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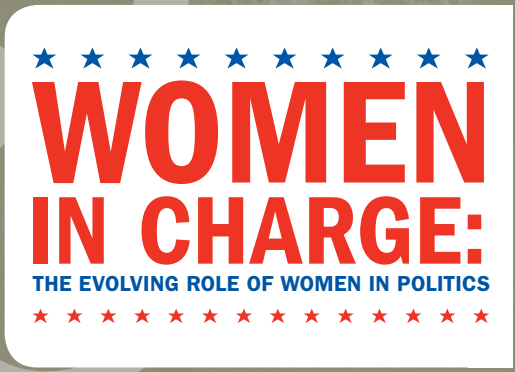

WOMEN IN CHARGE
The Evolving Role of Women in Politics

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MILANO THE NEW SCHOOL
FOR MANAGEMENT AND URBAN POLICY

Left to Right: Ellen Malcolm, Cecile Richards, Dee Dee Myers, and Andrea Bernstein

WOMEN IN CHARGE
The Evolving Role of Women in Politics

WHO'S WHO

Introduction

FRED P. HOCHBERG
Dean, Milano The New School for Management and Urban Policy

Panelists

ELLEN MALCOLM
Founder and President, EMILY's List

DEE DEE MYERS
Former White House Press Secretary; author, *Why Women Should Rule the World*

CECILE RICHARDS
President, Planned Parenthood

Moderator

ANDREA BERNSTEIN
Political Director, WNYC New York Public Radio

FRED P. HOCHBERG The title of today's talk, *Women in Charge*, was something I really have wanted to do for a number of years here at The New School, and I have to admit that I come to it with a slightly different experience. I worked with my mother for 20 years at Lillian Vernon. I watched her face a lot of challenges in business. I watched her go up against—I mean, I remember similar to the Bella Abzug comment when she would be at a trade show and they would show up to buy merchandise for our catalog, the Lillian Vernon catalog, and they'd say, well, why don't we wait for your boss to come and then we'll talk it through and see what she'd like to look at. And it was always an uphill struggle, and at some level she was never a member of the club.

But over time I think we've made some progress. We certainly made progress in business. In the philanthropic world, Judith Rodin was President of the University of Pennsylvania, President of the Rockefeller Foundation. Lorie Slutsky was a Board member and Trustee here as a President of the New York Community Trust. There are a number of examples.

But it seems to me that in politics and in elective office we still lag. We do have a woman Speaker of the House. Just two days ago we had a very viable woman running for President of the United States.

Only 16 women are in the U.S. Senate, and one of my favorite books of last year—my partner, Tom, and I became friends with Sherrod Brown and his wife, who is a very accomplished person in her own right, wrote a book, *And His Lovely Wife*, because for a year and a half she was simply introduced as "and his lovely wife."

We have 71 members in the House of Representatives. Statewide, fewer than 25% of office holders are women, and as you heard on the video, we rank 68th in the world in terms of women in elected power.

I remember a time at the '96 Convention, I was in Chicago and those of you who have been to conventions, there is always a breakfast with the state delegation each morning that tries to get everybody all excited and revved up for the day, and the person who conducted this, every time he

Fred Hochberg

introduced a man he would say, and here is Congressman So-and-So, who is really accomplished, and helped us on gun control, and helped pass this legislation, and helped pass that legislation. And each time he introduced a woman of equal accomplishment, he would say, and let me introduce the lovely Ann. She's very attractive, so presentable—it was unconscious, but each time there was a very different quality to the nature of those introductions.

We all know, and I can rattle off a number of countries where we do see women as Presidents or Prime Ministers—England, India, Germany, Argentina, Ireland—many, many countries. So today I know this will be a lively conversation. I also believe it's one we're going to hear over and over again for the next several months and perhaps next several years. I'm hoping that we learn something about this run that was, what was unique to Senator Clinton, what it is to say about our country in terms of being comfortable electing a woman as President. How much of this is unconscious, although a lot of this didn't sound unconscious to me. Is there a difference electing someone for a legislative office than an executive office? I tend to think there is, and I think my sense as we saw in Senator Clinton, a need, and I decided to become more of a feminist and more advocating for women's issues toward the end of the campaign. Has that become a requirement if you are a woman, or certainly if you're a minority or a gay/lesbian? Do you need to sort of also be sort of carrying the flag forward for a group that you're representing? And the question will also be, what does this mean for the next time we have someone, a woman running for President, the highest office in the land?

To moderate today we have an old friend of mine, Andrea Bernstein. Andrea and I actually met during the 1993 race. She and I are not that old—when she was helping Mayor Jenkins, and her father, who I know we invited. I don't know if he was able to make it. Her father has been a longtime faculty member at the school, Richard Bernstein. Andrea is now a political director at WNYC and in charge of political and campaign coverage for WNYC. She has covered state and local politics for many years. She has covered Hillary Clinton, and in fact, we chatted briefly on Tuesday when Hillary spoke at Baruch College, and she has also covered a lot of local politics, both the Bloomberg and Giuliani administrations.

