

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB HEADLINERS LUNCHEON WITH EMILY'S LIST PRESIDENT
STEPHANIE SCHRIOCK

SUBJECT: THE UPCOMING MIDTERM ELECTIONS

MODERATOR: ANDREA EDNEY, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

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ANDREA EDNEY: Hello, everyone, hello. Welcome to the National Press Club,
the place where news happens. I'm Andrea Edney. I'm an editor with Bloomberg News, and I
am the 111th President of the National Press Club.

We are so pleased to welcome today's Headliner, Stephanie Schriock, President of
the Political Action Committee, EMILY's List, which is a group that aims to elect more pro-
choice Democratic female candidates to national, state and local office.

I would like to remind you today that if you are Tweeting, we are Press Club DC.
And the hashtag for today's event is NPCLive.

I'd like to introduce our head table guests now, so please hold your applause until all
of them have been introduced. So, I'm going to start here from my left. We have Frank
Maisano, a partner at Bracewell's Policy Resolution Group, and a member of the National
Press Club Headliners Team; we have Art Swift, a professor at American University; we
have Tamara Hinton, the Senior Vice President at Story Partners, and a member of the
National Press Club Headliners Team; we have Eleanor Clift, a reporter and writer at *The
Daily Beast*; we have Emily Cain, Executive Director of EMILY's List.

Coming from my right, we have Lori Russo, President at Stanton Communications,
and a member of the National Press Club Headliners Team; we have Courtney Norris,
National Affairs and Education Reporter and Producer at PBS NewsHour; we have Christina
Reynolds, Vice President of Communications at EMILY's List; we have Bridget Bowman,
Senior Political Reporter at *Roll Call*.

Skipping over our speaker for just a moment, only a moment, we have Betsy Fischer Martin, Executive Director of the Women and Politics Institute at American University, and co-chair of the National Press Club Headliners Team. Thank you all for being here today. (Applause)

I would also like to acknowledge some of the additional members of the Headliners Team who are responsible for organizing today's event. We have Lisa Matthews, Linda Roth, and the National Press Club staff, specifically Lindsay Underwood, Laura Coker, and Executive Director, Bill McCarren.

Now, on to our guest, whose leading of what she hopes is a political pink wavy with the midterm elections just 49 days away. Two hundred fifty-six women have won their party's House and Senate primaries this election year, and that's a huge, new record. So Stephanie is here to help us review the field of Democratic pro-choice female candidates on the ballot across the country this fall and explain why she believes that women can shift the balance of power in Washington.

More than 40,000 women have signed up for the organization's Run to Win training program since the 2016 election, and another 9,000 people have volunteered to help selected candidates. You may be wondering who the Emily in EMILY's List is. The organization was founded in 1985 by Ellen Malcolm, who is seated over here. Thank you, Ellen, for being here today. (Applause)

EMILY is an acronym for Early Money is Like Yeast, a reference to a tried and true motto of Malcolm's, that gathering lots of donations early is essential to attracting subsequent donors and "makes the dough rise" when the campaign trail heats up. Stephanie came to EMILY's List with decades of experience on the campaign trail. She served as national finance director of Howard Dean's 2004 presidential campaign, and she managed the political campaigns of Senator Jon Tester in 2006, and Senator Al Franken in 2008. We are very happy that Stephanie has taken some time out of her busy schedule to be here with us today. Please join me in welcoming to the National Press Club EMILY's List President, Stephanie Schriock. (Applause)

MS. SCHRIOCK: It's such a pleasure, thank you so much. Such a pleasure. Good afternoon! My goodness, before I start I just want to thank the founder and chair of our board of EMILY's List, Ellen Malcolm, for being here today. We often think of this moment, and you're going to hear a little bit about this, as the history-making moment. But none of this happens immediately. We all stand upon the shoulders of giants who came before us, and those shoulders I stand upon are Ellen Malcolm's shoulders. So thank you for being here today. Thank you, Ellen. (Applause)

And thank you so much for inviting me here to the National Press Club. Boy, at a time when the press is under fire every day in this country, I am grateful to have a chance to speak to you and would like to start by thanking you for the work you do to bring the truth to the public every day. I know your job isn't easy. This is such an unbelievable and

unprecedented time in the news with a lot of drama coming at you, particularly out of Washington. But I know, I know, it isn't easy and it's often impossible to figure out how to manage all of this.

I also know that the days of the set news cycle, remember those days? They're over and we are in a constantly-evolving news environment that moves as fast as the speed of Tweets. So, today I'd like to take a break from the Tweets and Trump because the primaries are over, we're fewer than 50 days away from this election and some of the most important stories you'll ever hear about this election year still haven't been told. Or they're getting lost in the shuffle.

