

= Mary Isenhour =

Mary Isenhour is an American political strategist , campaign manager , and government official , currently serving as Chief of Staff for Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf . Prior to the Wolf administration , Isenhour served executive director of the Pennsylvania Democratic Party , was state director of Hillary Clinton 's 2008 presidential campaign , and assisted with the successful campaigns of U.S. Senator Bob Casey , Jr. and Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell .

Isenhour also previously worked as executive director of the Pennsylvania House Democratic Campaign Committee , and started a political consulting firm with former state party chairman T.J. Rooney . In 2010 , PoliticsPA called her " one of the top consultants in the state " , and said , " few can move between the strategy of campaigning and its mechanics with the ease that she does " .

Starting her career working on the Kansas House of Representatives staff , Isenhour eventually becoming chief of staff to House Minority Leader Tom Sawyer , and then director of the Democratic Party 's Kansas Coordinated Campaign for legislative races . She worked as the national political director for the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee before starting her Pennsylvania political career in 1999 .

= = Early career = =

A Kansas native , Isenhour attended the University of Kansas . She began her political career as a staffer in the Kansas House of Representatives . In 1990 she worked as a legislative aide to House Minority Leader Marvin Barkis , and the following year was an administrative assistant to House Majority Leader Donna Whiteman . From 1991 to 1995 , Isenhour served as Chief of Staff to House Minority Leader Tom Sawyer , where she worked with Democratic and Republican lawmakers alike to advance legislation , served as a liaison between Sawyer and other officials , and worked with members of leadership and committees to develop legislative strategies and build coalitions . In 1992 , Isenhour was the director of the Democratic Party 's Kansas Coordinated Campaign for legislative races , both in the state House and Senate . Those races included more than three dozen candidates by July 1992 .

From 1995 to 1999 , Isenhour served as the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee 's national political director , based in Washington D.C. In that capacity , she worked with legislative leaders and caucus campaign staff in more 15 states to help win or preserve Democratic majorities in state legislatures . In 1996 , she worked in Iowa to help orchestrate the Democratic legislative campaigns in that the Iowa General Assembly , partnering with Iowa Senate Majority Leader Wally Horn and other key legislative Democrats to improving the party 's position . She described it as an attempt to avoid a repeat of 1994 elections , in which Democrats suffered major losses in both federal and state offices during the Republican Revolution . Isenhour said of those elections :

Isenhour also managed Sawyer 's campaign for the bid for Kansas governor in 1998 . Sawyer won the Democratic nomination , but ultimately lost in a landslide to the popular Republican incumbent , Bill Graves .

= = Pennsylvania career = =

Isenhour began her Pennsylvania political career in 1999 , when she became executive director of the Pennsylvania House Democratic Campaign Committee , helping to get Democratic candidates elected to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives . She held the position until 2003 . Isenhour assisted with Bob Casey , Jr . ' s successful 2006 campaign against Republican incumbent Rick Santorum , served as political adviser to state House Democratic Leader Frank Dermody , and ran Governor Ed Rendell 's successful 2006 re @-@ election campaign against challenger Lynn Swann , after which she helped plan Rendell 's 2007 inauguration . Rendell appointed her to the Pennsylvania Community Service Advisory Board .

Isenhour worked for the Pennsylvania Democratic Party , serving as an aide and political adviser to T.J. Rooney , the state party chairman . In 2007 , she became executive director of the party ,

replacing Don Morabito , who took a position in the Rendell administration . The party enjoyed much success during her time there , controlling the Governor 's office , three of four statewide row offices , two U.S. Senators , a majority in the State House , and picking up five seats in the Congressional delegation . She served as director of PA Victory , a statewide coordinated campaign effort . Isenhour was also chosen as the Pennsylvania state director for Hillary Clinton 's 2008 presidential campaign , after Rendell recommended her for the position . There was talk of Isenhour continuing to work with the Clinton administration after the primary , but she instead returned to her position with the Pennsylvania Democratic Party .