I was also delighted because she recently completed a night fellowship at Stanford University, which is for people in journalism to have a greater understanding and in-depth exposure to the worlds of public policy and politics.

But before I give you Andrea, and she'll introduce our panel—I want to also just give a number of thanks, one

Dee Dee Myers

in particular I just want to thank Tracy Jackson. Where's Tracy? There she is in the last row. Tracy's been my assistant my entire time here, well, my last two years at The New School, and really pulled this whole program together on very short notice. So let's give Tracy a round of applause.

APPLAUSE

And a number of students have worked on this. So we're going to have a lively conversation. There are microphones in the front. There will be questions from the floor as well, so let me give you Andrea and our panel. Please come and join me onstage.

It's all yours. The stage is for the women.

ANDREA BERNSTEIN Thank you. When Fred asked me to do this, I said it should be fine as long as it doesn't come at the same moment that Hillary Clinton dropped out of the race. Little did I know how close it would come to that. So I'm really delighted to be here today and obviously, while we have a whole lot more to talk about than Hillary Clinton, that obviously is going to inform our conversation and I invite you to think about questions that you might want to have for any of the panelists.

> I think we tolerate certain things from men that we would never tolerate from women.
>
> —Dee Dee Myers

So I'm very excited to be joined by Dee Dee Myers, who is the first female White House Press Secretary and the author of *Why Women Should Rule the World*.

APPLAUSE

Next to her is Cecile Richards, the President of Planned Parenthood and the former Deputy Chief of Staff for democratic leader, Nancy Pelosi.

APPLAUSE

And all the way on the right, so to speak, is Ellen Malcolm, the founder and President of EMILY's List, which is the nation's largest political network and financial resource for democratic pro-choice women candidates.

APPLAUSE

So let me just start off by telling a story. In 2000, Beth Harpaz wrote a book called The Girls in the Van, which was about the women who covered Hillary Clinton's race when she ran for Senate, and I was one of them. I have been covering Hillary Clinton since January of 1999 when I got a call from our newsroom saying Hillary Clinton is coming to New York and she might run for Senate. I said Hillary Clinton will never run for Senate, but I went anyway to see her, and we were held in the Bedford YMCA, where she talked about balancing work and family. And we were held so long by the Secret Service after that event that I was late picking up my child from the babysitter.

That was the beginning of my career covering Hillary Clinton, and I'm sure it is not the end. However, on Saturday morning when I was in the National Building Museum in Washington, I was interviewing people before the event, and there was a lot of anger in the room, but not so much at Barack Obama; at the media, and specifically at me, but just because I was out there asking questions. And one woman said to me, "You ought to be ashamed of the way you covered Hillary Clinton in this race. It was so sexist, it was so over the top, I can't even believe she came this far." So let's start the questioning and, you know, I have never seen that video, nor have I actually even seen most of that. But I'm wondering, beyond the commentators on the cable news networks, should we, the media in general, be ashamed, and Dee Dee Myers, why don't we start with you?

DEE DEE MYERS I don't think the media covered itself in glory with respect to the way Hillary Clinton was covered. You know, obviously, that never applies equally to every reporter covering, or even every network in this case. I think some were more guilty. You may have noticed that a preponderance of the clips in that video we just saw came from MSNBC, and I think that there was abundant examples on that network in particular of conversations about her that would never have been tolerated of people, say, an African American candidate, Barack Obama. And I think it's always a little bit of a trap to try to compare racism and sexism, and I don't think we should get—I mean, we want to try to avoid that on some level because they're both bad and they should both be eradicated, but it does make for an interesting comparison.

So I do think—I think the media was—here are the ways in which I think the media was unfair to her: One was just the assumptions. For example, when Barack Obama said early on that he would negotiate with the leaders of Syria, North Korea, Iran, without preconditions, I think if Hillary had said that she would have been drummed out of the race. I think we tolerate certain things from men that we would never tolerate from women. So I think some of the assumptions that underlay the campaign from the beginning were much harder on her. I think she had to work much harder to prove that she was tough enough to be Commander in Chief. She did that, but again, at pretty great expense.

And then there were other examples of the language. We saw great examples of the language that we can use in talking about women. The example that jumped out at me so sharply was, and what we tolerate in the culture more broadly, but in the media as well, was when John McCain, in the fall, was at a Town Hall meeting and a woman stood up at the Town Hall meeting and said of Hillary, "How do we beat the bitch?" to which John McCain said, "That's a good question."

Flash forward to a few months later where John McCain was on his way to a rally and a talk show host was there warming up the crowd and saying things about Senator Obama, you know, Barack Hussein Obama and things that were dripping with innuendo, and Senator McCain did the right thing in that case. He disavowed the guy. He said that has no role in my campaign.