I'll be honest; this is sometimes hard to watch. With so much focus on the mess in the White House, we miss so much of what's happening. But most of the time, it feels like there's only one story about this year in Democratic Party politics that really ever breaks through and it gets rehashed over and over again. It's the Dems in Disarray narrative. It's the theory that breaks the Democratic Party down into easily-labeled divides; the outsiders versus the party establishment, the socialists versus the centrists, the progressives versus the moderates, the old versus the new.

In this version of the story, the Democratic Party is at war with itself deeply divided and confused. I'm here to tell you that's great divide is not a divide at all, but a simple debate; a debate that is not breaking the party apart, but making it stronger and more energized than it has ever been, at least in a very long time. And more importantly, there's so much more to the story of 2018. There's an energy happening on the Democratic side that has the potential to fundamentally transform our system for the better. The untold story of that energy and the excitement is why I'm here today and what I want to talk about, because I don't think any understanding of what's happening in our democracy right now is complete without understanding it. And because I believe the progressive versus the moderates, or the establishment versus the upstarts narrative is missing the forest through the trees.

Democrats are in the mess of some policy debates about how to best address the biggest issues facing this country. But whatever we decide, there's really no comparison to the direction Republicans have driven their party. In their primaries this cycle, Republicans keep reaching these forks in the road where they have to decide what matters most to them. And their choice has been to move further and further away from values rooted in basic dignity and humanity every single time.

They are now openly embracing and capitulating to corrupt racist forces to hold onto their power. Across the river in Virginia, the Republicans just nominated a confederate sympathizer for the U.S. Senate while an actual neo-Nazi, multiple white supremacists, and candidates under criminal investigation are on the Republican ticket across this nation.

Now, I will take our policy debates, and I'm proud of those conversations. The GOP is facing a takeover by Trump aligned forces. They're abdicating their responsibility and any pretense of reaching out to all Americans. They're choosing the darkest path. You can't tell me that there isn't a lot of soul searching in the Reagan-Bush wing of the Republican

leadership today. And yes, I recognize those are extreme examples, but wherever their candidates fall on the right wing spectrum, there's one thing that Republicans all agree on, and that's their end goal, which is empowering and enriching the few at the expense of the many.

That's what their values are rooted in. That's the vision their candidates share, and this is how they work to make this vision a reality; by electing people to maintain their power by stripping our power away through corporate tax cuts, dismantling healthcare, diminished voting rights. The list goes on and on. And those values, that vision, and their candidates couldn't be more different from ours. This isn't what you're used to hearing, but if you zoom out just a little bit, Democrats really are united around these fundamental values. We believe, we all believe everyone must have access to healthcare. We believe in keeping families together. We believe all Americans deserve equal rights and equal opportunities and a chance to earn a living for themselves.

We believe in more people voting, not fewer. In power that belongs to the people and in our voices being heard. And we know, and we understand, that this is the time to stand up and take that power back, because if we wait, it will be too late. The unity around those ideas, especially among Democratic women is the tide that is lifting up boats since the 2016 election. It's the reason that the energy we saw in the women's march the day after the inauguration turned immediately into electoral wins, particularly in 2017 in Virginia, where our candidate, Danica Roem, became the first openly transgender woman ever elected to a state legislator, where we elected women like Hala Ayala and Elizabeth Guzman and Kathy Tran, and where Jennifer Carroll Foy, who was put on bed rest right before her election, gave birth to twins right after that, and then won her recount.

This is what's going on. It's the reason African-American women in Alabama decided the special U.S. Senate election for Doug Jones, defeating a serial sexual predator expected to win that safe Republican seat. And throughout this primary season, it's the reason this newly energized electorate looked so different from what we're used to seeing. And why our general election candidates do, too.

But did you know that in Texas, 25 percent of the people who turned out to vote in this year's primary election had never voted in a primary election before? While half had never voted in a midterm election before. Or that nearly twice as many Texans voted in this year's primary than in the 2014 midterm general election? In Georgia, where Stacy Abrams is running her game-changing campaign, 34,700 African-American voters, more than 10,000 of whom registered since the 2016 election, voted in a primary for the very first time. And even in my home state of Montana, primary turnout was the highest we'd seen in over 20 years.

More than a quarter of a century has passed since Virginia last elected a Democratic woman to Congress. This year, in every Virginia U.S. House primary race where a Democratic woman ran, a Democratic woman won. In Pennsylvania, which currently has an all-male congressional delegation, there are eight women running for Congress on this year's general election ballot. The state of Nevada is now well on its way to having the first

majority woman legislature in the history of this country. And across our nation, historic numbers of women are running for office up and down the ballot.