In 2008 , Isenhour and Rooney met with MSNBC news commentator Chris Matthews to discuss the possibility of Matthews running against Republican U.S. Senator Arlen Specter , although he ultimately did not run . Also that year , Isenhour and her Republican counterpart Luke Bernstein , executive director of the Republican Party of Pennsylvania , together taught a class about presidential elections at the Dickinson College in Carlisle , Pennsylvania . Isenhour and Bernstein both believed it was the first class of its type , and said the two had a very cordial relationship despite representing opposite political parties . Isenhour also taught about electoral politics at other educational institutions , including the University of Pennsylvania , Central Penn College and The Washington Center .

In July 2010 , after more than seven years leading the Pennsylvania Democratic Party , Isenhour and Rooney started the political consulting firm Isenhour Rooney Strategies , which later became Isenhour Rooney and Carey . Also in 2010 , Isenhour was the only woman named to the PoliticsPA 's Pennsylvania Top 10 Influencers List by Campaigns and Elections , PoliticsPA also called her " one of the top consultants in the state " , and said " few can move between the strategy of campaigning and its mechanics with the ease that she does " . Among the candidates she advised was Rob Teplitz in his successful campaign for Pennsylvania State Senate in 2012 . Eisenhower served on the board of Planned Parenthood of Pennsylvania .

= = Governor Wolf administration = =

Isenhour was an early supporter of Pennsylvania gubernatorial candidate Tom Wolf , and became Wolf 's senior campaign adviser during his 2014 campaign , at a time when state Representative Allyson Schwartz and state Treasurer Rob McCord were considered to have better chances of winning . Isenhour , who had long been acquainted with Wolf , had not intended to become involved with a lengthy and work @-@ intensive gubernatorial campaign , but said she was convinced to do so after an hour @-@ long phone conversation with Wolf in 2013 , after which she was convinced he was the right man for the job : " I 've been in politics 30 years and I 've never had a candidate like this . " Isenhour maintained other clients during his campaign , but said Wolf was " my main focus for the next year and a half " . After Wolf 's successful election , Isenhour co @-@ chaired his inaugural committee , then worked as his Secretary of Legislative Affairs , serving as a liaison during negotiating sessions at the Pennsylvania General Assembly , and providing key planning during the governor 's budget strategy . Political reporter John L. Micek wrote of Isenhour : " She is in the unique position of having to work with Republicans she once ran campaigns against . " Her annual salary in the position was \$ 145 @,@ 018 . Isenhour developed a reputation for communicating and building relationships with legislative leaders and staff members from both parties .

In July 2015 , Isenhour replaced Kathleen McGinty as Wolf 's Chief of Staff , after McGinty resigned six months into her tenure to pursue a campaign for U.S. Senate . Wolf called Isenhour " one of my closest advisors " and " a valuable part of my administration " , and said she " really understands how the politics of this place actually works . " The selection was praised by both parties , including House and Senate Republicans , who expressed hope she would be less adversarial than McGinty . The Butler Eagle wrote an editorial criticizing the appointment due to her position on the Planned Parenthood of Pennsylvania board , in light of a national controversy over undercover videos about the group 's alleged sale of aborted fetal body parts . Isenhour came into the Chief of Staff position more than three weeks into a budget impasse between Wolf and the Republican @-@ controlled General Assembly .

In October 2015 , four months into the state budget impasse , Isenhour issued a memo notifying Wolf 's administration of a hiring freeze and travel ban . On February 3 , 2016 , Isenhour notified the state Public Employee Retirement Commission that , under Wolf 's orders , all employment of its staff would be discontinued . State Representatives Stephen Bloom of Cumberland County and Seth Grove of York County have filed a lawsuit against Wolf challenging that action , arguing the governor lacks the power to dissolve the commission and acted contrary to the Pennsylvania Constitution .

= = Personal life = =

Isenhour is married to Bill Patton , former chief of staff to Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives Dennis M. O 'Brien . They reside in Harrisburg , Pennsylvania . She has a cat named Ralph and enjoys cooking .