So, for one, there's absolutely no penalty. No one really talks much about McCain's interaction with this woman at the Town Hall. And for the other, there's an immediate reaction and a directed effort to get this guy disassociated from his campaign. So I think in the underlying assumption, the language that was used and the events that drew attention, there was a double standard that I think is pretty obvious.

AB Ellen Malcolm, did Hillary Clinton lose the race because of sexism?

ELLEN MALCOM I think that the coverage and the perception certainly played a big role, but I think, you know, when you're running a presidential campaign, there are many factors that took part in that.

You know, I watched this thing and I've seen these media clips before, and I have to confess that I've been in a state of rage for months now. But I don't want to lose sight of the incredible achievements of Hillary Clinton, and I think as all of us who were for Hillary go to our own emotional catharsis and sort of process this, it's important to remember that some very significant and really wonderful things happened from this campaign. And for me, they just center around the magnificent job that Hillary Clinton did as a presidential candidate. I mean, she was unbelievable. She was tough; she was eloquent. Every time she would go to a debate, she performed. You know, when the going got tough and the media was saying for months she was going to lose, she just was unfaltering. She kept going.

And one of the things I think she did was say to voters and, you know, one of the interesting things about this is said to voters in every single state in this country. I mean, everybody had a front row seat on this show that went on. She said to voters, "If you had doubts whether women were strong enough and tough enough to be President, I've stood here and showed you that it's possible that women have what it takes to play in the big leagues."

That is a phenomenal thing to do, not just for herself, but for any woman that is running for any level of office. Women running for Mayor, for Congress, for Senate, for Governor, are going to be taken a little more seriously, have a little bit less of the gender stuff because of the fine showing that Hillary Clinton made.

She ended up getting almost 18 million votes, which is more votes than I think anyone running for a presidential nomination has ever gotten. And so she was a real player in this, and I have to say one of my favorite moments of the campaign was the night of the New Hampshire primary. Actually, I have to say the night of the New Hampshire primary in and of itself was one of my favorite moments

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—Ellen Malcolm

of the campaign. But I was standing on the rope line and Hillary came by and she put her hand on my arm and she said, "Ellen, I'm the first woman in history to win a presidential primary." That is pretty exciting and pretty historic, so I think there were all kinds of problems. I think there were campaign decisions that were disastrous. Certainly, not competing in February for every one of those delegates in the caucuses was a big factor, but there's no question that the gender stereotyping, both the explicit, obvious kinds of things that we saw in there, and I think to some degree the kinds of coverage had an impact, and I can only say Hillary Clinton seemed to just be remarkably strong and forward moving through it all.

AB Cecile Richards, why is it okay for commentators to say some of the things that we just heard, but in a country where racism is so very present, for them not to say things that would be considered overtly racist?

CECILE RICHARDS Well, I think Dee Dee made a point. It's sort of hard to compare these two issues that we still deal with as a country. I think that if you look at the media, and this is the Women's Media Center, I believe, that put this together. You know, they've looked—3% of serious media positions in the country are held by women—3%—so that's why it's still acceptable. And essentially, we can't imagine that we're going to redress the inequities of treatment of women candidates and women being elected to office if women are still unequal in every other aspect of society. And I think media is absolutely one of the worst sorts of imbalances. But if you look at every other place in terms of how we're going to get more women—because I know that's one of the things Fred's really interested in—how

Ellen Malcolm

are more women going to run for office? We need more women CEOs. We need more women who have financial independence. We need more women who are heads of universities. We need more women in every aspect of life.

And I think, and I actually think, too, to the point that Dee Dee made, I think that—and I know this is a nonpartisan, nonpolitical event here—but I—that's what my lawyers always say to say before we say anything else, but—

EM Before you say partisan political things.

CR Well, you can draw your own conclusions, but I actually think the misogyny of this campaign is going to permanently damage John McCain in his race for the presidency, and I think that the example that Dee Dee used of his allowing that kind of remark to be made about a woman who has, as Ellen said, not only gained the support of women across this country, but frankly, toward the end of this campaign, for working class men. And she became the candidate of working class men in this country, and so I think that kind of attitude is not going to be tolerated any more, and I think it's really going to come back and hurt Senator McCain in this election.

AB I'd like to just push you a little bit more because the media is also overwhelmingly white, and yet there does seem to be a higher bar and a sort of more clear set of standards about what is acceptable and what is unacceptable. Now that doesn't mean that there isn't racism in the media. Clearly, there is.

CR Sure.

AB But I'm wondering what it is about this society that makes it acceptable to say things about women that probably wouldn't be said about men.

CR Well, I think we could teach a whole seminar on that. I mean that, and frankly, I think that Senator Obama began to sort of address that, and that race in this country is—there is so much not talked about and so much discomfort that it's an area that I think there is still—it's sort of the third rail in a lot of ways and I just think we all know. We've had so many—what we just saw from Senator Clinton I would love to say, wow, this is unique. No woman running for office has ever faced this. I remember a race in Texas once, actually, where a woman was running for Governor.