At EMILY's List, we, as you've heard, have heard from more than 40,000 women, and counting, starting from the day after the 2016 election. And they're from all 50 states and Washington, D. C. who want to run now and in the future. So, something really big is happening and to really put this in context, and to start to understand what it might mean going forward, it's important to remember that our country didn't get here overnight. The Republican Party didn't go from zero to Donald Trump. And what's happening now has been a long time coming. The groundwork for all of this was laid over decades by the Heritage Foundation and the Moral Majority and the Tea Party and by Republican donors like the Koch Brothers and the DeVoses who spent years, decades in fact, investing in state legislatures and elevating conservative judges and redrawing electoral maps and creating what has become, I would argue, a command and control structure where a couple of billionaires say, "This is what we're going to do," and everyone else says, "Okay."

What we, what we are building today at EMILY's List is the antidote to all of that. And because it is powered by people instead of just money, it is building very fast. We talk a lot about the importance of winning majorities at the state legislative level at EMILY's List. And that's because the work we do there is so critical to driving progress on a multiple set of levels.

First, because winning Democratic majorities while getting us closer to parity, is the only way to get better policies at every level of government. And because we make progress just by making gains. I mentioned our wins in the Virginia House of Delegates in 2017 where EMILY's List women were 11 of the 15 Democratic pickups in the House of Delegates. Now, we did come one seat short, and through the drawing of straws, we did not pull that one off. But, you know what happened after they all got sworn in? They expanded Medicaid in Virginia. See, it really shows you how everything counts. Because with every person who votes, every woman who runs and every seat we flip, some amount of progress is made. And when we win in large numbers, we will see transformation.

So, so far this cycle, EMILY's List has endorsed over 429 candidates running for state and local office, which is a record for us. And that number grows every day. We know those numbers include those that we've endorsed in special elections, and elections held in 2017 as well as more than 300 women who will be on the ballot this November.

This year, the U.S. is poised to see the biggest ever increase in women state lawmakers across the country from just under 26 percent today, by the way, to potentially, if we do our job, as high as 38 percent. So second point here is that this work is about building candidate pipelines for the future.

Now, the 40,000-plus women that have signed up, they are our next decade of candidates. Now, I know, I know, there are future members of Congress in that group, there are future senators in that group. And, yes, there are future presidents, at least one, in that

group. And for a lot of them, this starts the day they attend their first EMILY's List training, just like the over 5,000 who have done just that in the last 18 months.

And finally, this work matters for redistricting purposes. Because when we win Democratic legislative majorities, we draw fairer lines and we insure that there are more voices getting heard. So all of the people stepping into this process, using their voices, taking action, voting and supporting candidates for the very first time are just getting started. Think about the impact they can have over time with Democratic women leading these legislatures across the country. We're in the beginning stages of a transformation that starts with this election year.

And when people look back to this moment in time to see where it all started, and how we started building something in the middle of everything going on, this is what they'll see. They'll see M.J. Hegar running for Congress in Texas in the 31st congressional district. They'll see her tattoos covering the scars where she was shot in Afghanistan. And they're going to hear her telling her story of all the doors that were closed to her before she made her decision to run. And if you haven't heard that story, you should Google it.

They'll see Sharice Davids in Kansas 3, the daughter of an army veteran, a member of the Ho-Chunk Nation and a professional mixed martial arts fighter who is taking on now her toughest fight to date, which is to get elected to Congress, where no Native American woman has ever served in our history.

And they'll see Deb Haaland in New Mexico's first, a member of the Laguna Tribe making history with her. They'll see Xochitl Torrez Smalls in New Mexico 2, the granddaughter of Mexican immigrants who came to work in fields. She now works with farmers on water rights in the same border community where she grew up.

Now, they'll also see what the other side was doing. They'll see Republicans in Congress trying to take away our healthcare, and women telling their stories to stop them including women like Betsy Rader in Ohio's 14th who's lived most of her life with a preexisting condition after she was hit by a car as a little girl riding a bike. They're going to hear about Cindy Axne in Iowa's 3rd congressional district who sold her possessions on eBay because she couldn't get affordable maternity care.

Lauren Underwood, Illinois's 14th, a registered nurse with her own preexisting condition surprised herself when she decided to run to save access to healthcare for everyone. Every one of these women made the decision to run knowing it wouldn't be easy and knowing that they just couldn't afford to wait any longer. Right now, Abby Finkenauer's running in Iowa's 1st while she is paying back her student loans. Veronica Escobar is reheating frozen meals she makes ahead of time in her kitchen in El Paso as she runs in Texas 16. Gina Ortiz Jones is living off her savings while living back at home with her mom in Texas's 23rd.

When we look back at the progress we made at this time in our history, these are the stories we'll see. These are the women people will look to to see what they did and how they

did it, in spite of some pretty incredible odds. I just gave you a few examples of women who with the help of EMILY's List will be winning this November. But every one of our candidates has her own story to tell and no two stories are alike.

