Allyson Y. Schwartz

U.S. Representative of Pennsylvania (2005–2015)

Oral History Interview
Final Edited Transcript
April 12, 2017

Office of the Historian
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

"I think a risk-taking, feisty woman is seen as disruptive and scary sometimes—certainly for the politically powerful. And I think women are seen that way because we do bring a different perspective and a different style. So do different men, but I felt that certainly when I came here to Congress. I felt it when I went to the state senate. The group of men huddled around a corner, and then you walk into it. You could just see the body language changes, you know? I think it was a good thing, by the way, but it does defy what they're used to. It is a change. It isn't always embraced."

The Honorable Allyson Y. Schwartz
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Abstract

Allyson Y. Schwartz came of age during a time when traditional gender roles faced growing scrutiny and challenge. In her interview she recalls how the changing expectations for women in society shaped her individual and professional choices. Schwartz's path to politics began as a community organizer and women's rights advocate. In her role as a social worker and director of a non-profit women's health care center, she learned the ins and outs of local, state, and federal government. This knowledge, and the alliances she forged, sparked an interest in pursuing a political career. Schwartz describes her foray into the Pennsylvania state senate—one made more difficult and unlikely because so few women had preceded her. During her time in state politics she focused on many public health initiatives, including a children's health insurance program. In 2004, Schwartz set her sights on a congressional seat. Even with her impressive political résumé, she explains that she had to convince many voters that her gender did not serve as an obstacle for success in the House.

Once in Congress, Schwartz earned a reputation as a seasoned legislator determined to push an ambitious agenda. During her second term, she claimed a spot on the Ways and Means Committee. Schwartz recalls how this key assignment allowed her to focus on an issue of personal importance—health care. In her oral history, she reflects on how her background as a female social worker with experience in the human services and public health field, did not fit the typical mold for a politician. Schwartz also delves into the sharp contrast between the warm welcome she received in the House from veteran women Members and the less enthusiastic reception of the all-male Pennsylvania delegation. A prolific fundraiser, the five-term Representative worked closely with the DCCC (Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee), helping to recruit and raise money for promising candidates for Congress. Schwartz also explains how she donned a mentoring role by taking time from her schedule to meet with newly-elected Members to offer advice and answer questions. She concludes her interview by discussing her reasons for leaving the House to run for Pennsylvania governor.

Biography

SCHWARTZ, Allyson Y., a Representative from Pennsylvania; born in Queens, Queens County, N.Y., October 3, 1948; graduated from the Calhoun School, New York, N.Y., 1966; B.A., Simmons College, Boston, Mass., 1970; M.S.W., Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, Pa., 1972; health care executive; member of the Pennsylvania state senate, 1991–2004; unsuccessful candidate to nomination for the United States Senate in 2000; elected as a Democrat to the One Hundred Ninth and to the four succeeding Congresses (January 3, 2005–January 3, 2015); was not a candidate for reelection to the One Fourteenth Congress, but was an unsuccessful candidate for nomination for Governor of Pennsylvania in 2014.

Read full biography

Editing Practices

In preparing interview transcripts for publication, the editors sought to balance several priorities:

- As a primary rule, the editors aimed for fidelity to the spoken word and the conversational style in accord with generally accepted oral history practices.
- The editors made minor editorial changes to the transcripts in instances where they believed such changes would make interviews more accessible to readers. For instance, excessive false starts and filler words were removed when they did not materially affect the meaning of the ideas expressed by the interviewee.
- In accord with standard oral history practices, interviewees were allowed to review their transcripts, although they were encouraged to avoid making substantial editorial revisions and deletions that would change the conversational style of the transcripts or the ideas expressed therein.
- The editors welcomed additional notes, comments, or written observations that the interviewees wished to insert into the record and noted any substantial changes or redactions to the transcript.
- Copy-editing of the transcripts was based on the standards set forth in *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

The first reference to a Member of Congress (House or Senate) is underlined in the oral history transcript. For more information about individuals who served in the House or Senate, please refer to the online *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, http://bioguide.congress.gov and the "People Search" section of the History, Art & Archives website, http://history.house.gov.

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Interviewer Biographies

Matt Wasniewski is the Historian of the U.S. House of Representatives, a position he has held since 2010. He has worked in the House as a historical editor and manager since 2002. Matt served as the editor-in-chief of *Women in Congress, 1917–2006* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), *Black Americans in Congress, 1870–2007* (GPO, 2008), *Hispanic Americans in Congress, 1822–2012* (GPO, 2013), and *Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Congress: 1900-2017* (GPO, 2017). He helped to create the House's first oral history program, focusing on collecting the institutional memory of current and former Members, longtime staff, and support personnel. Matt earned his Ph.D. in U.S. history from the University of Maryland, College Park. His prior work experience includes several years as the associate historian and communications director at the U.S. Capitol Historical Society, and, in the early 1990s, as the sports editor for a northern Virginia newspaper.

Kathleen Johnson is the Manager of Oral History for the Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives. She earned a B.A. in history from Columbia University, where she also played basketball for four years, and holds two master's degrees from North Carolina State University in education and public history. In 2004, she helped to create the House's first oral history program, focusing on collecting the institutional memory of Members and staff. She co-authored two books: *Women in Congress: 1917–2006* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2006) and *Black Americans in Congress: 1870–2007* (GPO, 2008). Before joining the Office of the Historian, she worked as a high school history teacher and social studies curriculum consultant.

— THE HONORABLE ALLYSON Y. SCHWARTZ OF PENNSYLVANIA —
A CENTURY OF WOMEN IN CONGRESS

JOHNSON: My name is Kathleen Johnson, and I'm with the House Historian, Matt Wasniewski. Today's date is April 12, 2017. We're in the House Recording Studio of the Rayburn House Office Building, and we are very pleased to be with former Congresswoman Allyson [Y.] Schwartz from Pennsylvania. Thank you very much for coming in today.

SCHWARTZ: Pleased to do this. Pleased to be a part of this, keeping history.

JOHNSON: This interview is part of a series of interviews we've been conducting for the centennial of the election of the first woman to Congress, Jeannette Rankin. So our first question today is, when you were young, did you have any female role models?

SCHWARTZ: Well, there wasn't anyone in my family who ever ran for office or was engaged in politics, so not personally, not at all. Certainly, our life experiences are what motivates us or get us interested in this and in the world around us. And my family were always good voters and cared about the community and the world around us. My mother was—a little bit of history here—but my mother was a Holocaust survivor. So anyone who knows what that experience of being a child of a survivor really means is many things. But one of them certainly is an understanding that what the society around you, what the government around you, what your community does or doesn't do, can really be hurtful and harmful. And so, we have a responsibility beyond ourselves to think about the world around us and, potentially, get involved.

My dad was a Korean War veteran. He left when I was three. My first memory is his returning when I was five, coming to school to pick me up and

not really recognizing him, and saying, "Really, is he my dad?" You know, in these days, they probably wouldn't have let him {laughter} in to a school. But having to turn to my older brother—all of 18 months older—and saying, "Really, is that our dad?"

So certainly I understood service, both military service and, again, what we do as a nation, what we do as a community, to protect people. Obviously, this older brother, and two younger sisters, I felt real a responsibility to fix things, take care of things. I was the one who sort of tried to do that in the family. So I guess a little bit of history is, I always felt that it was a little bit of my personal {laughter} responsibility to fix small things and big things, and turned out to be what I did as part of my life's work.

JOHNSON: When you were younger, what were the societal expectations about what you would be when you grew up to be a woman?

SCHWARTZ: Oh, that's a great question because certainly I am of the era of great change in the expectations around women. There have been other eras like that, but certainly as someone who grew up spending my meaningful years in terms of middle school, high school, the [John Fitzgerald] Kennedy years—that sort of sense of giving back. What do you do? And a sense of great loss over the assassinations of both the President [Kennedy] and with Martin Luther King and a sense of upheaval.

But it was also a time of a push for change. You know, there was a pushback on the Vietnam War. I remember thinking can we really do that? {laughter} Are we allowed to do that? Should we push back on the government? To civil rights and people taking great risks to change the world for African Americans, and the women's rights movement, which I have to say I

played—it's only a small part, but certainly going to college in the late '60s—I graduated in 1970.

But it really was a time of changing expectations for women and a real understanding that we needed to step up. We didn't use that language then, but to be a part of the world and to defy expectations to do with women's rights and women's reproductive rights. I agreed with that and felt strongly about it. I participated in some demonstrations where I went to college in Boston, and some in Washington as well. And felt very much the small and large questions that we asked ourselves, the conversations I had both in college and with friends in graduate school about what is our role as women? Where do we take it? Do we change our name when we get married? Should we get married? {laughter} How do we actually balance family and our desire for love and marriage and children with expectations about our own empowerment? And how did we make that happen? I was part of the generation that embraced that and tried to figure it out. It was hard.

We also thought we had to be superwomen and really do both. We didn't want to give up anything. But we were really challenging expectations, both in our families—my family expected me to go to college, to graduate, but then to get married. {laughter} But my mother certainly said, "You need to be independent. You need to have a career. You need to think about that, even as you marry." And I did.

I remember changing my name when I got married right out of college and thinking that was so traditional of me, but you do this in bits and pieces, in a way that's comfortable. But then, you also do—and I think we did really say that we need to be taken seriously, we need to push. Language like "the glass ceiling" didn't exist in the same way. A lot of language didn't exist around

domestic violence or even sexual assault. That was language that evolved from some of our expectations and what we would do, and it was about changing the role of men as well. If we're going to be partners, or we're going to share both professional and personal lives and decision-making, that's changing the world not just for women but for men as well. That was very much a part of my experience.

I went to a women's high school. I went to a women's college. So there were those kinds of discussions. They weren't particularly radical places, by any means. So, for me, it was really a mix of how do you actually create new expectations for yourself while you're respectful of who you are and how you were raised, and your families. I had siblings who made enough waves. I didn't want to make too many waves, {laughter} so, okay, how do I do that in a way that's comfortable for me and the community I'm in? But that's really what it was all about for us.

It also became quite political. It made us very aware of how you could change expectations for yourself, but if the laws around you didn't protect you—if the community didn't respect you, if there weren't opportunities—it was a whole lot harder. So we needed to get politically involved as well.

WASNIEWSKI: Was there anyone who served, particularly, as a political inspiration for you, as a first mentor?

SCHWARTZ: I have to say not so much. It's kind of interesting. I think, partly because in Pennsylvania there were so few women to model yourself after, actually. Didn't mean that I didn't look at some of the women who were standing on that stage when I was maybe in an audience or something and think, "Wow, they're really doing this." I can't say there was one who I said I want to do it just like that. It really was how can I do it in a way that fit for me? When I

was in college, or even graduate school, I didn't think of running for office. I wasn't one of those 10-year-olds who stands on—I hope there are little girls who are doing this today—but stands on a box and gives a speech and says, "I'm going to be President someday." That was not something I sort of dared to do at that time. It's something that really evolved for me, as to much more how can I effect the changes that I want to see? Which I did very much in the private sector, and we'll talk about that.