LAUGHTER

AB Anyone you know?

CR And the attitude of the—and the gubernatorial candidate, when asked about, you know, rape said, "Well, it's just like bad weather. You should just sort of sit back and enjoy it."

AB He did lose that race.

CR He did lose that race, to my point exactly. So I just think that this has been commonplace and standard. I would hope that, not only with sexism, but with racism, and we all went through the Harold Ford race last cycle and saw the disgusting tactics that were used in that race. I hope we're getting to a place where both of these issues are no longer tolerated in a decent society and in public discourse. And so maybe this race is going to change that.

AB Dee Dee Myers, one of the things I found out on the campaign trail is that people, voters, really had faith that Hillary Clinton could make things happen, that she could get it done. And it's interesting because most of her résumé has been as a Senator in a legislative position and yet there was a high comfort factor that she could take care of things. Was there any way in which it helped her, being a woman?

DM That's a good question. Yeah, there certainly were ways that being a woman helped her. I don't know if they outweighed the ways that it hurt her, but certainly

Cecile Richards

her candidacy resonated with a lot of women on a very profound level and I think, I found myself, and you know, on days taking very personally what was happening to her and feeling like, "They can't do that to me; I mean to Hillary." Or I would find myself really depressed. I would wake up and I would feel like just so despondent and I would realize it was because Hillary was supposed to lose the New Hampshire primary or something. And then when she didn't, I mean, my mood tracked a lot, much more than I expected with what was happening to her, and so I do think Hillary benefited in some ways from this, you know, the aspirations of women which she came to embody and that grew throughout the campaign.

It was a way in which people looked at her and thought she is the multi-tasking, working mom who can get things done, because we all know that women do that in ways that sometimes men don't. Yeah, maybe. I hadn't really thought about that. But I think the most effective posture for her in this campaign was this place she came to at the end which I call the "Mama Bear" phase because there was the "I'll be ready on Day One", which people thought it was probably true, but they weren't that comfortable with, and there was a sense of entitlement with that and what's all this ambition and service and when she got to the end of the campaign and she was the Mama Bear fighting for her cubs. I think that was a posture that resonated with—that was a place that people were comfortable to see a woman fighting really hard to protect the interests of people who the deck were stacked against, working class families with high gas prices and mortgages that they could no longer afford. And all of a sudden, when she was fighting for those people, those people went, oh, okay, I get it. So in that sense I think she found a way to make her gender part of her story in a more compelling and organic way.

AB Ellen, did you want to add something to that?

EM I did. You know, EMILY's List is a women's vote program, and we've done a lot of work over the years with low-income women who don't have college degrees, which is sort of a demographic description, which I will now say non-college women. But these are the women that we see in the stores, and in the shops, and they're working, their husbands are working, and they are under tremendous pressures all the time.

When you listen to them in conversations, they talk about the real anxieties they have about what is happening with them and their families. They talk about their concern about the economy, that not only are they afraid that somebody is going to lose a job, but that it seems to be changing. There's all this international trade and it's all changing the way things are going here in the United States, the manufacturing jobs are shifting. And so it's this sort of ongoing anxiety about what is this world going to be like?

They're worried that somebody's going to get sick because they're living right on the economic edge, and if somebody in the family gets sick and they don't have health care and how are they going to take care of it? What's going to happen when their parents get older and they can't be on their own, and how are they going to possibly care for them? Just over and over again, tremendous pressures.

They look at politicians and they say, "These guys do not give one hoot about what happens to me and my family. They just want to run for office because they want to go to Washington and have cocktail parties with the lobbyists. That's all it is for them. They're just planning their next race. They probably could do something to help me, but they're not going to."

Along comes Hillary Clinton, and they hear that she's done, for 35 years, work to help children. They know she's tough, and smart, and a working mom. They know she's tried very hard to do something about the health care crisis, and they feel that that woman running for President is a politician who understands what's happening to me and my family.

She gets it, and she is going to go out and fight for me because she understands. I see her and I believe in her in a way that I don't believe these guys running for office.

And so as Hillary went through the campaign, her specificity on programs, her meeting with these folks and showing how much she understood what was going on with them created a real bond with non-college educated women and men, over time. And so it is one of the strengths of her as a candidate. Now, these voters are swing voters in every general election. They are very important to who wins the presidency and who wins all kinds of races up and down the ticket. We'll be doing—EMILY's List will be doing a lot of work trying to get these non-college women to vote for the democrats.

Hillary, I think, will have a tremendous voice in that process, and if you saw the speech on Saturday, her clear statements about how she was going to go work her heart out for the democratic nominee, Barack Obama, as she had said about the nominee for months and months, I think can make a big difference in the general election as she helps him connect with those swing voters that are so important for democrats.

AB Cecile, that speech on Saturday was one of the most overtly feminist speeches that I've heard Hillary Clinton give, ever.

CR Yes.