After more than 30 years of doing this work, we know that no two winning campaigns are alike as well. This is why we don't do these generic, prepackaged talking point campaigns. It's how we know the one size fits all approach isn't going to work. This isn't about a slogan. Our candidates are diverse like our nation. And they win because each of those candidates meets the voters where they are connecting their own individual stories with those of the voters.

See, that is essential because this work is about more than just this year. It's about way more than winning legislative seats and electing women governors. This work that we are doing is about electing women who can take us somewhere we've never been before as a nation; women with new ideas, new perspectives, vision and voices that will take this country, this country that was already great, and make it even better.

So this is my ask for you. Look closely at what these women are doing and what they've already done. Get to know and then tell their stories. As much as anything, they show us how far we've come, where we are and where we're going as a nation. Thank you so much for having me today, thank you. (Applause)

MS. EDNEY: Well, thank you so much for being here. We do really appreciate it. I would like to mention for our television and online audience that any reaction you hear from the room may not be from working journalists. We do have members of the public here at our luncheon today, so please do keep that in mind.

So, I have a lot of questions here from the audience.

MS. SCHRIOCK: Great.

MS. EDNEY: And thank you for your compelling statistics and the great stories you gave us a little taste of during your introductory comments. There are 15 Democratic women vying to be elected governor, and at least six all-female Senate races. What do you see as the greatest or the most common factors driving this unprecedented participation by women in this upcoming election?

MS. SCHRIOCK: And the numbers as you go further down the ballot are just larger and larger as well as you look at Congress and legislatures. It is really an extraordinary moment. I get that question a lot, and it's actually a series of things. We talk about these numbers of women-- I also want to note that almost 80 percent of those candidates who ran, those women candidates who ran, were Democrats. So this isn't balanced out on the partisanship, which is another point I'd like to make.

So what we found at EMILY's List while we were slowly picking ourselves up after 2016, as you can imagine we were a little down in the office that day, and weeks after, what

we instantly saw were women who wanted to do something, do anything. And those same women organized marches, but they also said, "I want to run. I want to help my community. I am afraid of the direction that we're going." And what we have seen in those over 40,000 who have come, not all are running, is this energy of empowerment and I would also argue that when they marched, they also realized they weren't alone. And so they have this community support and that has just continued on and on.

And so initially, it was Trump's victory, and I would also argue Hillary Clinton's loss, which was devastating to so many women across the country. But they then started to see the power that they had in trying to stop appointments by the Trump Administration saving the Affordable Care Act and then they saw themselves in those incredible women who won in Virginia and went, "Oh, I can do this and we are going to win."

And that is exactly what we see every day at EMILY's List. I mean, these women aren't running because they think it's a good idea to run. They are running to win and to serve their communities. And I really do think that this is not just a moment, it is a sea change. Once 40,000 American women have planted a seed that they want to run for office, it's just going to keep growing. And that's what's going on here.

MS. EDNEY: So you just mentioned 2016. That was the year that you were 0-15 with the House candidates that you were supporting. Is that right?

MS. SCHRIOCK: No.

MS. EDNEY: No? Sorry.

MS. SCHRIOCK: No, sorry, we actually did elect some great House candidates that year, though we were definitely 0-1 on the presidential, which was sort of the big, painful situation.

MS. EDNEY: Yeah, that was the big story here.

MS. SCHRIOCK: We're going to fix that in future cycles. I just want to note that. That is going to get addressed. But 2016, it was actually a really complicated moment for EMILY's List because we did add women to the House, not as many as we had hoped. We added more diverse women to the House. It was only one of two cycles in our entire history that we added four new women to the United States Senate, including the first time ever three women of color.

MS. EDNEY: And that in and of itself is a great success.

MS. SCHRIOCK: Which is a huge, huge story. All that being said, and I remember talking to Senator-elect at the time, Catherine Cortez Masto, in Nevada, I'm like "Oh, you won. We're so excited." And she's like, "Yeah," and then we're like, "Oh, yeah. But then there's that big loss that sort of overshadowed everybody's victory," which is true. But I'm so grateful that they're there.

MS. EDNEY: And every win really does count.

MS. SCHRIOCK: It does, yes.

MS. EDNEY: So in this election, you have a specific emphasis on flipping the House. How would you gauge the odds of success for that?

MS. SCHRIOCK: So, this was something that we looked at right away at EMILY's List. We knew that the map in the Senate was a challenging one because we have a lot of Democrats, both women and men, up for reelection in the Senate. And though we did really great in recruiting in our opportunities, we knew that our bigger opportunity, and our need, to take back the House was really the top priority for EMILY's List.

