

## Representative Todd Stephens

### Pennsylvania House District 151



#### Summary

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##### Legislative Biography

Todd Stephens is a graduate of Hatboro-Horsham High School and Shippensburg University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in Government. Upon graduating from college Todd worked briefly as an insurance agent before serving as a clerk in the Montgomery County Prothonotary's Office. In addition to working full-time in the Prothonotary's Office, Todd worked two part-time jobs and also attended law school in the evenings at the Widener University School of Law while rising through the ranks becoming the Second Deputy Prothonotary.

After graduating with his law degree and being admitted to the bar in 2000, Todd began his legal career as an Assistant District Attorney in the Montgomery County District Attorney's Office in January 2001. When Todd was promoted to the Trials Division he was assigned to the Sex Crimes Unit, where he immediately developed a passion for prosecuting crimes committed against children via the internet.

Throughout his career in the District Attorney's Office Todd spent considerable time in the community educating children and parents of the potential dangers they face while online. He also taught "Sex Crimes and the Law" at Temple University Ambler's Campus, as well as a course for Pennsylvania's Magisterial District Judges concerning the prosecution of internet sex cases.

In 2004 Todd was appointed as a Special Assistant United States Attorney with the U.S. Attorney's Office in Philadelphia. There, Todd was assigned to the Firearms Unit and focused on prosecuting Montgomery County's most violent gun offenders in federal court, where the penalties for these crimes are substantially higher.

During his tenure as a prosecutor, Todd served as the Captain of the Sex Crimes, Firearms and Major Crimes Unit. In almost 10 years as a prosecutor Todd achieved a 99 percent conviction rate, over 1,500 convictions, and 18 homicide convictions.

Outside the courtroom Todd served on the Horsham Planning Commission when Horsham was named the "15th Best Place to Live in America" by CNN/Money Magazine in 2007. He also served on the Reuse Subcommittee of the Horsham Land Reuse Authority for the Willow Grove Naval Air Station, and led the fight to ensure Willow Grove will never become a civilian or commercial airport.

Todd was elected to his fourth term in the Pennsylvania House in 2016. He believes in strong fiscal discipline and is focused on improving Pennsylvania's business climate and protecting Pennsylvania's most vulnerable citizens,

including our children. Todd serves on the Judiciary, Consumer Affairs, Transportation, and Children and Youth Committees.

Todd, his wife Nicole, and sons Will and Ben live in Horsham Township.

[Legislative Biography, [Accessed 7.30.18](#)]

#### ALEC membership/ties

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- Confirmed a legislator with ALEC ties by Keystone Progress

#### ALEC model legislation authored/sponsored

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Bill Title/Number	ALEC Model Bill	Sponsored/Authorred
HB 1349 (2011)	Regulatory Flexibility Act	Voted <a href="#">Yea</a>
HB 934 (2011)	Voter ID Act	Voted <a href="#">Yea</a>
HB 1950 Act 13 (2011)	Joint and Several Liability Act	Voted <a href="#">Yea</a>
SB 1131 (2011)	Joint and Several Liability Act	Voted <a href="#">Yea</a>

**In 2011, Representative Todd Stephens supported a bill to change state rulemaking by creating procedures to make it harder to impose regulations affecting small business.** In 2011, Representative Todd Stephens supported HB 1349, the Regulatory Flexibility Act. According to the Center for Media and Democracy, HB 1349 is similar to the ALEC “Regulatory Flexibility Act” model bill. This ALEC model legislation promotes deregulation "by creating procedures to analyze the availability of more flexible regulatory approaches for small business." It requires that agencies review all regulations to make sure they do not impose a disproportionate burden on small business. It also allows small businesses to seek judicial review of agency actions that don't comply with this law [Center for Media and Democracy, [Regulatory Flexibility Act Exposed](#); HB [1349](#), Bill passed unanimously in House, [6/21/2012](#) and Senate, [6/19/2012](#)]