AB And she had a line in it. She said, "You can be so proud. From now on, it will be unremarkable for women to win primary state victories, unremarkable to have a woman in a close race to be our nominee, unremarkable to think that a woman can be President of the United States, and that is truly remarkable." And I'm wondering—there are two things. I'm wondering is that true? Is it now, are all those things really unremarkable? And then in addition to that, there was some talk in the media afterwards about whether if she'd sort of played the feminism card, as some people were calling it earlier, would that have helped her? So that's a two-part question.

CR So first, I think the first question is, and unequivocally she has changed and answered this question forever, not that it's not always going to be hard for a woman to run for President, but there's absolutely no question that she transcended gender, too, toward the end. I mean, I think it really became about that she was—there was no question any more about whether she had the, whether she was capable of being President, capable of being Commander In Chief, and then had the compassion that I think both

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Dee Dee and Ellen were talking about to actually relate to people in a very fundamental way about their lives.

But she did become a candidate, again. I think it's important to look back. If you look at the last three months of the campaign, which I think were very interesting, which I think were really, really a change. You know, she was down, she sort of came back, and it really did become this, you know, she had the balance between—and I'm going to get to your point about the feminism point. I think that the challenge for women is you have to balance that strength and compassion, right? You have to be able to do both of that, and I think that in the beginning, yes, she was strong enough, but she found the sweet spot this last three months. And I think part of it was, she did talk more to people, related to people, not just women—everybody. I mean, she heard their stories. I think she incorporated that in the way she spoke about what this election was about.

But that has to be broad, and she was much more than a woman's candidate or a President for women, and people are very sensitive about that, and certainly—I mean, I come from Texas, where this is something that I think we always dealt with, is that you can be a woman candidate, but you've got to be a candidate for all the people. That's something fundamentally, I think, that George Bush never understood, that when you're a candidate, or you're running, or you're elected, you govern everyone, not just the constituency from which you came.

So I actually don't think she—I think she ran this campaign, particularly at the end, just right on the money, and I think there are things you can say in a concession

> You can be a woman candidate, but you've got to be a candidate for all the people.
>
> —Cecile Richards

speech that you can never say when you're running, and I think we saw that on Saturday. I think it's important to remember, in the last three months she won this race, right? I mean, she got 700,000 more votes in these last three months. And so, look, I think that's just something to acknowledge in understanding, as we're looking back, on how the race was run because as Ellen said, there were mistakes made and there were highs and lows, but she really got it right this last three months, and I think we should learn a lot from that.

The other thing, though, she said in that speech and I think it's really important to remember, is that, "Every minute we spend looking back is one minute we don't spend looking forward," and I hope that as we go through this sort of important dissection of the campaign, and dissection of what happened, and really valuing everything Senator Clinton did, I think we can't miss her point, too, which is there's a lot of work ahead to do.

AB Dee Dee, you know both the Clintons. Can you see them serving first, as Vice President and second spouse?

DM You know, at the beginning of this campaign I would have said there's no way Hillary Clinton would ever want it. Now I think she may or may not want it. I don't think it's going to happen. It could happen, and I think when you go through the list of potential candidates and all the things that you want in Barack Obama's running mate, you sort of keep coming back to Hillary Clinton with one exception, and that's the chemistry that has to exist. I think Senator Clinton and Senator Obama have gone a long way in a short time to try to re-establish the foundation of a good relationship, but I think if you look back over history, the most successful pairings between a President and Vice President have been ones that have had really great chemistry. And that's why George Bush picked Dick Cheney, to the detriment of the entire world.

DM And it's certainly why Bill Clinton picked Al Gore. You know, on paper that didn't make any sense, but they had great chemistry and Clinton decided that he wanted to underscore this idea about change. And so I just think based on—I think Senator Obama has to go through a process, and I think when he gets to that process he'll end up some place other than Hillary Clinton. That's just my reading of the situation.

I think it's tremendously complicated. I think Bill Clinton has been a tremendously complicating factor in this more broadly. Not only is Hillary Clinton the first woman to run a serious campaign, which puts her spouse in a spotlight that wouldn't necessarily happen if it was a man with a female spouse. But then you add to that he is the former President of the United States, and then you add to that he's Bill Clinton, and all of a sudden you have this very complicated dynamic, and I think, what would his role be? We really didn't get as much of what would his role be as we might have in this contested primary, but it certainly would have been a humongous issue in the general election, and I think the Obama people are scared to death of that whole complicated dynamic on top of the chemistry issue. So, I don't think we'll see it.

EM You know, there are some of us that aren't so sure it would be a great idea. I think Hillary comes out of this as much stronger, much more powerful, seen as her own player in a way that was not, since she got into the campaign and did such a phenomenal job, I think she is going to be a real force to be reckoned with on the national scene for a long time. I like the idea of Hillary being in the Senate working on health care reform, and energy independence, and those kinds of things. And so I'm perfectly content for her to stay in the Senate, to do a heck of a good job, to go out and help democratic candidates across the country, and to have her voice heard where we need it, working on making things change on the legislative front.