But then, it wasn't—and then helped others run for office. But there wasn't someone who said, "I can do it like that," or, "I'm going to run for office someday." Again, I hear young women say that. I'm excited about that. But it really was, for me, how do I make these changes? How can I be involved? And sort of evolved into, I guess, me running for office.

WASNIEWSKI: Since you brought it up, can you talk a little bit about how your attraction to the reform movements in the '60s and early '70s played out when you got out of college, and what did you pursue career-wise?

SCHWARTZ: Yes, well, I did get a master's in social work. It was in social administration, community organizing. It was not one-on-one counseling. And so, it really was about how do you organize communities? How do you enable, empower communities? Of course, it was a conversation about how to empower families to be responsible, to take charge, to deal with struggles they may have. But it really, for me, was about communities, cities, and ultimately with state and nation. So, in retrospect, it was very logical what I did. {laughter}

But my goal, when I was in school, really was to head an agency. I did sense my ability to lead, so I did think about wanting to be in that position of being the director of some agency. I did see some role models in that, of women who were doing just really remarkable work on all sorts of subjects.

And so, right after graduate school, I did do some work on health care. I went to work, actually, for a fledgling HMO [Health Maintenance Organization] in Philadelphia, early on, and was excited about that—I was one of their first hires, or professional staff—that went on to be an HMO, actually. It did, I thought, really, again, meaningful work in changing the health care system. I'm kind of doing some of that now again, so kind of interesting to come back around to it.

But it made me realize that as great as Philadelphia was in terms of terrific health care services, there were still real problems with access and coverage and disparities and all of that. So Philadelphia Health Plan is what it became. It was pretty interesting to see how you worked with very establishment, traditional organizations and got them to change and do things differently and work together in different ways.

But at that same time, I was involved in the women's movement. I was involved in reproductive rights and also was a committeewoman. Somebody asked me would I run for committeewoman—so, again, your sort of traditional level of politics in this country is committeeperson on a precinct level—so doing that, as well.

What I found was increasingly intriguing was the work on women's health care that I was doing and how that was both a professional interest of mine and also a passion, I guess a political passion, if you want to call it that, and a women's rights passion. I ended up working with a group of women to start a women's health center in Philadelphia, which was pretty daring of us. What made us think we could do such a thing? {laughter} It was a very 1960s thing, I think, even though it was early '70s. And it was just after the Supreme

Court decision in '73 which legalized abortion in this country.[1] It was a moment to seize, and could we do this? How could we do it?

And so, we did—a group of us who—some knew better than I did how you might be able to do this. It was being done in other areas of the country, again, maybe in more radical ways, sort of feminist women's health centers and collectives, and nobody gets paid, and everybody pays what they want. I was like, I don't know, I think we're going to have to do a little melding, here, as in, maybe we have to have fees for services. {laughter} They have to have a budget. How are we going to raise the money? I think people ought to get paid—those sorts of things.

And so, I helped organize that. I was the chair of the board, put together a board, put together the nonprofit status, that sort of thing. We started looking for a director. I was approached by some people, "Would you leave your job to do this?" So I was interested—and it is what I did. It was taking a pretty significant risk, actually, because I liked my job. But I was young—didn't have children yet. I said, "Look, if I'm ever going to do something like this, I should do it." And I remember my boss at the time saying, "Now you're going to really have to worry about budget and money, and how do you sustain this?" "How do you raise the money?" I said, "I know, but I think that's interesting, too." So we did it.

We took out a bank loan, believe it or not. And, ultimately, I had to get some cosigners, and it took us longer to pay it back than we thought, but we did start a women-controlled nonprofit health center in Philadelphia, and I was the director there for over 12 years. We provided full gynecological care. We did do pregnancy testing and first-trimester abortions, which had a political aspect of it. Even family planning, honestly, as we know to this day, has a

political aspect. Philadelphia, I think, is a very traditional medical community. They weren't quite sure what to make of us, so I wanted to be sure we provided quality care and could not be accused of not.

We put together a diverse staff, and we did some cutting-edge things. We provided GYN care for mentally retarded women who had a hard time going to a regular doctor because they really needed their hands held; they really needed to understand; they needed a comfortable, safe setting. We did menopause counseling. We did post-mastectomy support programs. We actually started and ran an out-of-hospital birth center with nurse-midwives, which was a very challenging thing to do. I had to go to the health department in Philadelphia and say, "Do you have any rules on this?" And they said, "We don't. We're going to have to write some." {laughter}

That was kind of interesting and challenging things to do, and exciting ones, as well. It really did give me a sense of how do you act on these—the rhetoric of what we were talking about—how do you make that change happen? And I think we really had an impact on health care in Pennsylvania and maybe around the country in terms of the way women were treated, the way they got to make decisions, the way they shared that responsibility. We call it patient engagement nowadays, but it's really the work I did. And, again, so much of that was political.

And so, during that time, I was also involved in how do you engage with candidates to understand what's going on in the women's movement, to incorporate that into their thinking? Certainly for mayor of Philadelphia—and working with a group of other directors of women's services: one that dealt with the issues of rape, one that dealt with the issues of divorce, one that dealt with the issues of career counseling, one that dealt with domestic

violence. And all of them were dealing with issues such as how do we deal with the police? How do we help them understand? Some of the national funding that Joe Biden worked on for domestic violence—these were conversations we were not alone in, but certainly I was very much a part of having those kinds of discussions.

We wrote platform-position papers for candidates, and I was involved with that. Supported some candidates running for governor, or mayor, or city council, and did begin to think there were so few women in those situations. There were so few women who felt as strongly as we did about the politics of what this meant.

So I did support a candidate for mayor, Wilson Goode, who won. And, again, a group of women—I was not directly involved with this—got involved with their transition teams. You learn these things as you go. I didn't know anything about transition teams, and how do you pick people to be in government? But, in fact, I was interviewed and then selected to be in the managing director's office, and left the Blackwell Health Center to work in the city in the managing director's office on health and human services and then replaced the commissioner for the Department of Human Services, which is all of the juvenile delinquency, child welfare, foster care. It actually even had a, they called it a youth study center—but it really was juveniles who were arrested and a holding place for them, which was really awful—trying to look for a different space for them, and a different way to handle that. So some of my social-work training came back to be really important in that.

But it was really both important for me to see government from the inside, to see some of the challenges, to see some of the feelings of communities that

felt not helped but actually intruded upon by what was supposed to be seen as help. You know, when you're dealing with foster care, when you're talking about taking kids away from parents, it's a really serious business. It's not one that is viewed comfortably by, sometimes, either the families that you're working with or the communities that you're in. So trying to bring some of my sense of how do you empower and enable the workers to feel good about what they do, and how do you engage in communities, was really important to me.

Actually, elder abuse was one of the things we dealt with as well. We transferred that to an area agency on aging, thinking it was sort of a "distance" from the city. But really, also felt very strongly about why are we intervening so late? That's what we did. We intervened really late. The idea of intervening early with families—there was very little funding for that. You intervened when you had to, which is also correct. You should not intervene when you don't have to, but there should be more support for families. So it was an extension of some of the work that I did, in the sense of how do you enable families to be empowered to take responsibility for their kids? How do you have community support for families—different countries do this very differently, different communities do it. We're understanding more and more how hard it is for poor families, for families that don't have the internal strength and support to do it.

So it sort of moved me also to feeling that the state did not provide the kind of financial support, the kind of interventions, the kind of help and understanding for families. And this was in the early '90s—epidemic of cocaine use, lack of funding for cities, really just a very disruptive time, difficult time. I found myself engaging with the city staff that was actually engaging with Harrisburg in trying to intervene on what's fair funding? How

do you get that funding? How do you engage other counties? How do you build those coalitions and relationships so that you can get things done in a state as rural as Pennsylvania, with the big city of Philadelphia seen as the bad actor always, and always begging for money? And the rest of the state staying, "Well, why are you sucking up so much money?"

It turns out Philadelphia and the surrounding counties actually provide a lot of the revenue for the state, too. {laughter} Somehow, that never became a part of the conversation until later. But it really enforced my feeling that, who's making these decisions on our behalf? Who's representing us? Can we do more, and can we do better to get more representation? And that led me thinking maybe I need to run for office.

My state senator at the time was someone who was seen as vulnerable and did not represent a lot of the values that I had. He was not pro-choice. He was not necessarily supportive of additional funding for the city. He played the race card in an interesting way. I think he was not as attentive to some of the racial issues in Philadelphia, and some of this—how hard that was sometimes and saw himself as representing a white, working-class community and not the diversity of Philadelphia. And did not see himself as how can I help the city, as well, even though he represented {laughter} a good portion of the city. He also had some political issues where he had run as—he was a Republican state representative who changed parties to run for the state senate. He was elected as a Democrat, and then changed back to being a Republican. You can maybe do it once, and that's not easy. But doing it twice was really {laughter} did not, in fact, ingratiate himself to the Democratic voters or the Democratic leadership.

So it is not an easy decision to run for office. It's a huge leap of faith in our system, and faith in the community you represent and hope to, values you think are important. You never have done it before, and I didn't have a history—some of those people who do this and say, "Oh, yes, my dad ran," or, "my mother ran," or, "I had a history here." So I didn't have a lot of that family to draw on, but I did have a lot of strong connections in the nonprofit community, in the social-services and human-services community, and some of the political community as well. And decided to take that leap: to run for the state senate.

JOHNSON: Not many women had served in the Pennsylvania state senate. There weren't many at all. So what was that experience like for you?

SCHWARTZ: There were two. {laughter} There were two women out of 50 in the Pennsylvania senate. So that's both good and bad because that did galvanize women and men who thought that it was certainly time. This was 1990. It was time to run for office—for women to run for office—to be a part of it. And yet, there were very few role models. There were very few women who had that experience. There were some women on the city council in Philadelphia, and that was very, very helpful to me, one in particular who was very supportive. So it galvanized people, but it also meant that essentially the political leadership was all men, and certainly true in Harrisburg.

There was not an infrastructure supporting women. You know, and how do you do that? How do you do this? How do you look? How do you dress? How do you sound? Interesting discussions continue today about that. You don't have that role model. Anyway, kind of interesting.

We decided, once I was elected, to do a bike ride. I'll jump into this. Okay, should I wear my {laughter} my biking shorts and spandex, or shouldn't I?

What do I do on this? It's kind of interesting. Anyway, that's a small factor, but it just indicates how we really had to invent how you do this. I was fortunate that I did have a couple of—a city councilwoman, in particular, and then a state representative who was supportive of me and some of their team who knew how to do this. And that was great.