So this is what we did. We laid out the districts. We first started with about 50 potential pickups. That number went to 60 and then 70 and then 80 and we recruited like mad to make sure that we had great women in as many of those districts as possible. I've made it clear to my poor team who does this work every day that I would like EMILY's List to deliver the 23 seats that Democrats need. Some good men can win, too, we're really excited about that. Go Connor Lamb. But we'd like to deliver the majority of the majority incoming class, and we, in fact, are in nearly 50 red to blue pickup seats. You're going to see a lot of activity by EMILY's List in a lot of those seats and we think we're in a position to maybe hit 23, maybe a few more, maybe a few less. We'll see what the voters decide. But they're in position to do that, and that's extraordinary.

MS. EDNEY: Well, we'll definitely be watching, yes. How would you say the agenda of President Donald Trump's administration has changed or altered the mission and the work at EMILY's List?

MS. SCHRIOCK: It's just made it even more important than it already was. The beauty of EMILY's List was in Ellen's simplicity of mission, which was we're going to go out and we're going to elect pro-choice Democratic women to office. And that started in 1985. Our first candidate, ever, by the way, was Barbara Mikulski, who was running for Senate for the first time in an era where a Democratic woman had never won a seat in the United States Senate in her own right when we started. Think about that. Now, for some of you when we started, that was a long time ago, but for most of you, we remember 1985 pretty well. And it has been one advance after another and we've added 23 women to the Senate and 116 to the House over those years so that has made this really, really important.

But when President Donald Trump came in and then he made it so clear during the campaign his views of women, of reproductive healthcare, of economic issues, I mean everything that our women voters care about, we knew that we were up against it and that we needed to make a stand. What I don't think we grasped right away, but we picked it up pretty quick, is that women across the country were ahead of us. We got to organize.

And so what we were able to do this election cycle is expand rapidly to take on the responsibility of over 40,000 women who want to run in this country. And that entails staffing and sitting at kitchen tables and working through campaign plans and finding staff. All these folks who are running need staff, they need training, and that's what we're here to do. And if it were completely equal and easy, we'd already have women running in every race in the country because we're pretty close, pretty close, to having men run in every race. There's no reason why this is a question except there are still obstacles for women getting in.

We've blown through a couple this cycle, but that doesn't mean this is equal and fair, and we still have work to do to get that done. So we've just expanded the work we've already done under this administration. I'll tell you what, we're going to keep going. This isn't about a cycle for us, either. This is for many, many cycles and generational change in leadership in this country.

MS. EDNEY: You just mentioned obstacles. So in your opinion, what is the cause of 90 percent of the governorships in the U.S. still being held by men?

MS. SCHRIOCK: Oh, this one is something we talk about all the time. And the good news, because we've got some great candidates in position to change some of those numbers going in, but you're right. We currently only have two Democratic women governors in the entire country. They both happen to be up for reelection right now as well, Governor Gina Raimondo in Rhode Island, Governor Kate Brown in Oregon. Both, by the way, have done extremely well in governing in a progressive way both those states and have really introduced family-friendly policies, have been great for the economy, have great stories to tell. But there's still a little bit of a challenge.

And we think one of those challenges is that a lot of voters just haven't seen women in executive positions all that often. Over 20 states have never had a woman governor of either party, forget about party, have never had a woman governor. So it's hard to be what you can't see, and so that's the case. We're also talking about a country where there's not that many women CEOs. So you're also not seeing women in corporate roles, in executive roles.

And so we are still breaking through mindsets of women in these executive roles. The good news is like every time one more comes in, it makes a huge difference. And they become important not just in their state, but across the country and it's a conversation I have with our women who are running right now. You know, Gretchen Whitmer, who's running for governor in Michigan in a state that has had a woman governor in Jennifer Granholm but I will tell you for the first year that she was running, it was a lot of uphill battle to get folks to think about the fact that Michigan could elect a woman governor again.

I had those conversations in Michigan. They didn't think it could happen. She's been in the lead, by the way, most of the way. Put together a fabulous, fabulous campaign, has a great vision for the state, will make a great governor. We got a lot of work to do to get her there, but it's still in the mindset of so many. So we still have a lot of work to do. We've got to deliver, we've got to try to get these women through the primaries which, still, a lot of folks haven't seen these executive roles. And so it continues to be a challenge. The good

news, as I said, we've got some great women in place now in Michigan, New Mexico, Kansas-- there's my sleeper for everybody. Kansas governor's race, watch out; Laura Kelly is coming. Stacy Abrams, a sea change type of candidate who could really change everything for so many people in this country. So that's the good news. But we still have a lot of work to do.

MS. EDNEY: Do you think the Me Too movement will be a factor in women's turnout in the midterms?

MS. SCHRIOCK: I think there's been-- I think the answer is yes, it is part of a lot of factors that is driving energy among women voters right now. Again, I sort of talked about what started getting women wanting to run and it really was the election of Donald Trump and the loss by Hillary Clinton. And it was sort of the one, two punch of that. Folks were in shock. I mean, even if women voters, maybe some, not us, but some, maybe they didn't even like Hillary Clinton. But they were all told by all of us that she was going to be president. So it was going to be okay.