AB Ellen, one of the things you're talking about was New Hampshire, and there was a phenomenon that I noted in New Hampshire, and I noticed it consistently through the entire campaign, and I think it's perhaps one of the reasons why Hillary Clinton went on for, her campaign went on for as long as it did, was that the day before the New Hampshire primary, well, the Sunday and the Monday, when the polls were showing Obama up by 13 points, 14 points, I was wondering whether we should start our live broadcast an hour earlier because it might all be over at 8:00, and I found myself talking for four hours while we waited for the results to come in. But there were women who came from around the country, who just got on a plane sort of by themselves and flew—

EM Some of them are sitting right here in this audience.

AB —to New Hampshire, but people that said to me, I'm not a political person, but, you know, I don't want it to end here. And, you know, there was sort of the women for Hillary. I saw them on primary day. A lot of women drove up from Massachusetts to work at the polls, just su esponte.

EM It was a very cold reunion.

AB I'm wondering to what extent you think that that will become an organized force in electoral politics, the sort of, you know, Hillary women who sort of got up and said, you know, "I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take it any more, and I'm going to fight back for her."

EM I think she clearly has energized women, both activist women who went to New Hampshire, and I think a lot of those women are going to get more and more involved in politics. It's certainly what we found. You remember 1992, the Year of the Woman, when we ran all those women for Senate and for the House after the Anita Hill hearings? Women became energized. EMILY's List, at the time, was about 3,000 members and we have over 100,000 members now because it's a lot of women who said boy, we need to get more women in office. So I think that in that case we are going to see a shift, and I also think we're going to see a shift, I hope, with women voters.

You know, Senator Obama deserves tremendous credit for exciting younger voters and bringing some new folks into the campaign. But Hillary did as well. In every single state where there is exit polling, women, as a percentage of the vote, went up. So women were 59% of the vote in Ohio, 57% of the vote in Pennsylvania, so it was women coming out and participating, and putting aside their cynicism as I talked about earlier, and I think to the extent we can keep that going, that is not only good for Hillary and our women candidates, that's good for democrats because the gender gap shows that women prefer democratic candidates, democratic positions on issues, and at EMILY's List and our women's vote program we spend a lot of time just convincing them to go out there and vote. It's going to make a difference.

AB Cecile Richards, we haven't heard that much about abortion in this campaign. Now, part of it is because there is not much of a difference between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, and that's been the race that's been dominating the headlines the last four months. But even in the Town Hall meetings that I went to in New Hampshire with the republicans, it got raised a whole lot less. And I'm wondering, is it going to be—I mean by voters—is it going to be a factor in this election?

Andrea Bernstein

CR I'm so glad you asked that question. It's going to be an enormous factor in this election. I think that the difference between Senator John McCain and Senator Obama, and would have been with Senator Clinton, is on issues of women's health at large, not just on the question of Roe, is as wide as the Grand Canyon. This is going to be, and our own research at Planned Parenthood shows that women voters in the battleground states, women voters have no idea where John McCain stands on any women's health issue. And if you don't know, he not only opposes Roe, he basically opposes birth control being covered by insurance companies. He's opposed to family planning. He opposes comprehensive sex education for young people, a whole host of things. He has a 0% voting record with Planned Parenthood.

And another sort of interesting tidbit is that half of Senator McCain's own women supporters are pro-choice, and when they find out how out of touch he is on women's health issues, they begin to leave him in droves. So I actually think this is going to be an issue, and not just so about Roe, which clearly for all of us I think is so fundamental, looking at the Supreme Court, knowing the nominations that are going to be faced by this next President. But when you look at health care affordability in this country, an enormous issue for

women voters that supported Senator Clinton that are going to be critical in this election.

And when you have a candidate like Senator McCain who is so out of touch on the cost of health care for women, and for women, if you're not talking about the cost of reproductive health care, you're not talking about, you know, women's health care. So I actually think this is going to be because the difference is so stark. This is a country of not just women, but men as well, who are not prepared to see Roe overturned, I think, this is one of those issues that is going to demonstrate very, very clearly how out of touch Senator John McCain is on basic, economic, bread-and-butter, kitchen-table issues that are facing the American people.

AB To what extent are people going to be sort of talking about that when the economy is, you know, headed south so fast it's spinning everybody's heads, and there's a war in Iraq. To what extent, I guess, are you going to try to put it in a place where people notice it?

CR One, it's going to be an issue because of difference. I mean, I think we can look at—you were asking earlier to Dee Dee about how did she feel about the way the media dealt with Hillary Clinton? I think the way the media has dealt with this election at all has been so pathetic in terms of not dealing with real issues. And that includes many of the debates that we saw that were much more focused on style than substance. So I think we're going to begin to get some substance, and this is an issue in which there's going to be huge substantive differences.

