean energy as quickly as possible, and we can create millions of good union jobs in the process." It comes with a 45 second [video](#) about environmental justice. (As I discovered, he's also got a [TED talk](#) on "The Brevity of Life and How It Can Move You.")

Mehmet Oz (R). Dr. Oz also has an atypical story as the son of Turkish immigrants, a surgeon, and a TV personality. His explanation of why he's running begins with, "Today, America's heartbeat is in a code red in need of a defibrillator to shock it back to life." He goes on to attack the handling of COVID, particularly lockdowns and quarantines. The tab on "energy independence" is a full-throated appeal to Pennsylvania's history as a producer of coal, oil, and natural gas:

"Pennsylvania is a leader in the production of natural gas and coal. The Biden Administration has launched an attack on the energy industry stifling domestic energy production and weakening the U.S. position in energy production. These attacks have resulted in skyrocketing gas and energy prices and made our current energy options less reliable. Dr. Oz will work to overturn these heavy-handed regulations that are hurting Pennsylvania jobs and our local communities."

Which of these two unconventional candidates prevails may well determine control of the Senate. At the moment, it looks like Fetterman has the edge. Either way, we're going to end up with someone interesting filling this Senate seat.