So in terms of the, really, just the logistics of who do you hire? How do you run a campaign? How do you raise money—which we turned out to do a little bit on our own thinking on that of how you do fundraising? We'll talk about it later. But it actually was a very exciting thing to do. Everyone says you love your first race. I did actually love my race for Congress, too. I did have a primary because I did not have the institutional political support. There was a ward leader who ran, had all the political support—county chair, the ward leaders, Harrisburg folks, who did campaigns. All of that were behind him. And then another candidate who was head of an organization that did a lot of community organizing, field effort, statewide—basically, a citizen's action organization. He was known as very smart, very capable, knew how to organize people. Actually lived in my neighborhood, so we came from some of the same base, which also was interesting because it did divide some streets and neighborhoods.

And then me. People didn't—I will say that the political writers didn't know what to make of me. They didn't have a category to put me in. I was seen as very much an outsider and not given a lot of credit for the work I did. We can talk more about it because I also think that human services and health care are not seen as important as someone who worked on jobs. Oh, actually, there are a lot of health care jobs. {laughter} But it's sort of interesting that it was not seen as important, as hard. It's like, "I don't know, childcare, how hard can that be?" Actually, it's really hard. {laughter} But anyone who's done

that, it's hard. How do you handle juvenile delinquency? How do you handle child abuse? These were hard issues. But social services, human services, were not seen as—and I think, to this day, are not given the kind of credit they deserve. And, again, the work I did on health care—how does that fit in? It was pretty cutting edge.

So what we did is, created it ourselves. In just a few weeks, where I had a group of women coming out of the women's movement because Blackwell was a—we saw a lot of women from different races, different incomes, and all that. And the staff was diverse. It was a little more mixed than much of the women's movement where by and large the leadership were white women and middle-class women. And then, there were also some African-American political leaders who helped me. And so, I was meeting with them one morning, and I was meeting this sort of other group {laughter} another morning, and I finally said, "We can have coffee and Danish together. We can do our coffee and bagels together. We just have to because this is, one, making me nuts; and, two, you can't coordinate a campaign that isn't actually working together." And we did. That was a really unusual thing to do, actually. But we did, and we had a team that was great. There was a little competition. There was a little proving themselves to each other. And that was great because they did a great job. It created a sense of camaraderie that, I think, happens in most campaigns, if they're good ones. And really was incredibly powerful for all of us in that campaign.

I did win the primary with 50 percent of the vote against the two others who were given all the expectation that they would win. No one thought I would win, so that was kind of an amazing experience. We did a lot of field work. We did a lot of knocking on doors. I was probably in the best shape I've ever been in my life, putting my sneakers on and running door-to-door every

evening and day. I raised money in small amounts from a lot of people: a lot of house parties, a lot of, "Can you give me $25? Can you give me $50? Can you give me $100?" And people were repeatedly doing that. "Oh, I didn't really mean to give you $500, but I guess I did." {laughter} But we were also showing people they could do that. That it wasn't about somebody else giving that money. It was about them giving it, and I saw that as sort of an organizing effort, in a way. And then went on to take on the Republican incumbent and beating him in the general election.

WASNIEWSKI: You were elected to the House in 2004, and we want to get to that first election in a minute. But we're curious to know what your state legislative experience did to prepare you for running for the House.

SCHWARTZ: Sure. Well, first of all, I had had a very competitive race, as you just heard. But going to Harrisburg, which is a highly partisan place. The political pundits will tell you that. And as you said, there were two women there before me. One woman—Jeanette Reibman was her name, who was the only woman in the Pennsylvania senate for 20 years. Kind of amazing. She served in the house before, and really smart, wonderful woman. I was delighted that I had a chance to overlap with her. She was from the Lehigh Valley, just to the north of the Philadelphia area, and did a lot of work on education, community colleges. She was terrific.

Another woman, Roxanne Jones, who was an experienced African-American woman—first African-American woman to serve from Philadelphia—had been a welfare mom and passionate about the issues she worked on—an important force in the Democratic caucus. And then there was me. {laughter} We were, all three of us, really quite different, coming from different experiences.

Another woman was elected at the same time, Melissa [A.] Hart, a Republican from Western Pennsylvania, who came to Congress before I did. So we didn't overlap, but interesting we both ended up in Congress, which was great. We were very different, politically and came from different political motivations.

But suddenly, we doubled the number of women in the [state] senate. But again, that said, all of the leadership, all of the expectations, it was very much an all-boys club. And actually, it is different today, but not so much. It still is very much an all-boys club, and in the House as well. But I went there with a real determination to get things done. I thought that's why I was there. I was surprised that not everybody felt the way I did. {laughter} I worked really hard. I put together good legislation and always been fortunate to hire smart, capable staff.

We went to work with a passion for what could I do about the child welfare system. Working then with someone who's now in Congress, who is in the House, really did put together a change in funding for child welfare systems across the state, which was sort of one of those behind-the-scenes kinds of conversations. It's not a public debate, particularly, but got that done.

But then really went to work on access to the health care that women needed. Everything from a lot of insurance mandates, which is the states do a lot of insurance mandates—so, having insurance cover annual GYN visits and mammograms and PAP smears and domestic violence injuries was work I got done, which was great and important to do—proud of that. We did some work on access, even to maternity care. There's a patients' bill of rights, that kind of thing. Can you stay more than 48 hours? All these things have been conversations over the years.

But then, I also was very interested in children's health care and certainly was involved and really led in the senate the effort to get the Children's Health Insurance Program—CHIP, as we know it nationally now. We called it CHIP in Pennsylvania five years before it was done on the federal level. I actually came to Congress and testified about the work we did in Pennsylvania on the CHIP program. And the fact that we used private insurers—it was really a public-private partnership. It was not an expansion of Medicaid, which is the way it was done later in some states, but the option of using private insurers. My feeling was that these were families who were making too much money to be on Medicaid. They really wanted a private-insurance card and couldn't afford it, and so what we ought to do is give them access to a private-insurance card for their kids. Which I think was not, I guess, the most progressive way to go about it, {laughter} but I thought one that was really an interesting way to have state contracts and do bids and worked with then-Governor [Robert (Bob)] Casey to get this done, and we did, and it was great. And hundreds of thousands of children have been covered in Pennsylvania and, of course, millions across the country. I think the numbers range from eight to nine million children of working families have health coverage under the CHIP program nationally. Eleven million children are eligible, so we've extended the eligibility and funding so we could cover more children. It became a real federal-state partnership as well—lots of innovations done in the state.

But that was huge. To actually say I got that done was pretty amazing. You know, so, you don't get something done every day as an elected official. But when you do, it can have enormous impact on the lives of your constituents and those in the state and ultimately in the nation.

JOHNSON: Well, in 2004, you decided to run for the U.S. Congress. What motivated you to run for that, and were you recruited to run?

SCHWARTZ: Not recruited, no. {laughter} What can I say? I guess the political powers-that-be—I thought I worked pretty well with some of them, but I guess they still saw me as pretty independent. But it was an open seat. Joe [Joseph M.] Hoeffel, who held the seat had just one term but decided to run for the U.S. Senate. I guess he figured it was—he ran; he won by one point, so I think he felt like it was going to be a tough race again. It was truly a swing district. It was almost split Republican-Democratic. It was split between the city and the suburbs, and that was—it seemed sort of a big divide, which, when you think about it, is pretty silly in a way. If we can't find a common ground between city and suburb, my feeling . . . well, we have to. Otherwise, we're in serious trouble in this country. We have to figure this out.

Anyway, so there was an open seat. It was designed for a Republican woman, again, who had lost just with one point. She was running again, but it was certainly seen as an opportunity to capture this seat, keep it in Democratic hands. And there was a lot of interest. There were several people who were interested in it. But as you know, these races are expensive. It's not easy, who has a relationship to the district. My district did overlap with this congressional district.

My state senate seat had been redistricted twice, first making it an African-American-majority district two years after I won. It had been 40 percent minority and became 62 percent African American, which I represented for, then, 10 years, or a dozen years almost. And then it became more suburban. It gained some added suburbs as well. So I did have the experience with the

district, although it was, by and large, a different part of the city although there was some overlap with this district.

So there's a little bit of science to this. I was interested in moving up. You sort of asked the question before, was I prepared for this? I think I'd learned a lot in my 14 years in the state senate. I had traveled the state a lot. I had gotten things done. Each piece of legislation, the work you do in your district—which we haven't talked about—you learn a lot. You learn a lot. Twelve years older—I felt like I really was prepared for this, and I was excited about the idea of going to the federal level.

So, well, we did do a poll because you're not completely crazy. {laughter} I did do a poll to see if this was possible and whether my personality would fit and whatever the work I had done would be a good fit. And I lived a mile outside the district, so we wanted to also test whether that would be a disqualifier. Lots of people run for Congress who don't live in their districts. It's not a legal requirement, but it is tradition to live in your district, to be of your district, to have that connection to your district. So I did move into the district. I sold my house I lived in for 25 years and moved into the district, but that was after the decision to run.

But I did have a primary. A young man who was the head of the National Constitution Center, always wanted to be in the federal government and wanted to be in Congress, and stepped up and had a lot of political backing because of the work he did on the Constitution Center really was both fundraising, but it also was engaging the city and on the federal level. He had raised a lot of money for the Constitution Center. So he knew he could raise money, and the assumption was I couldn't beat his money power. And he

had good connections to Governor [Ed] Rendell and, again, to the power structure.

So, again, I had a primary. I did have some political support—more in the suburbs actually—but it was divided. There were people who still thought that my opponent was really terrific, and they supported him. And could a woman do this, again? We had no women in our congressional delegation from Pennsylvania at the time. There were 20 Members in the delegation and no women. So where's the role models? Who does this? Could I do it? When I ran for the state senate, people asked me, I had one person ask me, "You seem too nice. Can you do this political thing?" I thought, what a great question, actually. {laughter} There's not always a positive feeling about politics. Do you have sharp enough elbows? Can you get in there and get things done? Congress was some of the same things. Could I do this? Less of a question because I had been a legislator. I think there's a little more of acceptance of women in legislative roles. But, still, it was a step up.

And did I understand northeast Philadelphia, which was a very white working-class community and a lot of firefighters, police officers. They had to live in the city. That's where they lived. Row houses—your classic, sort of, Philadelphia row house. I represented a district, as I said, that was very racially diverse. They weren't thrilled about that. They wanted to know whether I was too progressive. I had worked for a black mayor. I had supported a black mayor running. They weren't too keen on that. I was seen as somebody who was strong on women's rights. This was a very strong Catholic community. They were a little concerned whether I would care too much about women's rights. Would I make that the top of my agenda and not care about their issues? I think there were some of those underlining kinds of issues. I knew some of the ward leaders but not all of them. They

worried, wondered about how much attention I'd pay to them. I had just moved into the suburbs, having never lived in the suburbs before in my life. I actually grew up in Queens, which is very much like northeast Philadelphia. {laughter} I was very comfortable in northeast Philadelphia, and that showed. That helped, actually, I think, for me to be very comfortable in the community.