And then the election night comes and it's not okay and they cannot believe that that happened. And they took to the streets in marching and then they took to their neighborhoods and organized and they're registering voters and they're doing all of this work.

And then one thing happened and then another thing and another thing and Me Too is part of that. I don't believe the Me Too movement and moment really happens without the women's march. Because the beautiful thing about the women's march is this: women across this country-- like the women who came to D.C., that's one thing. But the women who walked out of their house in Jackson, Mississippi, or Helena, Montana or one of the 600 locations in the United States who probably didn't think there was another Democrat or another likeminded person in their whole community, but they were empowered that day. They were empowered that day to make a stand.

And they walked out and then they realized, "Huh, I'm not alone. There are people who think like me in this neighborhood, in this community, in this town." And then all of a sudden that empowerment had backup. And the Me Too movement is exactly that. Women have been struggling with all of this forever, forever. But for generations they were told to not say anything, be nice, let it go, overlook it, all the things.

And finally, they're like, "No, I'm going to do it and I know I'm not going to be alone." And that's the power of this. And that's what's happening right now as we get ready for this election, why we have so many women running. They've been empowered and they know they're not alone. And that is just feeding and feeding, feeding the energy by women voters who want to make a very public stand right now and say this is not the direction we want to go. We want to go somewhere new. And that's what's happening.

MS. EDNEY: Very unprecedented in many ways.

MS. SCHRIOCK: Yes, absolutely.

MS. EDNEY: You mentioned Hillary Clinton a few times. So what is Hillary Clinton's role in the midterms?

MS. SCHRIOCK: She has already been an inspiration to so many of our candidates and so much of the activity early on, and continues. So what I would say in these last 49 days, she wants to do whatever she can to be helpful to these women who are running and that's exactly what she's doing in both fundraising and support. You know, a lot of folks just focus on the fact that it really was the Donald Trump election that energized these women. But, so many of us were traveling or in the campaign or traveling around the country in those last weeks before the 2016 election. And I'm telling you, I would go into canvass kickoffs where we're getting ready to go door knocking and make phone calls. And women, older women, younger women, women my age, would come up to me and go, "Can I talk to you for a second?" I'd be like, "Okay, okay." And she's like-- they would go in the corner in whispered voices with great fear, say, "Do you really think she's going to win? Is it going to be okay? Are they going to stop her?"

See, there's a lot of fear. And they're like, "I don't want to believe it's going to happen, so I'm-- because I don't want to be heartbroken." I got a lot of that. I said, "There's so much emotion pent up in so many women across this country to see that glass ceiling broken that they were devastated. And what's so impressive is that they took that devastation and that anger and they took it to action just like Hillary Clinton has done over and over again, and told us to do.

And so I think her role has already been set in the inspiration she's been to so many women across this country, and good men.

MS. EDNEY: Will she be doing any events leading up to the midterms with EMILY's List?

MS. SCHRIOCK: So she's definitely doing-- we communicate regularly and we feel one of the best things she can do is help financially support a lot of our candidates. In fact, she has a fundraiser coming up for a group of our candidates very soon. So, thank you. And that's going to be an important part of this. These races still take money. I mean, our name is Early Money is Like Yeast, but late money's pretty good, too.

MS. EDNEY: You'll take it.

MS. SCHRIOCK: We're going to need it all.

MS. EDNEY: Talking about fundraising, can you tell us where you stand right now in terms of meeting fundraising goals?

MS. SCHRIOCK: Oh, this has been a good cycle, which is good because we have a historic number of women and historic responsibility to these women who have stepped up. So here's the good news. By the generation of a lot of small dollar donors, we have raised

more than we have ever raised at the grassroots level. We also have major donors who've been with us a long time. I knew you were going to ask for specifics. Let me tell you what we're spending, which is this. We just announced that we are going to be doing independent expenditures that equal \$37 million. That matches our independent expenditure from 2016 when we had a presidential race. Not in a million years did I imagine two years ago when we started this budget that we would be in that place, which is extraordinary.

We have been able to bundle, which for us means getting money directly to candidates by our members, over \$10 million already, which is on path to be one of our best, and probably will be our best cycles. And we've been able to expand this organization. So we will have our best cycle ever. The question is how much more's coming in? We could use more; not from the press because that's wrong. But for others who are not part of the press, EMILY'sList.org, great place to go. You can become a sustaining member. We could use the help.

MS. EDNEY: Coming back to some of the more current news happening in Washington, how do you see the allegations against U.S. Supreme Court nominee, Brett Kavanaugh factoring into the midterms?

MS. SCHRIOCK: I received this question yesterday at an event as well. I'll start with women voters are pretty riled up right now anyway. That being said, a little more gasoline on the fire is probably pretty good. I mean, there is a huge energy by women voters and they're watching this. And these are voters who are very concerned about the direction of our country. They don't want to see the court go into the hands of the right. They are concerned about Roe v. Wade, they're also concerned about executive power and now this.

