

## ELECTION 2023

### Our Democratic LD26 Candidates for NJ Senate & Assembly

**STATEMENT FROM PRESS RELEASE:** A multi-generational slate is seeking office in Legislative District 26: Joan Waks of Pequannock, Walter Mielarczyk of Pequannock and John Von Achen of Parsippany. Both Mielarczyk and Von Achen are Eagle Scouts. Waks is a former Wayne Councilwoman and retired attorney. She is an experienced campaigner who ran for both state Senate and Assembly in the 1990s. Von Achen of Parsippany is a supply chain leader of North America for the global operations team of a multi-national company. He serves on the Parsippany Planning Board. Mielarczyk works as a research and development engineering manager. He is a graduate of the New Jersey Institute of Technology, with a BS degree in mechanical engineering.



#### **LD26: SENATE – Joan Waks**

Joan Waks received her BA in Economics from Trinity Washington University and went on to earn her JD at Cardozo School of Law. Joan worked for 8 years in a mid-size law firm focusing on Family Law and would go on to become a sole practitioner in a two-person firm dealing primarily with the issues of divorce, custody, child support and paternity. She became a Certified Family Law Mediator in 2010. Joan was also Associate Attorney for the Passaic County Board of Social Services from 1999 to 2021 until she retired from the practice of law in 2021.

Joan has been active in the community and served as a member of the Chilton Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees for 16 years, as well as the Board of Directors of Eva's Village in Paterson for 12 years and is currently a member of the Board of Trustees of DePaul Catholic High School. Additionally, she is the President of the Trinity Washington University Alumane/i Board of Trustees on which she has served for 16 years. She is an active member of Our Lady of Good Counsel Church and is a long-time choir member and lector.

Joan became involved in politics in New Jersey in the early 1970s and worked in many national, state, county, and local elections. She served as Wayne Township Democratic Municipal Leader for several years and ran unsuccessfully for Passaic County Freeholder in '91 and '92, NJ Assembly in 1995, and the state Senate in '97. She was elected to the Wayne Township Council in 2001 and served a 4-year term.

Joan is the proud mother of three accomplished children and the loving grandmother of six grandchildren. She moved to Pompton Plains in 2011 following the passing of her beloved husband, David Waks, a long time Wayne councilman and Wayne Mayor. She enjoys her life there with her Australian Labradoodle, Murphy, and is ready for a new Journey, to bring her many skills to Trenton to ensure that our voices in LD26 are heard in the State Senate.



### **LD26: ASSEMBLY – Walter Mielarczyk**

**Walter Mielarczyk** is a candidate for the New Jersey General Assembly representing LD-26. He grew up and continues to live in Pequannock, where he also earned the rank of Eagle Scout by serving his local community. Walter graduated Cum Laude in Mechanical Engineering at New Jersey Institute of Technology and currently he works as a R&D Engineering Manager for a NJ based vertical farming company, specializing in growing

strawberries indoors.

Walter is running for General Assembly because he is concerned about the direction our county has been going. In Trenton, Walter will defend women's rights and reach across the aisle to protect children from gun violence. He will work to build a better future for New Jersey's children by supporting Governor Phil Murphy's Universal Pre-K plan and establishing a statewide free school lunch program to make sure no child goes hungry.



### **LD26: ASSEMBLY – John Von Achen**

**Family:** Married: Kendra Von Achen, Spouse, past Parsippany School Board member. Children: Lillian, 14; Robert, 9

**Community:** Cub Scout leader, Baseball/Softball Coach, Dance Dad. Planning Board, 2018 - Present, Chairman, 2020 - 2022

**Personal Achievements:** Boy Scouts, Eagle Scout Order of the Arrow, Vigil Honor TaeKwonDo, Black Belt

**Political Experience:** Denville Town Council, 2004, 2005; Morris County Commissioner, 2008; Treasurer for Michael Soriano, Parsippany Mayor, 2018-2022; Treasurer for Emily Peterson, Parsippany Council, 2018-2021; Treasurer for Janice McCarthy, Parsippany Council, 2018-2021; Parsippany Democratic Committee, Sergeant at Arms, 2019 – Present; Co-founder of the Parsippany Democrats Social Club, 2023

John notes that in New Jersey, policy is set at the state level. Issues important to him are gun safety, access to abortion, equality for the LGBT+ community, and safety on college campuses.