**In 2011, Representative Todd Stephens supported Pennsylvania's Voter ID Law.** In 2011, Representative Todd Stephens supported a bill to require voters to present photo ID in order to vote. According to Andy Hoover, legislative director of the ACLU of Pennsylvania, "A vote for this bill is a vote to disenfranchise U.S. citizens. Research indicates that as much as 11 percent of U.S. citizens do not have government-issued photo identification. But they have the right to vote. Why is the state House afraid of the voters?" A 2006 survey by the Brennan Center at New York University School of Law found that 11 percent of U.S. citizens do not have the type of identification required by House Bill 934. The NYU survey found that those without ID are disproportionately citizens over the age of 65, citizens who are African-Americans, and citizens who earn less than \$35,000 annually. State Senator Daylin Leach told North Penn Live, “The bill will disenfranchise 700,000 currently eligible voters. Eleven percent of voters nationwide do not have the sort of photo ID that would be required to vote”, he said. Supporters of HB 934 indicated no credible evidence of voter impersonation fraud. [ACLU Pennsylvania, [6/23/2011](#); North Penn Life; [3/16/2012](#); HB [934](#), Bill passed in the House 134-88, [3/14/2012](#), and passed in the Senate 26-23, [3/7/2012](#)]

**In 2011, Representative Todd Stephens sponsored a bill that preempts local zoning authority from banning fracking.** Rep. Stephens sponsored HB 1950, (ACT 13), which preempted local laws that banned fracking. According to Desmogblog, Act 13 would have stripped away local zoning laws, eliminated the legal concept of a Home Rule Charter, limited private property rights, and in the process, completely disempowered town, city, municipal and county governments, particularly when it comes to shale gas development. Act 13 – pejoratively referred to as “the Nation’s Worst Corporate Giveaway” by *AlterNet* reporter Steven Rosenfeld – would have ended local democracy as we know it in Pennsylvania. Act 13 also reflects the writing of the ALEC model bill: “Granting the Authority of Rural Counties to Transition to Decentralized Land Use Regulation.” After the bill’s enactment, the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court ruled PA Act 13 unconstitutional on July 26th, 2012. [Desmogblog, [7/27/2012](#); Center for Media and Democracy; [Granting the Authority of Rural Counties to Transition to Decentralized Land Use Regulation Exposed](#); HB [1950](#), Bill passed in the House 101-90, [2/8/2012](#), and in the Senate 31-19, [2/7/2012](#)]

**In 2011, Representative Todd Stephens supported a bill that provides that each defendant is liable only for damages in direct proportion to that defendant's fault.** In 2011, Representative Stephens voted for SB 1131, which, according to the Center for Media and Democracy, is similar to the ALEC “Joint and Several Liability Act” model bill. This ALEC model legislation is designed to eliminate joint and several liability meaning that corporations would no longer be jointly liable for injuries caused by the products they manufacture or sell, along the chain of distribution. The bill would allow joint liability only if the companies deliberately conspired to commit a tort or injury against an American. Thus, this so-called model bill would reduce the liability of companies that sell a product that injures an American, by abolishing the legal doctrine of "joint" liability. This type of model legislation that eliminates joint liability except in unusual cases gives a significant advantage to corporations. In a comparative negligence state, like Wisconsin, a plaintiff could be 20% at fault and four defendants could each be 16% at fault but escape liability. [Center for Media and Democracy, [Joint and Several Liability Act Exposed](#); SB [1131](#), Bill passed 116-83 in House, [6/27/2011](#) and 32-18 in the Senate, [6/21/2011](#)]

#### **Additional Hits**

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**Representative Todd Stephens voted against the reproductive rights of women.** In a letter to supporters Rep. Stephens stated, “I have voted in favor of every pro-life bill that has come before me since becoming a member of the House of Representatives. I have also voted against many pro-abortion amendments supported by Planned Parenthood. My record is clear – I have stood with the unborn on every pro-life bill that has come before me since I was elected to the House.” [Politics PA, [9/23/2015](#)].

**Rep. Stephens sponsored a bill that would reenact mandatory minimum prison sentences in Pennsylvania, despite the fact that, in 2015, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court found mandatory minimum laws to be unconstitutional.** In the 2017 legislative session, Rep. Todd Stephens sponsored HB 74, a bill to restore mandatory minimum sentences, after they had been ruled unconstitutional. Corrections Secretary John Wetzel, an opponent of the Stephens bill, noted that, “As the rest of the country moves away from mandatory minimums for drug offenses, the state House plans to reintroduce them. Research indicates no public safety enhancement but a potential price tag of 85 million” [Penn Live, [6/15/17](#); HB 741, [referred to Judiciary Committee](#) 4/6/17]