And I think folks, something could have changed in the last hour while we were here, so I'm not going to speak on where they are in the process, but I will say these are very, very serious accusations that must be figured out before they proceed. And it sounds like that's, at least with the committee hearing coming up and the conversation that's coming up, is really, really important.

I will say this; women are watching. Women are watching to see what they're going to do. Folks have been probably-- I know all of this room have been tracking all of the news stories. Last night, I turned on one of the cable news shows and they were walking through, not surprising, the Anita Hill hearing and what was going on. And I'm always shocked-- I don't know why because I've seen it a number of times in my life, and I remember it-- but I'm always so shocked by that 1991 hearing because if you remember, the entire committee were white men. The entire committee.

And as the story goes, and I hope I have the story right, Senator Barbara Mikulski would get asked at the time, "Well, where are the women on the committee?" And she was like, "There's only two of us. We can't do all the committees." And it was shocking and it was a trigger for women voters across the country. And as Ellen would tell this story better than I, she was there and lived through it, we elected four new women to the United States Senate in 1992 because of what was going on.

But I was just shocked, again, by the flashes last week of that committee. I am proud of one side, one side where you have women and women of color and members of color, the diversity of our nation, who are asking questions from different perspective which is why we need diversity of voices at our table.

And then I looked at the other side of the aisle on that committee. It hasn't changed one bit since that 1991 hearing. And I think there's going to be a lot of voters, not just women voters, a lot of voters who are wondering what's going on with their Republican Party and why there has been so little change in 27 years on who's representing their communities.

MS. EDNEY: I'm going to ask you just one more. We have so many good questions here, and I see we are running a little short on time so I'm just going to ask you one really quick question still about nominee Kavanaugh. What are your thoughts on whether accusations dating back 30 years should disqualify a nominee for the Supreme Court?

MS. SCHRIOCK: I mean, first off, there's got to be conversation and investigation, what the real situation is. But this is a lifetime appointment. This is a job for life. How many would like that? Others wouldn't mind a lifetime appointment to something, that sounds great. So this is a serious bar that a candidate, a nominee, should have to cross over before they get that. Which means yes, I think their past actions are important to understand because it also reflects on a lot of their thinking going into how they're going to handle cases of all sorts of matters that relate to women and to people of color and to every American in this country. So I do think that this is as important as that judges, they're usually judges, but those nominees' understanding of the law and also their positions and their-- we look at their legal record for all of their career. We should look at who they are as well.

MS. EDNEY: You worked with Senator Al Franken for many years. Earlier this year, he resigned and you said in the midst of his own Me Too moment. At the time you said he had done the right thing. Did he seek counsel with you on this decision and do you believe that his treatment was fair?

MS. SCHRIOCK: I won't comment on any conversations I may or may not have had with him at the time. But I will say for the Senator and what I've always know about Senator Franken, is that he was going to do the right thing for the people of Minnesota. When it was clear to him what the right thing to do was, he did it. And I think that this moment that we're in and these conversations that we are having really, arguably for the first time as loud as we're having, is really, really important.

I think we need to continue having those conversations about where we go from here. And so you're really asking me should that have happened to Al Franken? There's a spectrum of things. He was in a perfect storm moment where he made the right decision for himself at that moment. Times change monthly at this point, if not daily, I feel like, and we should continue looking at how we're handling each and every one of these situations very carefully. And it should not be a one size fits all. We should have a conversation, and that's why I think

what's happening right now, we should have a conversation about what happened 35-plus years ago with Judge Kavanaugh. I think it is important to know.

MS. EDNEY: Coming back to midterms, if the House flips to Democratic control, do you think Nancy Pelosi should be Speaker again, or should she pass the torch to someone else within the Democratic Party? Why or why not?

MS. SCHRIOCK: First off, when the House flips. It's going to be a very exciting moment for women in this country. In all of the questions about Nancy Pelosi, I will say I find just a little frustrating. Because here's the thing. She was one of the best Speakers we have ever had. Do you know how hard it is to run the House of Representatives? It's really, really hard. It was so hard that John Boehner cried a lot and then quit, and Paul Ryan has decided he can't do it. So she is extraordinarily talented and think about just her short, brief record which was helping save our entire economy and also getting through the Affordable Care Act. So she knows how this place works and she's done so much to bring us to this point.

The other thing, though, about Leader Pelosi, is this. She cares so deeply about the direction of this country and the next generations coming up, so all I can say is she's going to do the right thing for that caucus, for the House of Representatives and this country. And if that is her decision to run for Speaker of the House, I know this; she knows how to run the joint and that don't seem like such a bad idea to me.