I grew up in a very Catholic community. I remember asking, as a little one, how come we didn't go to church? {laughter} And feeling like I was the one very much on the outs, and why I didn't wear a uniform to school because I went to public school. You know, those kind of questions. I knew it was important to actually really figure out how to make that strong connection to the community. And yet, I was also new to the suburbs. This was half of Montgomery County. A lot of the people there didn't know me, so I had to get known.

But we decided to do a great deal of field work: knocked on doors and introduced myself to people, galvanized a lot of the women's community. And in areas where I had a strong record, like on the environmental community, were very helpful—did an independent expenditure for me in the suburbs, which was great and really introduced me as somebody who cared about that. A lot of people in the suburbs did. And we talked about my record, that I really stood up for people and got things done. It made a difference. It was a tough race. We each spent $2 million on that primary. I did win the primary, obviously, and went on to defeat the Republican who the district was designed for. This was the first time I'd run against a woman. It wasn't so different, actually, {laughter} which was fine. But it was a terrific race. EMILY's List was obviously very helpful to me, both in the primary and in the general. That was great, too.

JOHNSON: In your primary, how important of an issue was gender for you, as a woman candidate?

SCHWARTZ: You know, interesting. That's a good question. I don't know that it really was such a huge issue there except for the media. I don't know that it was as big an issue, although there was an assumption that this young man who had never been in public office could do this job absolutely as readily as I could. That sort of struck me as, really? I had been in office. I had done this before. I knew how to do it. There was an assumption that he could do it. So there's definitely that bias that's just inherently built in—that a man could do this job. A woman has to prove herself. So I think there is a piece of that always in it for women running for office. There really is. Sometimes they trust you more in a way, but you still have to be tough. It's not easy. It still is a question of could you do it? And, again, very few role models for them to see it. Who's done that before? Who could do it? And some of the women in elected office, like, in that district, were not—I was a little bit different than they were. They came out of the community. They sort of fit the political model of the ward leader who then ran for, that came up through the political establishment, and I didn't do that either. So I think both those forces are there for you. But I think there's always, whether it's stated or unstated—there's kind of that question: can a woman do this job?

I was elected and served as the only woman in the Pennsylvania congressional delegation for almost all of that decade. There was one term when there was another woman from Western Pennsylvania [Melissa Hart], and I served—was here for that term—great to have her. {laughter} I think it's wonderful to be sort of unique and special, but let's move on from there and just see if we can't actually increase the numbers and make this more of a . . . it's just what you can do.

WASNIEWSKI: Was there ever a turning point moment in that first campaign, where you felt like you got a lot of decisive momentum behind you? Or was it a campaign where you were just kind of grinding it out in the grassroots?

SCHWARTZ: Oh, there were lots of moments. There were some really great moments in that campaign where you could feel the energy, the support, moving in our direction, and some of that came from some of the door knocking and the conversations that we had with folks who you could just see moving in our direction. I remember my first race, somebody actually saying to me—because I went to a lot of regional rail stops—and they said, "Okay, Allyson, you've got this. You can sleep in one morning." {laughter} I'm like, "Really?" Or at a transit stop where you realize increasing numbers of people recognize you. They're nice to you. They're engaging with you. So I think you can sometimes pull it out when you don't have that feeling, but you also can feel when it's really happening. I guess you can also feel it, and then you didn't talk to all the right people, and you don't get those votes. People win and lose on very small numbers. We know that. We know that history. You can talk to Members of Congress who are here, and they got less than a hundred votes. So you can feel it. I certainly did feel good about that.

The primaries are very tense. I will say that. That's harder because you often don't disagree dramatically with your opponent, so that becomes very personal, much more so than in a general election where there is often more keen differences, particularly nowadays, in where you stand on things.

JOHNSON: You mentioned that your opponent in the primary had that fundraising background. And then you also just mentioned EMILY's List, that they were a backer for you. How important was it to have that backing from EMILY's

List? And then, also, do you think it's harder for women candidates to raise money than male candidates?

SCHWARTZ: Yes, I think it's harder for women to raise money than for men, partly because we make less money, and we aren't as comfortable or as transactional. I think a lot of men raise money off of, well, we work together, or you knew me from the Rotary Club, or we did business together, or you asked me for your charity, and I asked you for my charity. And women—increasing as we have those professional experiences, but it's a little less transactional.

I think, if anything, we're very much more ideologically based. I would think I raised most of my money based on less transaction and more a trust in me and a belief in me, that I stood for the right things: that I would stand up for the right issues, that my values were consistent with theirs, that maybe I would also be a little more disruptive to the system, that it wouldn't be the same old, same old, and that was a good thing. Others want to vote for somebody {laughter} because they want to keep things status quo, which is another issue.

I think there was a lot of energy and excitement about both of my candidacies, in the state senate and in Congress, of really we're going to change the world a little bit by this win, beyond just who I am. But I embodied that, and I don't think of myself as being disruptive as a personality. I feel like I'm always trying to make things more comfortable for people, but, in fact, I am somebody who's willing to push the envelope to make those changes. And I want to get things done, which, in the work we do, is sometimes itself, pushing the envelope. Some people want to be safe. You do something, well, somebody might not like it. {laughter} You take a chance when you do something, even if it's something like putting new

sidewalks, getting funding for sidewalks and curbs and lighting and transforming a main street. Somebody might not like it. Or you support this kind of a move, and somebody else doesn't like it.

I remember supporting the optometrists having broader prescriptive privileges. And all the optometrists were happy, but the ophthalmologists weren't. {laughter} So it's like there's often another side to what we do. Taking action is taking a risk. And doing nothing—can also do something good or bad, but it is not as risky as taking a risk.

I think a risk-taking, feisty woman is seen as disruptive and scary sometimes—certainly for the politically powerful. And I think women are seen that way because we do bring a different perspective and a different style. So do different men, but I felt that certainly when I came here to Congress. I felt it when I went to the state senate. The group of men huddled around a corner, and then you walk into it. You could just see the body language changes, you know? I think it was a good thing, by the way, {laughter} but it does defy what they're used to. It is a change. It isn't always embraced.

WASNIEWSKI: One question we've been asking everyone is the degree, in those campaigns, to which they were involved in campaign items: picking buttons, bumper stickers, literature. {laughter} How involved were you with that, in your early campaigns?

SCHWARTZ: Oh, I was involved. And I think, actually, we had fun with that. First of all, everything costs something, so I was conscious of every penny being spent, {laughter} that I had to raise. So I'm like, "Really?" Okay, how glossy does it have to be? Are you handing it out at a parade or something? You're seeing it's all just strewn about, and you're thinking, oh goodness, all of them cost a

dollar each, and they're just sitting here getting swept up and creating trash. It's really, sometimes, a pressure, but . . .

There are people who believe fervently in buttons. Actually, it turns out there's no evidence that buttons make any difference in a campaign, but that doesn't mean you don't have to have some. Even bumper stickers—people love them, but there's no evidence they make any difference. {laughter} But when I ran, certainly for Congress, the district was huge on lawn signs. It's a district that expected lawn signs in your yard. Actually, even where you're not supposed to put them, on major highways and thoroughfares, you put signs out. And we put a thousand signs out one night, or over two nights, in northeast Philadelphia, along Roosevelt Boulevard. There's a big median, a grassy median. It's great for lawn signs, and you're educating a lot of people who can't vote for you, but it's just great. Next morning, they're all gone. The other side took them all away. You know that it's illegal. Fine, okay, it's done in campaigns. And you think, "Really?" So we replaced all of them, and I said, "Not a third time." So it's one of those things that you just . . .

But then, it also becomes a little bit of a…this is a competitive process. The more people who can go out there and do that . . . So I think we tried to be a little creative, also, in some of the things that we did, in how we did it, how it appealed to people. Not to be wasteful in what we did but to have enough. It's important to have visibility. I think it also creates that energy. There are always decisions. I think we'll talk later about my governor's race. I think I was less involved with those decisions, but more involved with some of my first races.

But I'll say this…Maybe we'll talk later, maybe, about my recruitment—the work I do with recruitment and other candidates. The candidate has to be

the candidate. There are some things that only you can do, and you have to get a campaign manager you trust because if you're going to do all of the work of the campaign manager, you're not being the candidate. And you have to build a team you can trust. As a candidate, you have to know the issues. You have to greet voters. You have to do debates. You have to set the tone. You have to make important decisions about what kind of campaign we run and how positive it is, how negative it might be. Those are ones you should always be involved in. And, yes, you have to raise money. So if you're running the campaign, you're not able to do all of those other things, so you do have to leave some of these decisions, I think, to others.

I can't remember a time where I took something off the street that I didn't like, necessarily. But occasionally—they knew there was a sensitivity. Like, what photos do you use? What photos of my family do you use? There are issues about how do you engage your family and how don't you. And my congressional race—I have two grown sons and a daughter-in-law now and a granddaughter. But then I had two almost-grown sons, and one of them did work for my congressional race, which was actually great to have someone who knew me, understood me, and was smart about these things. And in some ways, my knowing he was in those rooms, even if I wasn't, and he could be a little bit of a filter for me.

WASNIEWSKI: We also look in the House Collection for an object related to each person that we interview.

SCHWARTZ: Yes.

WASNIEWSKI: And we don't have a campaign button for you, so maybe we should talk to you about that.

SCHWARTZ: Oh, I have a few left. {laughter}

WASNIEWSKI: But we did find, in the collection—and I'm pointing to it because it's on the table—your old nameplate from the old voting system, which was before the LCD system that went in.

SCHWARTZ: Oh, goodness.

WASNIEWSKI: So that's in the House Collection.

SCHWARTZ: Okay, well, I can get you some things if you're interested. You do try and hang onto a few of the campaign things. I had sort of biking caps that are really kind of fun actually. It's lightweight little caps for a couple of races. We did some baseball caps one year for a race. That was fun. And actually I think the most unique one I did is, in the state senate I liked to wear scarves. To make a joke on that, we wanted to find something that was like a scarf but unisex. So we used a lot of this bright blue that's good campaign blue, actually. Someone once referred to it as a Schwartz blue because I used it so much. {laughter} We actually made a blue bandana, and so I do have some blue bandanas. {laughter} There really are just a select few left, but people got a kick out of these bandanas that we gave out to folks. That was kind of a fun thing that says, "Allyson Schwartz" on it.

WASNIEWSKI: We're curious about the nameplate. Do you have memories attached to looking at the voting board in the House Chamber and seeing your name during an important vote?

