

# O.C. man to challenge LoBiondo for House seat

By ERIC AVEDESIAN  
Cape May Star and Wave

OCEAN CITY — Ocean City resident Dr. Steven Fenichel is throwing his hat into the political ring as an independent candidate in the Nov. 8 Second Congressional District election.

New Jersey's Second Congressional District consists of all of Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland and Salem counties, and parts of Camden, Burlington, Gloucester and Ocean counties.

Incumbent Republican Frank LoBiondo, of Ventnor, has served as the district's congressional representative since 1995.

Democrat David Cole, of Mantua Township, a tech industry executive and former staffer for President Barack Obama, defeated Constantino Rozzo of Vineland in the Democratic primary and will challenge LoBiondo.

Fenichel, 69, ran unsuccessfully in 2003 for state Senate in the First Legislative District. Back then he ran on clean money campaign finance reform and single-payer health care.

This time, his slogan is "Representing the 99 percent."

"I really don't have that much concern with representing the 1 percent of billionaires," Fenichel said.

His reemergence into politics comes after Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders launched a presidential bid, touting the tenets of democratic socialism and galvanizing young people into participating in his campaign.

Fenichel refers to Sanders affectionately as "the Old Man," and admires his message of condemning political corruption and a political system infused with corporate money.

"I'm running to fix a broken and corrupted system," Fenichel said. "The people's voices are not heard in this system. It's a very rigged system all around. I don't have any illusions of being able to win, but I do believe that if people have their eyes wide open instead of their eyes wide closed, they'll realize we need people in Congress that will represent the people's needs and interests and not the special interests."

In the presidential race, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is the presumptive Democratic nominee and real estate mogul Donald Trump the presumptive Republican nominee.

Fenichel said he had hoped Cole would support Sanders for president instead of Clinton.

Regarding the issues, Fenichel said paying workers a living wage is "essential."

Critics of increasing minimum wage point to its deleterious effect it could have on small businesses, who'd have to cut hours, lay off employees or raise prices.

New Jersey's minimum wage is \$8.38 per hour. The New Jersey State Senate voted on June 23 to increase minimum wage to \$15 per hour. The bill increases minimum wage to \$10.10 on Jan. 1, 2017, and then increasing it incrementally by \$1.25 an hour until 2021.

Fenichel doesn't agree with elevating minimum wage to \$15 for seasonal businesses in shore communities.

"I would not impose that on a seasonal employer. There would have to be some allowable exceptions

to that," Fenichel said. "Those people if they did get what they should have which is single-payer health care, that would at least take care of one of the major expenditures in their family budget."

A dermatologist working at a federal clinic called Complete Care in Cape May Court House, which cares for those uninsured and those on Medicaid, Fenichel said health care is a human right.

"The largest cause of personal bankruptcy is health care bills," Fenichel said. "It should be immediately provided for people."

Fenichel supports Medicare for all. He said his physician's group, Physicians for a National Health Program, purport that if there was a transactional fee charged for every transaction on Wall Street, the result would cover health care for everyone in the United States.

"It is time now that Wall Street pay back the people who bailed them out because of that canard they were too big to fail," Fenichel said.

"It's very doable if there is a conviction and a resolve to do it. If not, we're going to be left with a status quo."

Like Sanders, Fenichel condemns the high cost of college tuition, saying students are saddled with heavy debt. He said Sanders proposed college debts should be covered by an increase on the taxes of the "super wealthy" without affecting the middle class tax rate.

Fenichel is also critical of America's mass incarceration rate and for-profit prisons.

"We live in the country

that has the highest rate per population of people in prison," Fenichel said. "We're number one. It's mostly non-violent drug offenders."

Fenichel called marijuana the "gateway drug to incarceration in the federal level and many states." He noted Colorado and Washington state decriminalized marijuana, which he said garnered tax revenues that helped those states balance their budgets.

"How can we keep using marijuana to have prisons profiting off young people arrested for this natural herb?" Fenichel said. "Without marijuana, we would probably have an incarceration rate that's a little bit below the top nations that are mass incarcerators. With the drug war and marijuana being illegal in a number of places, that puts us at the top of the list."

He said prohibitions of any substance — whether alcohol or marijuana — don't work.

"It's nobody's business what someone chooses to lessen their stress as long as they don't threaten the well-being of anyone else," Fenichel said.

Under federal law, marijuana possession is a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in prison and up to a \$1,000 fine. Selling marijuana increases the federal penalties.

Climate change caused by greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere, is another issue Fenichel discusses.

Fenichel said sea level rise, caused by melting ice caps, would dramatically affect Eastern Seaboard cities.

"There are effects on the warming causing tropical diseases marching further up north, the droughts that are being caused by climate change are going to lead to



FENICHEL

## Drones to drop disaster supplies

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Demonstrations gave participants a taste of what is possible. A test flight of a ship-to-shore delivery of blood samples was made as well as a demonstration of the Navigator, an unmanned aerial-aquatic drone developed at Rutgers University. The Navigator can transition from flight to aquatic operation and can operate in most weather conditions.

What's important to drone innovation in the county is what Spell described as "unprecedented support from local and federal officials including Sen. Cory Booker, U.S. Rep. Frank LoBiondo who is the chairman of the House of Representatives' aviation subcommittee and Freeholder Will Morey," who is a pilot.

"They are dedicated to having New Jersey in the forefront of drone innovation and use," Spell said, adding that "everyone is coming together."

That also includes educational institutions, the Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA), non-profit organizations and community groups.

Only days before the "Do Tank," the FAA issued new regulations for drones. Among those regulations are the following: drone operators-for-hire will have to pass a written test and be vetted; the drones have to weigh less than 55 pounds and fly at speeds below 100 mph.

It is important to establish the county and the whole country as a leader in drone technology as China's SZ DJI Technology Co. is the larg-



Joseph Salvatore/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

A test flight gave Field Innovation Team participants a taste of what is possible when they met June 23 at the Cape May-Lewes Ferry terminal.

est manufacturer of drones, according to Spell. She said the European Union has not established drone rules but

many countries throughout Europe are using and testing drones for all types of applications.

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- Central Intelligence PG-13 11:30, 2:10, 4:50, (7:20, 9:50)
- \*\* Mike and Dave Need Wedding Dates R (7:20, 9:50) Thursday Premier
- Conjuring 2 R 12:10, 3:30, (6:40, 9:30)
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very serious contention for food," Fenichel said.

Preventing climate change involves a ban on hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, a process of drilling for natural gas by injecting liquid into the ground at high pressures to fracture rocks.

Fenichel said plans by South Jersey Gas to transport natural gas via pipeline through the Pinelands to the B.L. England plant in Upper Township pose a severe health hazard.

"By this fracking, not only are we poisoning the drinking waters of those people in the fracked areas, but then we are transporting as South Jersey Gas plans on doing through the Pinelands with pipes carrying this fracked gas with venting along the way and the venting puts methane into the atmosphere," Fenichel said.

Fenichel is also critical of beach communities using rainforest lumber for re-decking their boardwalks.

Ocean City's current administration vowed not to use tropical hardwood to for its boardwalk.

"Without the Amazon rainforest which is being depleted more and more every day, we're really tying out future in a knot and we're threatening so many species as well," Fenichel said.

Fenichel said "greed and self interest" are corrupting the political process. He said the solution lies in clean money campaign finance reform, a grassroots effort to entice qualifying candidates to limit their campaign spending and reject donations from private entities.

He said if special interests such as the fossil fuel industries, pharmaceutical companies, and for-profit industry don't get political attention by their campaign contributions, politics will be set on a "level playing field" instead of "empowering the oligarchy."

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