MS. EDNEY: What advice do you have for pro-choice women running for office in districts where the majority of voters are pro-life? And do you think a pro-choice candidate can be electable to pro-life advocates?

MS. SCHRIOCK: Here's the thing: seven out of ten Americans think *Roe v. Wade* should stand as it. This country is very, very open to allowing women to make the choices they need to make for their economic and family futures. And so what we have said all the time is this: these races are about more than one particular issue and usually if it is about a series of issues, it's about economic security and access to healthcare and insuring that your family has a better future.

And so I believe candidates, our pro-choice Democratic women, can run anywhere. Can run anywhere in this country and win. And by the way, they are. They are running everywhere in this country because they listen, they understand and they're going to make a case for a better future. And because maybe a voter disagrees with them on one issue, it doesn't mean they don't agree on ten others. Americans are not single issue idealists. They do care about their families. I don't care what background, I don't care what party. They care about their families and the family's future and what our women, our Democratic women can do at EMILY's List is connect and understand those stories and find the best way to move forward. And that's why I think you're going to see Democratic women win in places that you never thought that was going to happen, just like we've seen Doug Jones win in Alabama. Nobody thought that was going to happen.

MS. EDNEY: Who is your candidate for president in 2020?

MS. SCHRIOCK: (Laughter) We have to win in 2018 first. So I just want to start with that. But I know you want an answer, and here's the thing. What I really don't like are folks who say the Democrats don't have a bench. We have a really, really good bench of candidates. And that bench starts with four women who I think should all be thinking about running. I'm not saying they should all run, but there's no reason they shouldn't be thinking about running. And those going from west to east, Senator Kamala Harris, Senator Amy Klobuchar, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and Senator Elizabeth Warren. They are uniquely different. They bring different things to the table. I love that because the idea that there's one woman and only one woman and they're going to represent 51 or 2 percent of the population? Come on. They could really bring great policy discussions and vision to this process. And I hope that one to four of them run. (Laughter)

MS. EDNEY: Thank you.

MS. SCHRIOCK: You're welcome.

MS. EDNEY: And have you ever considered running for political office?

MS. SCHRIOCK: I get asked that every once in a while, and I say the same thing when I look in the mirror and the question comes. I have to say the same thing to myself as I say to our staff and to our recruits and to our trainings, which is I never say never, and I say that to everybody. Never say never on running for office. We all as citizens have a responsibility to find a way to best serve. But you can say not now, and I am very much in the not now phase of my life.

MS. EDNEY: All right, thank you. Well, thank you very much. I'm going to have one final question for you in just a moment. But I wanted to take a moment to present you with our National Press Club mug. We give one to all of our esteemed speakers. We are so very happy to have you here with us today. I hope you use this, use it often and in very good health.

MS. SCHRIOCK: I promise. Thank you.

MS. EDNEY: Thank you. So one final question: what do you think is going to be the biggest surprise on election day?

MS. SCHRIOCK: What is going to be the biggest surprise on election day? Outside of my Kansas tip that I gave you earlier? Watch out for that governor's race in Kansas. I'm an optimist and I think it is going to be very surprising. It's going to be the gender gap, the number of women voters who come out, who vote and who are going to vote for Democrats, I believe is going to be historic and almost eye popping. That's what I think is going to happen.

MS. EDNEY: Thank you so much. Really, thank you for being here with us.

MS. SCHRIOCK: Thank you so much.

MS. EDNEY: Thank you. (Applause) So, I'd like to just take a second to plug some of the excellent, excellent upcoming events that we have here at the Club. And I'd also like to say-- well, first the events. So, just over the next couple of weeks, on Friday we have an NPC Newsmaker with Judge Ashley Tabaddor. She's President of the National Association of Immigration Judges. And next Monday we have a luncheon with Craigslist founder, Craig Newmark. Later in the week, we have a luncheon with the Secretary of the U.S. Air Force, Heather Wilson. And we have House Speaker Paul Ryan coming here on Thursday, September 27th. So we hope that you will join us all.

Thank you so much for being here today. I'd like ask that you stay seated for just a moment so that we can let our wonderful speaker exit with her staff. She has another event to get to quickly, but we are going to-- we hope that she will come back and speak with the Club again and that you will have more of an opportunity to speak with her at a later date. So again, Stephanie, thank you so much for being here today. (Applause)

And so while they're exiting, I'm going to plug a couple more events because we have so many great events coming up. We have the Director General of Al-Jazeera coming at the very beginning of October. We have the President of Slovenia coming on September 28th. We have the CEO of-- we have the Director of the National Air and Space Museum coming October 22nd. And we have Senator Ben Sasse coming and speaking on Wednesday, October 31st. There are a number of other excellent events. You can look at them, like for details on them, at our website. Thank you, everyone, for coming out today. With that, we are adjourned. (Sounds gavel.)

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