SCHWARTZ: Well, in the state senate, we voted by voice. It still goes up on a board, but it's not like the House where you look on the board all the time. It's a voice vote. There are only 50 [state] senators, so it's done differently. So I don't think that, but I do think this…I think both when I went to Harrisburg, but

certainly when I came to Congress, if you're not a little bit awestruck, I think there's something really weird. It is really amazing to think of yourself in that position of power and potential influence and of history. I felt that way. Harrisburg is a beautiful state capital and very grand and very stately. It almost looks like Washington. It's actually been used in TV movies on occasion, to look like the chamber here, and beautiful murals and very ornate. So it is a bit of an awesome place, and I think it should be. Certainly that was true here when you think about, one, how few women, how few people have ever served in Congress in this country. I think there is, certainly for me, a real sense of that history and that engagement.

JOHNSON: So moving on from campaigns and objects, now you're in Congress—did you find, when you came here in 2005, that it was a welcoming atmosphere for women Members?

SCHWARTZ: Yes and no. {laughter} I think the fair thing to say is, first of all, there were some—and still are—wonderful, powerful, important women in Congress. While they're still under 20 percent, as you know, numbers, it was great to have that kind of leadership. You can name them. Not as many women heads of committees as there should be, but there are Ranking Members on the Democratic side now, of course. But just seeing Nancy Pelosi and Rosa [L.] DeLauro and Nita [M.] Lo'wey and Louise [McIntosh] Slaughter and Maxine Waters and Nydia [M.] Velázquez. These are women who stepped up, and they are important in the work they do and on important committees and head important committees.

There was a real sense of welcoming from them. There's no question about that. This is a competitive world we are in, but they were enormously welcoming. So I think that sense of, how can we be helpful? How will we

engage? They were friendly. They were nice. They were completely accessible, which was just terrific, something I did not have at all, except for the two women {laughter} before me, in the state senate. That didn't exist. Even though there was a women's caucus in the House, in the senate, we were just too small. So that was really quite fantastic.

One thing was, I had not served in the state house, so one of the things that I found that I enjoyed and appreciated is, there were a lot of House Members. There were a lot of affinity groups, if you want to call it that. There were people from cities. There were people from suburbs. There were people who got elected in my class. There were people who had swing districts. There were the New Dems. There were Jews. {laughter} There were different affinity groups that you could make connections with very readily, particularly if you sought it out, and I certainly did. And that was pretty exciting.

Also, there were people to learn from. I remember my chief of staff at the time said, "All right, we're going to look for Members who represent districts like ours who had tough elections, and could have a tough re-election, and learn from them." So that was great, to think we don't have to reinvent the wheel completely. What can we do? How can we engage? How can we represent the district well, pick up good ideas of how you engage with constituents, not just our own? There were people who—chiefs of staff to chiefs of staff who were readily willing to mentor my staff as well, so that was great.

I think the unwelcoming part was, again, I was the only woman in the Pennsylvania delegation. There's a Pennsylvania corner, if you've ever heard of that, in the House. It is not written down anywhere, {laughter} but Jack

[John Patrick] Murtha [Jr.] was the head of the Defense, Appropriations—a very powerful figure here for many years. And he always sat in the most—the corner seat in the back, and the Pennsylvania-delegation Democrats sat around him. The way the chamber is structured is, it's a little bit on a rise, and they're not assigned seats. It was the only thing that surprised me. I'm like, "Really? {laughter} There are no assigned seats in the chamber?" So you do see people milling around all the time.

People do start to sit in certain areas, either by state or by caucus, or stand in certain areas. But the Pennsylvania delegation was, I think, the only one that was actually known as that. You don't sit in Jack Murtha's seat. {laughter} And, actually, what's funny about being on the rise is, if you wanted to talk to Jack Murtha, you were sort of at eye level if you were standing and he was sitting. So it was definitely a power thing. It was always about that.

Then, there were several other Members from some other states who actually also have hung out in that corner. And except for one or two women who actually would often sit there, and I actually had really good relationships with that team, they weren't used to having a woman in the delegation. The most recent was somebody who had served one term. And they weren't as thrilled—it was a mixed welcoming experience. They, again, didn't know what to make of me. They were told to be wary of me. They were told I would be pretty aggressive, I think. So they weren't too welcoming, and it shook up who they were and the kind of conversations they had. It just is what it is, you know?

JOHNSON: Did it get better over time?

SCHWARTZ: Not so much. No, it was pretty consistent during my decade here. I always spent some time in that corner. It was important to me. They were my

delegation. I obviously worked with some of the Republicans, as well—traveled with Bill [William] Shuster once—that was great and so, built some relationships there. I did work, obviously, with Jack Murtha on some things, Mike [Michael F.] Doyle from the west, Bob [Robert A.] Brady from the east. They're important politically in the region. And certainly always had conversations, always engaged with them, but certainly never felt I could count on them to have my back.

WASNIEWSKI: You've talked about a number of women who were very welcoming. Did any of them, or did any men in particular, serve as a mentor during your first term in the House?

SCHWARTZ: Well, again, I think that a number of them were enormously helpful, and good conversations, and created really good relationships. I did join the New Democrats—the Democratic coalition—so the moderate Democrats, and I had a really great affinity and worked closely with them. There were people in my own class that we had good relationships with. But I actually am hesitant to name names because I think what I really sought to do was to create really good relationships. A lot of what you do here is—we think it's about issues, and it is. So I knew I wanted to work on health care. It's something I cared about. I dedicated a full-time staffer to health care from the get-go, even though I was not on a health committee. {laughter} So I staked my claim a little bit on that and could build that.

But I really did also create some of those relationships. I have to say I think Nancy Pelosi was wonderful to me. She was really helpful, and her team was helpful in helping to think about how to use my skills and talents on behalf of the caucus.

I did get engaged with the DCCC—the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee—because I had come through a tough race. I'm not sure I fully answered your question about fundraising, but I turned out to be a very good fundraiser. I dedicated time and effort to it. I built a community of donors who, to this day, talk to me about "Who should I vote for?" and "Who should I give to?" and "How could I be helpful in advising on that?" And I miss that. I actually miss some of those relationships. You get to know people {laughter} over 25 years in elected office and see their kids grown and things change in their lives. But I wanted to use it as a tool not just for myself but more broadly. I did, when I was in the state senate as well, really help others run for office: going to their districts, raising money for them, providing some advice and help and some dollars.

But I think she [Nancy Pelosi] is extraordinarily talented at recognizing the strength of Members and placing them in good committees. I would not have gotten on the Ways and Means Committee, obviously, in my second term, which is unusual, without her wanting that to happen and without her seeing that in me—to be able to be on that kind of committee, to be able to articulate the important issues of tax reform, and how we fund government in every which way, and how we vote on complicated everything. And health care and Medicare and to be one of so few women on Ways and Means. It was a great opportunity, as well, for me. So I think she was somebody who will give help, too.

I think that, again, Rosa DeLauro was helpful to me as well. She was the head of the Steering and Policy Committee. I ended up being vice chair of that, ultimately. She was certainly very helpful. But also, so were some of the men, too, in helping me recognize that I wasn't getting a lot of support from my

own delegation, so I needed other avenues to be able to rise in the ranks, rise in influence, and to be able to do the kinds of things I got done here.

And for me, it was also about building trust in me, with a whole lot of other Members, so that when I would introduce a piece of legislation and ask them to cosponsor it, building other initial cosponsors but being able to go to someone and say maybe, "This is what's in it. Here are the risks." As I said before, there's somebody on the other side of almost everything you do. So, "Here are the risks." I would even sometimes be talking to some people and say—a group of them—and say, "Really, I think both of you could sign this. I'm not so sure you should." It's that kind of thing, recognizing what hurts for someone; what isn't; where they might be coming from on it, and not expecting them to always step out of their comfort zone. You hope they might do it once in a while, and that should be true the other way around, too.

My first piece of legislation that I really touted and got done was around veterans. It was really a tax credit for businesses hiring veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Obviously, we were at war at the time, and being able to do something for our newest veterans was something I wanted to do. A lot of veterans [lived] in my community. It was important to me, as well; my dad was a veteran. But it also was a wonderful way to engage other Members, Republicans and Democrats, in what was something that they could see a way to get done, and did. It was made part of a small business bill that got done under George [W.] Bush. So it made me realize, okay, that's one way to get things done. {laughter}

And on Ways and Means, you get very little legislation passed with your name on it, but you do introduce legislation to build support and then hope

it can get done as part of a larger bill. You do start thinking about taxes and tax credits and other ways to use the tax system to encourage behavior to support the right kinds of investments. And it's different than being an appropriator, but it is a way to get those things done. I built relationships, is what I'm saying also.

JOHNSON: By the time you came to Congress in the 21st century, the number of women serving was higher than, certainly, some of the women that we've talked to, as we mentioned, in the 1970s and the 1980s. But it was about 70 women, so, still, a smaller percentage of the overall body. Because the number was small, do you feel that women tended to gravitate towards each other on both sides of the aisle?

SCHWARTZ: Well, I do think that, certainly, the kinds of conversations we would sometimes have as women across the aisle—I think that certainly was valuable. And we respected each other getting here {laughter} and being here, and what it took to do that, I think. I don't think any of us only worked with other women. That would have, of course, been impossible and not smart. And I think few of us thought they were here only on women's issues. In fact, if anything, for me—well, I think everything is a women's issue, those sort of classic ones. Because there were strong women with leadership roles in things like women's health issues, reproductive rights, I didn't need to always do it alone. But, I was there for them. I was part of those caucuses. But I didn't need to be the singular voice.

There were times in the state senate in Harrisburg I felt like I had to. I looked around, like, who else is doing this? I did that, actually, around family and medical leave when I was in the state senate. You know, looking around, like, who's going to do this if I don't do this? There was just no one else who will

be this voice, and in those cases, trying to find women who would on the Republican side who might also be supportive was different.

But it seemed there was a certain camaraderie and understanding, yes. But there's also you don't want to be identified as only caring about women, {laughter} or only talking to women. That would be sort of a crazy notion in a way. So I found myself very much, I think, to have the willingness and able to talk to, obviously, men, and a diverse group of men that I worked with here. Ways and Means was a small committee, so that's a great opportunity to work with men on that committee.

But I found that was true my first term I was in Transportation and Infrastructure—great committee to serve on. My predecessor—not Joe Hoeffel but Bob [Robert Anthony] Borski [Jr.], who represented much of the district—was high ranking on Transportation. He advised me to get on Transportation. He said, "There's going to be a big transportation bill coming up. It could happen on your watch. You'll be able to help the district enormously to do that." Which is an important thing for us to do, as well. I love talking about the big issues. I was there on Medicare; on how do we do energy policy right; how do we actually move big issues? You have to vote on issues of war and defense and national security and immigration. These are huge issues that we all have to engage in and take very, very seriously. But you also want to do things for your district, and you should. You know, you take the word representative seriously. And what does my district need?