I do think, though, for Planned Parenthood, we're health care provider to 5 million people every year, in every single state. And the interesting thing is the patients that come to us—women, teens, men—they come to us not to make a political statement. They come because they need affordable health care. And so we're going to be in this race talking about the lack of affordable health care for people in this country, including reproductive health care, and John McCain has opposed every single effort we have made over the last, you know, however—he hasn't been in office 90 years. We've been around for 90 years.

But he has opposed every effort to make health care more affordable for women in this country and so we will—and again, the difference between him and Senator Obama is so big we're going to just drive a Mack truck through it.

EM You know, one of the things I think the Obama campaign is going to be talking about is that John McCain is just going to be a third term of George W. Bush, that they are in absolute agreement on issue after issue after issue.

And I think these issues that Cecile is talking about is just a great example of, you know, they hold hands on women's health care issues and on choice, and they don't listen to women. They listen to their own religious beliefs and the political power of the radical right, and so I think in that sense it will be one more brick in the wall that at the end will say John McCain equals George W. Bush.

CR And can I, can I just—to echo that because Ellen and I have been—this is not our first presidential election we've worked on.

EM No, no. No, no.

CR So 2000 and 2004, we, Planned Parenthood, and other organizations tried to convince women and really talk to women about where George Bush would be on women's health issues. And just quite honestly, we could never make a dent. One, because he has no record, okay? Because he hadn't really been in office for very long and, quite honestly, as Governor he had done nothing on these issues.

The second is, I think at the end of the day women voters thought Laura is not going to let him do anything that bad.

EM Or Barbara.

CR Or Barbara is going to take him out and woodshed him on anything, you know, so when it came to the Supreme Court, when it came to women's health, they felt like he pretty much was going to be under the sway of those two strong women and his own record. And, you know, he was always pretty weenie-ish about all these issues, right? He never really said much about anything. So it was very difficult.

John McCain, totally different story. First of all, he's got a record, you know, a mile wide, right? You know, 20 some odd years of voting against women's health issues.

And the second is, quite honestly, I don't think anyone thinks Cindy McCain is going to have any influence on John McCain's position on these issues. So I just think we are—it is a very different deal this time around. I think that—and John McCain himself says very proudly, there is no more prolife candidate that's ever run for President than him, and that he absolutely would overturn Roe if allowed that opportunity as President, so I think there's going to be huge opportunity to talk to women about this issue, and men.

AB Dee Dee, there's still a lot of, I mean, this anger that I was talking about is still very present, and people are saying I'm not going to vote. I'm going to write in Hillary Clinton.

> And part of the argument that I make in the book is that the reason that there ought to be more women in public life is not because we do everything the same as men, but in many ways because of the ways that we're different.
>
> —Dee Dee Myers

I'm going to vote for John McCain. What do you think's going to happen?

DM Well, I think it's a really important point, and I think it's something that we as democrats and people who are, you know, really advocating on behalf of women, and I think most certainly Ellen and Cecile are doing such great work, but a lot of—and will continue to do great work in making the case about John McCain, but I think Senator Obama really has to take to heart he has some work to do. I think the campaign's done a brilliant job in many respects. I don't think that they've reached out as effectively to women as they might have. I think they sort of ceded that constituency to Hillary Clinton and just said, well, she's going to win the women. We'll win—we'll put together a coalition over here. Not that they don't want to win, but they're going to have to work harder than they've done so far to make the arguments that, not just that McCain is bad, but that Senator Obama gets it, that he wants, and will work for, and has worked for and fought for women. I think he will, but this election may very well be won or lost among the non-college women that we've been talking about. These are women who are really attracted to Hillary Clinton, not just because she was a woman, but because they thought she understood their lives.

Now, Senator Obama today is starting a kind of a tour of the country on economic issues in some of the swing states. He needs to connect his program of hope and of a different kind of politics with putting food on people's table, and gas in their cars, and providing health care so that people don't have to choose between paying the rent and getting, you know, taking their kids to the doctor, which a lot of people feel like they're in that position. And he needs to connect on a more visceral level with the women who are going to have to decide, am I going to vote for McCain, am I going to vote for Obama? These are swing voters, and I think we're not there yet, and I think that will be a big part of what comes, and I, you know, and we're beginning to see, and I'm sure both Cecile and Ellen have already seen the reaching out and the, from the Obama campaign trying to figure out how much time do we have to, you know, how do we do this in a way? We can't rush women, but at the same time we want to make sure that they know that we, you know, we care and we want them to come, and we want to bring the party together. So I—and there's a lot of work to be done.

