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Vice President Mike Pence campaigns in Manheim Township, calls Lloyd Smucker, Scott Perry 'outstanding leaders'



SAM JANESCH | Staff Writer Oct 24, 2018



Vice President Mike Pence greets the crowd after speeches at the Lancaster Airport in support of Lloyd Smucker and Scott Perry on Wednesday, October 24, 2018

DAN MARSCHKA | Staff Photographer

Vice President Mike Pence, at a rally Wednesday in Manheim Township, called U.S. Rep. Lloyd Smucker an “outstanding” leader and supporter of the Trump administration who deserves a second term representing Lancaster County in Congress in two weeks.

Speaking to about 300 supporters in an airplane hangar at Lancaster Airport, the vice president endorsed the Lancaster County Republican along with U.S. GOP Rep. Scott Perry in the neighboring Harrisburg-based district.

He mentioned the congressmen’s backgrounds and noted a couple specific items they’ve worked on in Washington, D.C., while giving what was mostly a typical stump speech for President Donald Trump’s leadership.

Tax cuts, health care reform, increases to the military budget — the administration has accomplished them all, Pence said, and **Smucker** and Perry have enthusiastically supported them.

“These are two great congressmen, and with them back in Washington we can make America great again,” Pence said to the crowd, which included several Lancaster County elected officials in addition to other campaign supporters.

Pence’s high-profile rally, and a private fundraiser that preceded it, came less than two weeks before the Nov. 6 midterm election, when Smucker will be up for a second term and when Republicans will try to defend their party’s control in the House and Senate.



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Smucker’s seat in the historically Republican Lancaster-based seat — which was newly redrawn this year as the 11th Congressional District — has 100,000 more GOP voters than Democrats. Trump won its precincts by 26 points in 2016, and local and national political

observers have said Smucker's place is safe.

But his Democratic challenger, **Jess King**, an economic development nonprofit director and first-time candidate, has developed an extensive field operation and held a \$429,000 cash advantage earlier this month — **an unprecedented figure** for a Democrat facing a Republican incumbent in Lancaster County.

Smucker has responded with an aggressive advertising effort, using television commercials and mailers to call King a “radical” who would “rule us like a king” because she supports a national health care system like “Medicare-for-all.” He has also criticized King for out-of-state **donations coming from supporters in places like San Francisco** and New York, **calling them “San Francisco socialists”** while King emphasizes they're the workers for tech companies, not the leaders.



POLITICS

Jess King 'sets a new bar' for Democrats fundraising in Lancaster with \$429,000 cash edge over U.S. Rep. Lloyd Smucker

SAM JANESCH | Staff Writer

Pence did not talk about King or Perry's Democratic challenger, George Scott, by name but referred to them while endorsing the Republicans.

“You look at the contrast between these leaders and their opponents and it couldn't be more stark,” Pence said, citing the Democrats' preferences for single-payer health care and claiming they want to “raise taxes on working families” while the Republicans want to lower them.

While Pence refrained from the terms like “radical” or “socialist” that Smucker has repeated about King — and said again in his remarks at the rally — Perry did pick up some of that language while introducing Smucker.

“In this district right here they're pumping millions of dollars from San Francisco, New York — all kinds of different places that aren't Lancaster County,” Perry said, incorrectly mentioning how much in donations King has received from out of state. As of Sept. 30, she had raised about \$1.4 million total, most of which came from outside of Pennsylvania.

And on the same day explosive devices were sent to a national press organization and several high-profile figures, Perry also inserted a criticism of the media — saying King's campaign has “all the money. They got the press. They got all that stuff.”

Pence started his remarks by condemning the thwarted bombings earlier Wednesday.

Mike Pence in Lancaster County

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Vice President Mike Pence visited the Lancaster Airport Wednesday in support of Lloyd Smucker and Scott Perry.

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The Pence tour

The vice president's Lancaster County visit for Smucker and Perry was part of a two-stop campaign tour Wednesday in Central Pennsylvania before heading to another rally in Norfolk, Virginia.

After stumping for Republican John Chrin in Forty Fort, Luzerne County, he landed at Lancaster Airport in Air Force 2 at 2:20 p.m., about 35 minutes behind schedule.

Smucker and Perry greeted him in the plane before coming out to shake hands with supporters, mostly made up of local first-responders and their families, on the runway.

Smucker said later that while on the plane, they talked about the state of congressional races nationwide and in Pennsylvania, and “a little bit about Lancaster County and the beautiful place that it is.”

During the speech, Pence noted Smucker’s background as a Lancaster County native who built a local construction business and brought “commonsense and conservative principles” to his previous service in the state Senate and in Congress.

“He has established himself as a champion for Pennsylvania, a champion for jobs and a champion for the values that make Pennsylvania great,” Pence said.

In the one reference to the freshman congressman’s personal legislative agenda, Pence said Smucker had worked to expand apprenticeship opportunities for military members.

“These are two really remarkable people,” he said of Smucker and Perry. “I mean, to be honest with you, I’d be out here campaigning for Scott Perry and Lloyd Smucker if they were unopposed.”

But Smucker and Perry are both facing challengers in a year when Democrats are widely expected to perform well in congressional races. And with new reports last week indicating both of their Democratic opponents were well-funded in the final stretch of the campaign, part of Pence’s trip was to fundraise for the candidates.

He spoke with financial supporters for about a half-hour before he took the stage at the rally. The cost of a photo with the vice president was \$2,700, according to a copy of the invitation. Those funds will go to a joint fundraising committee for Smucker and Perry.

Smucker, when asked in an interview if his fundraising disadvantage was a main factor in getting the vice president to come, said Pence and Trump have been committed to helping all kinds of Republican candidates.

He also said there’s been influx of support and Republican enthusiasm in recent weeks as he faces a “strong campaign” from King.

“I think we’re going to win this thing, but sure it is definitely, it’s a competitive race and we’re going to need all Republicans to come out and we’re confident that’s going to happen.”

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