Being on Transportation and Infrastructure was hugely helpful to me. I really thought quite seriously about what my district needed and made a decision—which I think also was a little unusual that—well, you need to support those big highway projects. What could I do that would help be transformative on

the ground in communities I represented? So I was trying to think…I said to myself, let's think more like a foundation if we could. {laughter} Let's think about a theme that's important to us. So we had a number of, used to be small towns, now suburban communities, "Main Streets" in the suburbs that had suffered tremendously from the growth of malls. You saw Main Street after Main Street where the small dress shop, the small hardware store, the, you name it, just was gone.

One, in particular, I remember walking through where the hardware store was the only one that continued. The movie theater was gone, or still there but hollowed out, down at Lansdale. I said, "Look, there was a lot of discussion about how you could invigorate and reinvigorate these towns. It's important to who we are as a community to have those downtowns." There were several if not many of them in the suburban part of my district. And in the northeast part of the district, there were also some commercial districts, we would call them. They weren't quite like Main Streets, but commercial districts—had similar concerns. As well as the fact that the northeast part of my district actually has a riverfront that was mostly industrial, and some of that abandoned but some of it still functioning. And I-95 went straight through and cut it off. So there's this swath of property that has been cut off with a raised highway that cut off the neighborhood to the riverfront. I'm not sure we'd do it that way this time.

And, again, Bob Borski, who helped make that happen, realized how problematic that was and wanted to fix it and started an organization to do something, to green and create more access for the community, for the riverfront. And so, I made several decisions. One is, I would not just give a little bit of money, but I would give a serious chunk of money if I could to get that greenway kickstarted because it was hard to envision it for the

community or for anyone. Big numbers here, but a million dollars is great, but it gets maybe a mile or two of a path done. {laughter} It doesn't get it done. So I wanted to do something big there. I ended up being able to get $16 million dedicated and an additional $8 million by then-Senator [Arlen] Specter dedicated to that. All that has to be matched by local and state money, so that is a serious investment. I've been proud to be able to go to those ribbon cuttings, to see piers transformed to parks and playgrounds and soccer fields. And a bike path that is really quite extraordinary on the Delaware River, that's not complete yet by any means, but there's another one coming up. But to be able to go and see that North Delaware really being used and greened and accessible to the community is really quite fantastic.

For the towns, we did a similar amount. We called every township manager and said if you have a plan to redevelop your Main Street, we will help invest in it. So anywhere between a half a million and $3 million went to some of these towns. And Ambler, Lansdale, Jenkintown saw huge changes by doing pedestrian-friendly lighting, new curbs, and sidewalks. They were mostly around transportation hubs. Then we saw a lot of private investment come in. I will tell you, Ambler and Lansdale in particular, and Jenkintown, but some of these other communities really look different today, which is great.

WASNIEWSKI: Before we get too far away from it, I just wanted to ask—so, you had the opportunity to serve with the first woman Speaker, Nancy Pelosi, who you've mentioned before. We're just curious. This is kind of a two-part question. Collectively, what do you think that meant for women in Congress? And then, also, how would you describe her leadership style? How did that differ from the other Speakers that you served with here?

SCHWARTZ: Well, I can say I have pictures with all of them, when they swear you in. I have pictures, my first one with [John] Dennis Hastert. I have that picture. {laughter} I'm not sure what I'll do with it right now, but I have that picture.

It was an extraordinary moment for women in Congress to see Nancy Pelosi be the Speaker. It really was. I actually remember being with her the night before and being able to have that sort of funny conversation, like, "What color suit do you think I should wear?" {laughter} This is kind of monumental, but her interest was to bring her grandchildren and the children of Congress to the podium with her, and she did relay the story that the Parliamentarian wasn't sure that was allowed. He had never been asked that question. There wasn't a rule on it, so it wasn't not allowed, but it wasn't allowed. {laughter}

There must have been some sort of reception, and a group of us were sort of standing around, and she was saying, "I don't yet know whether I'm going to actually do it." Because, again, I think even for her in this very powerful moment, you don't want to be gaveled down by the Parliamentarian telling you, you can't do it. That's kind of not going to look great on TV. She is somebody who is very respectful of this institution and of the rules and the procedures, and knowledgeable about that. You do want this to be a moment that really symbolizes who she is, what she cares about, what it means to girls, and boys, I hope. And so, when she did it, it was just great. It was just great.

I feel it was a very important moment for all of us. I loved being a part of this moment in history and continued to vote for her. But you asked about her leadership qualities, and what she actually did. And I think what's really important about this is that, I hope she gets credit for this in the long term, and I know how she's been demonized, obviously, in the public. A lot of

money has been spent to do that. I can say this: She is somebody who has both big vision and big goals. Several things, but understands the context of very complex legislation and is willing to really engage, and able to engage in those very specific conversations as a leader of the [Democratic] Caucus. She does engage herself in that. She is also somebody who, again, understands people's districts. She has traveled this country. She has campaigned for them. And that makes a difference too, to see people in their home context, and to be able to understand how far they can go, understand a little more about them. She often knows about family. She has watched people's kids grow. She also is willing to sort of say, "What does it take? Do we have to tweak this language? Are these people we can get? How do we build internally within a caucus the coalition to get the votes to move legislation?"

She certain is somebody who has been willing to work across the aisle to get things done. She did a lot of that the two years we were working with—when George [W.] Bush was President and she was Speaker. That was very important. She was absolutely able to engage with the White House and the Republican Leadership in the Senate to get things done. Negotiating that—she comes out of conference committees and knowing how to do that. Again, she believes in that process, and is very good at it. I don't remember an occasion where she brought a vote or was about to bring a vote to the floor but didn't get the vote right. So I think that her skills are quite extraordinary in that regard, both in understanding legislation and being able to . . .

Look, when President [Barack] Obama became President, we were ambitious to get something done and to move it forward. And it's hard to move the House; it's a lot of different people from different parts of the country with different perspectives, even within our own caucus or conference. In both places, you have to make a decision. Are you going to just do it within your

own party, or are you going to work in a bipartisan way? That's often made by the Speaker. There were times we were brought in over and over again, when we were in the minority, where we were brought in to save the day, so to speak. That we can't pass this—people think of it as the budget, but it's really not the budget. It's really the appropriations bill, the omnibus, the final, the continuing resolution.

I remember my final vote was one of those, actually, where—can we get this passed? Does it have enough in it that we want? Can we get some other things in it that are very important to our side? That final vote, when the White House wants to get this done, we really have gotten a lot of important things done in it. There were a couple of things that were criticized by some of the Democratic Senators who didn't like it. Can we put together that coalition to make it happen, to, one, protect our country, to protect our values, to govern? And she [Pelosi] would do that time and time again. I hope history shows that not only did she get things done when we were in power as Democrats, but she got things done—it required bipartisan relationships and bipartisan work because she got that done, too. So she is one to be admired and respected. Internally, she was quite extraordinary at that.

WASNIEWSKI: That's great.

JOHNSON: We've asked you about some of the informal relationships that you've had with women and male Members, but what about the Women's Caucus? What were your impressions of that more formal organization of women?

SCHWARTZ: You know, I participated but not in a really deep way. Partly because as I served during the decade, it became increasingly difficult for us to work broadly in a bipartisan way. You could work very specifically in a bipartisan way. You get the distinction here. So, for example, I worked very hard to

have every piece of legislation I had be—a Republican cosponsor, original cosponsor. I think it is the way to get things done if you can. I think it's the only way, in these days.

I worked with Phil [David P.] Roe, the conservative Republican from Tennessee, on health issues—not on everything, but we did some work on that. I worked with Joe Heck on some. I worked with—my first piece of legislation was with a Member by the name of Joe [John J. H.] Schwarz who—different spelling—from Michigan, Republican, to get that veterans bill done. On environmental issues, I worked on something else. Again, on transportation issues, one of the first things I did was to work with Frank [A.] LoBiondo on a terrible oil spill on the Delaware River that we worked on navigable rivers and some legislation on that. So, you find ways to do this.

The Women's Caucus, in theory, is a very good idea. In practice, it's still difficult. Even on things you'd think would be obvious, like how are we going to stand up against sexual harassment? As the Women's Caucus, of course, we should, but that means more regulations. Do we want regulations on private companies? Is it only on the public? Do we want more rules and regulations? Well, right now it's tough to get {laughter} almost any Republican to stand up for any new rules and regulations. They're just, in principle, opposed to more government interference.

I found that true on family and medical leave, on paid family and medical leave that exempted small businesses. They railed about it's going to hurt mom-and-pop stores. Well, they're exempt. It's going to set standards for larger companies. Set standards for the federal government then, at least, so I think it's really quite difficult. It's to be admired when they can do it. And I think there are times when it can be very powerful for the women to all stand

up on issues that really matter—even on sexual assault in the military. It would be great to have that be a bipartisan effort and not a partisan effort. So I still think we have a ways to go in doing that. It's great they play as a softball team and do some of that.[2] But I think it's—from my point of view—it's really about working with women or men to get these things done.

END OF PART ONE ~ BEGINNING OF PART TWO

JOHNSON: You referenced that Speaker Pelosi was helpful for you on getting onto Ways and Means. But can you describe a little bit for people that don't know how that works, especially about getting on such an influential committee?

SCHWARTZ: Yes, it's a process to get on a committee. You're advised, as a freshman, to do what you can to sort of put a marker out there on the committee you might want to be on, but you're probably not going to get it your first term. {laughter} There is definitely a seniority system, much more on the Democratic side now than the Republican side because they have term limits for chairs of committees, so that creates a process to move up. The Democrats don't have that, so there's very little process to move up on the Democratic side. So you have to make some decisions about the kind of committee you want to serve on that usually start with what do you care about? Well, we all care a little bit about everything, but sometimes you have an area of interest, where you came from. You may care about criminal justice. You may way to work on that. You may want get on Judiciary. You may want to, because of your district, get on Agriculture. You think about those things.

But then, there also is the question of do you want a very powerful committee, which is harder to get on? It also means that it's very hard to move up on a powerful committee because people don't leave. Or do you want to be on a smaller committee that people often move through, so you can move up? And you've seen people do that on the Science and Technology Committee, for example. But then, you can get to be a chair of a subcommittee. You can get to be the chair of the committee, potentially. So there's that sort of process piece. Sometimes it's nice to just start out, I think, as a freshman with a mix, so you can see what you like better. And then, you don't always make the right choices when you're a freshman. You start to look around and think, "Oh, I don't know that that's really what I meant." {laughter}

I actually remember in the state senate—this goes back a ways—where I had worked really hard to get on the public health and welfare committee, and then—because I wanted to work on health care—and then realizing that was mostly about Medicaid and other sort of welfare programs. It was really banking and insurance that really dealt with health insurance and a lot of the rules and the requirements. I ended up saying, "Oh, big mistake. I really need to get on banking and insurance." {laughter} Okay, that took a couple of terms.

But in Congress, obviously, there are many more Members. And originally, of course, you thought the powerful is appropriators. They had a lot of power, particularly when there were earmarks, because that's when you could get money into a bill for a Member for their district or for an issue. They have gone away. That's had some impact on their power with other Members. It's still an important committee. It certainly is a very large committee. Ways and Means is, I think, the most powerful committee

because it really is a small committee, and it deals, again, with all tax revenue. It deals with the means by which we fund everything else. If we need more revenue in the government, you have to get it from Ways and Means. Tax bills have to start there. It has to start in the House. It can't start in the Senate.

So I remember a big energy bill was coming through, and like all the—it came to us because it had to be paid for. If you're going to raise fees or taxes on some part of the industry or some sector in the industry, it comes to us, so suddenly I have a role in this as well. It certainly has a big role in parts of welfare as well. It has part—and in Medicare, very much so. Shared jurisdiction overlay, obviously, on health care—the ACA [Affordable Care Act], on the AHCA [American Health Care Act]—shared with Energy and Commerce, which is a huge part of the jurisdiction. And a bit, even, on the Labor Committee, as well—Education and Labor, because of ERISA [Employee Retirement Income Security Act] and the laws that govern employers and what they do.

But Ways and Means, as I say, is a small and powerful committee, and certainly the chair of that committee knows it. Previous chairs have been very powerful, including—look at Paul [D.] Ryan and where he is now. I was also very interested in getting on the Budget Committee because of my experience from when that very first—my very first boss said to me, "You know, you're going to have to pay a lot of attention to how money is spent and raised, and how you have it." He was right. I think that's true in government, too. I believe very strongly that our budgets are very much a statement of our priorities and values. And so, engaging in that debate and formulating the budget on stating our values and priorities is, I think, a very critical part of what we do. Even though the budget itself doesn't have the force of law, it

does set the parameters. So I actually served on the Budget Committee my entire time, getting to be second ranking—getting to be ranking, or chair.[3] I enjoyed that, and I thought that was important.

But Ways and Means was a great way for me to, one, take on an issue I really cared about, which was health care. So, even though, again, I wasn't on the—never on the Health Subcommittee, I decided I wasn't going to let that matter, and just took on the issue of Medicare, and I think wrote some very significant legislation, particularly a lot of language about primary care and supporting primary care and investing in primary care. And work in a way—we would help move to a more value-based payment system under Medicare, away from fee-for-service, so that we are moving towards a better use of tax dollars and better care for people with chronic conditions. I spent a lot of time and effort on that, in writing that legislation, and getting—it was like 160 cosponsors {laughter} of that legislation. In fact, it got done so easily and early in the ACA that nobody talked about it. {laughter} I was like, "That was sort of a big deal. Maybe we should tell people we did that. It's really an important thing we did." But it was really—I had done a lot of groundwork on that, and it just kind of got inserted into it very quickly.

But the work we did on health IT and meaningful use of EMRs [electronic medical records], it's really the infrastructure that we have in health care, as to how we communicate and better coordinate care, and have hospitals and doctors talk to each other, physicians now even more broadly.

I did a lot of work on academic medical centers. In my own district—of course, Philadelphia—I decided that the hospital didn't have to be in my district, and I represented, in a way, a third of the city of Philadelphia. Health care is hugely important to our economy. I met regularly with all of

the major hospitals in Philadelphia and the hospitals in my district and worked with them on how we could get more residency slots for doctors. I believed that we needed more doctors. We need to train more doctors, and, again, with more attention to some of those primary-care doctors. On those issues supportive of science and supportive of NIH [National Institutes of Health] and research—happy to see the Cures Act passed. My brother and sister-in-law work in NIH in important roles, and all of us know somebody with a serious chronic condition, a serious illness. Wouldn't we all like to see those cured and treatments available? And that doesn't just happen without a public investment.

I've represented a lot of pharmaceutical companies, too. They need that pipeline of research, that basic research in science. And it's really one of the things that's made health care in our country great, and if we defund it, it's a loss to us. I felt strongly about that. I would do that in the Budget Committee—try and bring an amendment to fund NIH. It tended to be the one amendment—well, maybe there were a couple of others, but one of the amendments that the Republicans would have some angst about. They would all say they supported funding for NIH, and then voted against it, pretty much universally. At some point, that matters. {laughter} If you really care about it—and they did finally do something in the Cures Act, and I hope it gets funded and authorized.

So I did stand up in a variety of ways. I think of it as a spectrum on health care, which is the investment in primary [care], in research and cures. Primary care, attention to chronic conditions, which is very much what—we're doing a much better job, we designed our Medicare system—I talk about this a lot in my new job now—for acute illnesses, costly hospitalizations, and catastrophic expense. While that can still happen, what

we really are experiencing in health care these days, because of the great success we've had in interventions and medications and treatments, is living with serious chronic conditions, and sometimes multiple chronic conditions, for a long time. And yet, our payment system really isn't geared towards that. We really need to say what are you doing to help slow disease progression, intervene earlier, attend to chronic conditions, and not just wait for people to get really, really sick and show up in the hospital? So it is a transformation I think I had a lot to do with.

The work I did on the SGR—the sustainable growth rate—and the way we pay physicians was really not only about finally resolving and repealing a failed idea. I understand the idea, but it failed to just cut doctor payments every year in order to reduce cost, but rather move to a better system of reimbursement that would contain the rate of growth in costs., and to actually replace it with that new system. So I won't take full responsibility for MACRA [Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act] because it got sort of—a lot of work got done on it after I left [in 2015]. But it was voted on three months after I left, and I was on the floor to see that happen, which was great. And my former staffer, who worked on that, had a lot to do with it, working for Steny Hoyer to get that done. It was great to see that happen.

WASNIEWSKI: When you first got on the Ways and Means Committee in the 110th Congress, there were only two women on that committee—Stephanie Tubbs Jones and Shelley Berkley. How important is it to have a woman's perspective on any House committee, but in particular a committee as important as Ways and Means?

SCHWARTZ: Well, Stephanie was great. First of all, she was great, and she became a real friend and a loss when she died, too young.[4] She was there by herself before

Shelley went on, I think, a year before I got on—the term right before I got on. Of course it's important. And it's not that we always come up with different ideas or perspectives; sometimes we're right on the same page with somebody else. But there are times when—and I hope every Member feels this way a little bit—but I certainly felt like if I hadn't raised an issue, no one would have. I don't know if that's because I'm a woman. I don't know if it's—sometimes it's obvious. {laughter}

Sometimes it's obvious, but it's important to have those different perspectives, just like it's important on these committees to represent the whole country, to represent diverse opinions, to find a way forward on that. But certainly I think, one, it changes the nature of the dynamic. I think we bring different skills. I remember people sometimes saying to me—actually, it was once where I actually just, instead of looking up at Jack Murtha, I went around and stood in front of him. And someone said, "That was a power move." I did not do it consciously, but maybe it was. But I did want to just talk to him. I didn't want to be looking up at him and sort of asking for something. And I think we just have different styles.

I've gone directly to Republicans and just told them what I wanted to do. And I had one Republican say to me, "No one does that. You don't come to the chair of the committee and talk to them directly. You have to go through the chain." I'm like, "I didn't know that."—okay, you get a little more perspective. But sometimes just going directly, getting it done. Again, I had a real—well, I guess I still do—a real determination to get things done. Look, you don't get everything done—you know that. You have to pick and choose. You have to have priorities. And you do have to become a champion for the work that you're doing and to pursue it.

When I got electric—e-prescribing, they call it, electronic prescribing of prescription drugs—which is the way you write prescriptions these days. Now people just take it for granted. I didn't come up with this idea. Somebody came to me with the idea, but they said we can send prescriptions electronically from every doctor's office with a little handheld device. We've all seen them now. If you go to a craft show, and you want to buy something, they go, "Oh, here, put your credit card in here." The same technology {laughter} is used to send a prescription electronically rather than writing a prescription now—a million and a half prescription errors a year in this country. People were hospitalized. They'd die. They'd get hurt by it. You could eliminate almost all of them by sending them electronically because almost all of them are due to handwriting errors. That's kind of a stunning fact.

So, okay, how hard can this be {laughter} to be done? But we decided that we would reimburse physicians to buy that handheld device or support their getting electronic medical records to do it. That we would—pharmacists were well able to receive it electronically. And then we would ding physicians later if they didn't do it. We would support it, but at some point—it took four years, you would have to just do it if you wanted to take Medicare.

I think I was a little bit of a nuisance on the Ways and Means Committee {laughter} and said, "So are we getting that in here?" I wrote the legislation, introduced it. The language was there. I got teased a little bit by someone saying, "This is your mission in life?" I said, "Well, it is until we get it done." And then, to think it's now the law of the land. It's universally done. Consumers like it. You don't have to take the prescription to the pharmacist and sit there and wait for it. It's done. They sometimes can check to see whether it's not a good idea given what else you're taking because it's all in

the system. Pharmacists can tell you that there's a generic. The pharmacist, he or she, can say, "Oh, maybe they didn't mean 0.5. Maybe 0.05 is what they meant." They can find those errors beforehand. It may not be 100 percent, but it's damn close.

So I think Ways and Means gave me the opportunity to do those kinds of things, and building those relationships as you work on legislation with somebody else is also really, very important because people then knew—both inside Congress and outside Congress—that if I decided to champion something, it was a good thing. I think that's also a good thing to have people be able to know that, as well.

I did introduce legislation that got into the ACA about making sure that insurers could not discriminate on pre-existing conditions for children. Joe Courtney was braver than I was. He did it for adults and children. {laughter} And that is actually what got done, which was even better. But starting with kids who are sympathetic was the way to go. How great that would be done. Anyone who has a child with a pre-existing condition is anxious about it forever. You're anxious about it because you love your child and you want them to be well, but thinking also that you might not be able to get health care for him or her. It would be terrible. We've actually fixed that for now.

WASNIEWSKI: We've got about 10 minutes before 1:00, so do you want to do some general wrap-up questions?

JOHNSON: Yes, there's just one other question, career-specific, about the DCCC because I know that was a really important part of your career: where you were recruiting candidates. You were involved in fundraising. Can you just talk a little bit about your role with that organization?

SCHWARTZ: Absolutely. I did think that as my elections gave me—which I always paid attention to, and I did have one we worried about because a lot of people in swing districts like mine lost. {laughter} And so, we did spend a bit of money I raised. First of all, I thought fundraising for myself, and having money in the bank, was a way to protect myself for the next election because it's very hard to raise $2 million, $3 million. I spent $2 million in my first race for the primary, two and a half million in the general. So knowing I might have to spend $3 or $4 million at some point was something that certainly I wanted to be prepared for. I didn't want to have to do that. I also didn't want to have to—there are some Members who just wait to say, "Okay, you've got to save me." And sometimes we do {laughter} and raise the money for them.

I wanted to be self-sufficient enough to do that. And, again, being on Ways and Means gave me some opportunity to have some relationships to do that, but even more broadly. But I also thought that if I was that good a fundraiser, and didn't have a tough race, I should really be able to put some of that money back. And as a member of a powerful committee, you are asked to do that, to put some money into the DCCC and help others. And I did. I did as a freshman. I did every year, every cycle.

But I did more than that. I did create a leadership PAC, which used to really just be for leaders, but now many do, as a way to raise money that has to be given to other people, so that I could get some of my donors who might say, "What else can I do to get back the majority or to help elect a really thoughtful, good Member or a Member who cares about these kinds of things and would trust my judgment on that?" So we called it "We the People," I think a national or Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, kind of thing to do. {laughter} It's sort of the Constitution Center, but it's the Bill of Rights.

It took us a while to find that name, but we came up with it. It was great. And did raise some money and used that to help support other candidates.

Heading up recruitment in the cycle, that was really quite wonderful. I went to districts. I talked to people to recruit them. Many of them are here now. And then helped them to be sure they were running the kind of modern campaign that could help them win because there are lots of wonderful people out there who are never going to get to be Members of Congress unless they can put together the kind of campaign. It's like anything. You start a business, maybe you're really lucky, maybe you're really smart. But you really have to know some of the ground rules, usually, to make a go of it. And I was delighted to work with a great team at the DCCC. I really did appreciate and enjoy helping others run for office. They didn't all win, but we elected the most diverse class in the history of America, which was great.

I know Nancy Pelosi deserves a lot of credit for this. She does a lot of work, and so do all the other people who work on the recruitment and, of course, so do the candidates. But you count women, minorities, gay and lesbian—it's really quite wonderful to think that those 50 Members—there were 50 Members, actually were a majority-minority class and helped to make this institution more representative of the country. I think that's pretty exciting.

WASNIEWSKI: You, because you had a history of recruiting people through the DCCC, did you find that later in your career, that once they were here in the House, that you actually served as a mentor for them in any way?

SCHWARTZ: Yes, and I made a point after being a freshman myself, that I would actually take freshman Members out to dinner. And I did that. I did that in little groups, actually, not always one-on-one. But I reached out and would invite them to dinner, and three or four at a time, and say, "Just ask me anything.

Tell me how I can be helpful." They often asked me advice about committee assignments. They asked me advice about legislation that they might introduce. They asked me who they could talk to. They asked me for fundraising advice. They sometimes would ask me to give them money, but mostly it was around how to be a good Member of Congress. And they asked me advice about how to work their districts and how to be visible and engaged in districts. Again, I had come from a swing district. I worked very hard to be visible in my district. I think it's very important to have good constituent services.

I was very attentive to even a bill we didn't like. I was not here to vote on Medicare Part D (addition of prescription drug coverage to Medicare). But we held 12 different forums on how you could sign up for Part D. Those seniors showed up with pads of paper and notes, taking notes, and asking questions. We did 10 town halls. We did veterans' days. We did all sorts of things that actually were really very visible in the district, which were really appreciated. So they would ask things like that. "What did I think about your 'Congressman on the Corner?' Should I do that? 'Donuts with David,'" or whatever they wanted to do. We would talk on some of the stresses and strains.

They asked me sometimes what about family. "Should I move my family? Shouldn't I move my family? Is that going to give me grief? How do I do this? How did I do it?" When I came to Congress, my kids were already grown, but it doesn't mean you're not away from family a lot. And how do you juggle that? And I think there's a great support system in that, but it also did build great relationships, I have to say, when my taking time with freshmen—generally you worry more about the people more senior. I decided to worry about the people who were freshmen.

And then, well, I was here five terms, so that's a lot of {laughter} Members who I got to know personally and chatted with and built some relationships with. But I thought it was important for me to, in that sense, give back to them lessons learned from my point of view. As I once said to my mother-in-law, you can give me as much advice as you want; I'm not going to always take it. So the same thing here. I love my mother-in-law, and she loves me, to this day. But I said to them, too, "This is my advice. That's your choice as to what you do with it. But I'm happy to give it to you." I think that worked. It worked for me. I loved doing it, and, actually, I still do it. There are still people who call, particularly in Pennsylvania, who I get together with: state representatives, city council. If I can help them, in particular, do better at what they do, to support them, to lend them a little bit of my credibility, then I will do it. I even occasionally get a call nationally, which is great.

JOHNSON: You were in the House for five terms, for a decade. And as we know, and you talked about, you were on Ways and Means. You were often described as a rising star. So we were wondering if you could just talk about your decision to leave the House to run for governor of Pennsylvania.

SCHWARTZ: Yes, you can tell I really liked my job here. {laughter} It's great. And I think I did it well. I did make a decision to run for higher office. I do consider governor a higher office. I did it for two reasons. One is, the governor we had really was not only vulnerable, but I really disagreed with him quite fervently on his leadership for our state. Secondly, I knew I was in a position to potentially be a very good governor and to be able to use my experience to do that. And that I was in a position to run, and that if we don't take those risks, we're never going to get there.

So it's a risk. It was a risk the first time I ran. It was a risk when I ran for Congress. You do it believing you can win. I certainly didn't do it thinking I was going to lose, but I did lose that primary. I only lose primaries. {laughter} But I did think if I got to the general election I would win. I probably would have, but it really was getting through that primary. It was a much tougher primary than we anticipated, and money was against me. It turns out $10, $15 million that can be written without raised, and put down early, made a big difference.

I still think it's a real challenge for women running for executive office, obviously, as we saw with the presidential [election]. Each one is different. Personalities are different. Situations are different. But we see very few women governors in this nation right now. We have two Democratic women governors, two Republicans. Anyway, you know that better than I, but we don't see women in executive office at the governors' level. I think that that's to the detriment of our nation, to not have women in those kind of leadership positions.

I think it would have been a little scary for Pennsylvania, potentially. But it also would have been an opportunity, again, because I do respect the institutions. I'm not as disruptive as people think. I am ambitious for who we are in this country and what we do for each other. But I also do know the realities, {laughter} and I'm practical about this. Otherwise, I wouldn't have gotten things done. I like to think of myself as a real practical optimist, a realist about what we get done, and to do that, and to take that into account. I would have been working with a Republican general assembly. It would not have been easy. There would have been disagreements. I'm sure I would have been beaten up. But I think women have to take these moments and seize these opportunities. Otherwise, we're never going to break through.

I did it for myself because I also thought it would be a wonderful challenge for me, personally. I had run things before. I had confidence I could run things again. I think I attract really great talent to work with me and that I'd build those relationships across the aisle. And I think that would have been unexpected in Pennsylvania, that I might have been able to do that—hard to convince the public, the media. {laughter} They don't believe it. I understand that; they turned out to be right in this case. But we have no giving limits in Pennsylvania for governor.

So even two of my other challengers, opponents in the primary had both much more personal wealth than I did, but also knew a lot more rich people than I did, and could get people to write $200,000, $300,000 into their campaign accounts. And I was still raising money as a Member of Congress in the maximum $5,000 federal limits…and a few $10,000 checks, but 10,000 people gave to my governor's race. That's great. It's great to be proud of that. But it's a lot of work. It's really different than writing yourself a check and getting five or six of your buddies to write checks, too.

I'm working on good things now. I'm very pleased with where I've landed, which is working on Medicare, big federal policy; being able to use my understanding of how it works in Washington; building a coalition of a variety of stakeholders in health care. It's what I like to do, bringing people together to advance the cause of both protecting Medicare for the future, but then also modernizing it to address the real issues of seniors and those with disabilities today, which is living with chronic conditions and high costs of health care.

So if I can continue—I'm just doing it in a different way. Miss it a little bit. Hard not to. I enjoy my moments in the halls of Congress, talking with my

former colleagues and some new folks, too. It's just another way to contribute to that broader mission, which I've always had.

WASNIEWSKI: We've asked you a lot of retrospective questions today. We want to ask you to prognosticate now. In the 115th Congress, there are 109 women. There's 88 in the House, and 21 in the Senate. And we've asked everybody who we've interviewed how many women do you think there are going to be when we celebrate the 150th anniversary of Jeannette Rankin's coming to Congress? So that would be in 2067.

SCHWARTZ: Oh, my goodness. Well—

WASNIEWSKI: And how do we get there?

SCHWARTZ: How we get there? Well, first of all, women have to run, and you have to take the risk. I've talked about this. We have to take this leap of faith in ourselves and our community. We need to keep doing it, and we'll do it enough that we'll be like the guys. We'll run. We'll lose. We'll run. We'll win. And we'll be a part of making this great country as great as it needs to be. It's tough. You take a risk. You do it. I think it's pretty exciting. I don't think anyone doesn't think it is. Certainly being here is an important endeavor. So running and winning, running and governing—just running is the first thing.

I do think that we also need to see women in other sectors. They hit glass ceilings in corporate America in a lot of different ways; so being supportive of women in the private sector who are doing that as well. Thinking about how do we do that? And that takes both men and women to do that and to think differently about women's leadership roles and leadership skills. I think that's important as well, and I think we need to educate our children and grandchildren to think about that as well. And do I think where we'll be?

Well, we sure better be 50–50 by then. {laughter} Wouldn't it be great to be in a place where we are not talking about this anymore, but it is actually understood that women can be leaders, too?

JOHNSON: I had one last question in terms of your House service, what do you think your lasting legacy will be?

SCHWARTZ: Oh, who knows? You don't do this for history. You do this—some because I actually will tell sometimes when somebody says, "How did you get there?" I had to think it through. You don't really know where you're going to go in your own careers. If you sit down when you were even in college, let alone high school, would you have said, "Oh, this is what I want." I didn't even know about these jobs necessarily. There's a big world out there. Who knows what people will be doing?

I hope that my legacy is that women can take risks; that women stand up for themselves and for others. We're a great country and that we have to participate. I think that is very important to me. We have to participate at every level. It starts with caring about your neighborhood. It starts with caring about your community. It goes to voting. We have to make that easier, and we have to have fair elections, obviously. I think we have to do something about redistricting, so there's a fair fight, which there isn't now; it's not a fair opportunity. But I firmly believe that if—I hope my legacy is take a chance, get engaged, make a difference.

JOHNSON: Great. Thank you for answering all of our questions.

WASNIEWSKI: Great. Thank you so much. Our time has flown—two hours. {laughter} We could talk to you for another four. Thank you so much.

SCHWARTZ: Thank you.

NOTES

[1] Reference to the 1973 Supreme Court decision, Roe v. Wade, 410 U.S. 113 (1973).
[2] First organized in 2009 by Representatives Debbie Wasserman Schultz of Florida and Jo Ann Emerson of Missouri to support breast cancer charities, the annual Congressional Women's Softball game is played by a bipartisan group of women Members of the House and Senate against the female press corps.
[3] Representative Schwartz served as the highest ranking Democratic member of the Budget Committee behind the chairman, John McKee Spratt, Jr., during the 111th Congress (2009–2011).
[4] Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones died of a brain aneurism on August 20, 2008.