AB We're going to take some questions, so if you want to ask a question, please come to one of these microphones, and Dee Dee, while they're coming up, maybe you want to answer the question, why should women rule the world? (Laughter)

DM Yes, it was a slightly provocative book title. You know, my argument is two things, a couple things about it. First of all, my argument was never that women should rule the world in place of men, but rather alongside men. And part of the argument that I make in the book is that the reason that there ought to be more women in public life is not because we do everything the same as men, but in many ways because of the ways that we're different. Not that every woman is one way and every man is another, but I think that women bring a different life experience, sometimes a different way of looking at issues, of different necessities, sometimes different ways of solving conflicts, and I think that that perspective is critical. And I think there's not enough of it. And I think one of the things that we have to do to get there, to get to a point where there are more women in all the places in the world that Cecile was talking about across the board, is that we as women have to recognize and really own the value that we bring. I think sometimes we're too quick to say that to believe some place our perspective isn't as valuable, and I think therein lies a big, huge piece of the problem.

Our perspective is every bit as valid. Our life experience is every bit as important, and when we denigrate that and say, oh, it's just me, I think that sets all women back.

AB All right, let's take some questions, and we'll go from side to side, and we will begin over here. You might move the mike…

FEMALE Okay. I wanted to make a comment. I had never thought about the racism versus sexism before and when you were all talking, two thoughts occurred to me, if you

care to comment on them or not. One is that women might get more criticism because women have never stood up as a group and rioted, and burned, and looted and, therefore, we're not as frightening. And that to me it seems like racists are still perceived as more, as minorities and more downtrodden, and even though women are obviously part of the races, they are not as a group, I think, considered as downtrodden and put upon, which I don't think is true, but I think is the perception, so I don't know if you care to comment on that.

But my question is, do any of you see Hillary being nominated for Supreme Court if Obama gets elected and, if so, would she do that, and is it a good thing or a better thing than her continuing to be in the Senate and possibly running again?

AB Anybody want to take that?

DM Let me make one comment and then I'll turn it over to you guys. I thought about that a lot, why, what is it about women versus, you know, other groups that have been left out of the power structure. Part of it is that women are everywhere, right? And everybody has a relationship with women and so it doesn't—and I—one of the things that we all heard in this election was, oh, it's not that Hillary's a woman. It's that she's that woman, and I think that that, to me, was—that's a bit of a dodge, isn't it? I mean, part of the reason she's that woman is because she is a woman. In other words, we started hating her a long time ago because she had a mind of her own and, you know, people had very ambivalent feelings about the role of women in public life, and about powerful women, and how women wore their power, and how much she should be allowed to do and take and, you know, and assert and all those things and so, yeah, there's, you know, Hillary's a complicated figure, but I do think the part of that woman phenomenon is the woman phenomenon, and I think it's easy to discount people who are in the middle of our lives as opposed to groups that seem, that we know are left out because we don't see them, whereas we see women. People see women every day in their lives. I mean, everybody has a mother.

AB Let me just challenge you a little bit on the that woman thing because, I mean, Hillary Clinton has certainly said a number of things in the course of this campaign that have, you know, also been— when she's displayed a tinny ear. I mean, the white Americans comment, or the comment about he's not a Muslim so far as I know, you know, and one could go on. But she certainly has provided ample fodder for people to be infuriated with her. And then there is this sort of reverberation, is it sexism? Are people angry with her because she's a woman, or are people angry with her because she said something that is appalling?

> Our perspective is every bit as valid. Our life experience is every bit as important, and when we denigrate that and say, oh, it's just me, I think that sets all women back.
>
> —Dee Dee Myers

DM Well, I think there's room for both of those things. I mean, I would never argue that all of Hillary Clinton's problems are related to gender. Some of them are related to her particularly. She's a Clinton, she's a democrat. I mean, she's like all politicians. But I think that's always been true of men, too, and I think people—I think that in certain instances you can't unravel that very complicated sort of Gordian knot about how much of the resistance, how much of the attitudes that Hillary came to this campaign with were as a result of sometimes her imperfect political skills. But how much of it was also related to something else? There's a lot of people out there with imperfect political skills who don't create the kind of emotional, polarizing reaction. What is it about her? Part of it is that it's the hardness of her. It's not just that, but there's no doubt in my mind that part of it is that she's, you know, that there's this unresolved place we are in our society about the role of women and she becomes the poster child for, and has been, for the last 16 years for so much of that.

EM I think that one of my takeaways, my personal takeaways from this whole experience was that as a feminist, I feel that I have to go back and relook at some of my assumptions and some of my understanding of what is the role of gender in this country. And I'll give you some examples since I'm suggesting that we all do this self-reflection. I'll share with you some of mine.

I was amazed at my reaction at watching the debates, and there were copious many of those debates. I always had tremendous confidence that Hillary would be terrific. I went with her to the South Carolina debate, the first one. I saw her in action. I thought, boy, this is going to be great, and I think she was phenomenal in the debates. When I watched

the confrontational debates, and I think there are sort of two kinds, the confrontational and the lovey dovey debates.

When there were the confrontational debates, I was a nervous wreck. I was so anxious. What was going to happen? How was it going to work? You know, how was this going to be? And I would realize how anxious I was when they got to the lovey dovey debates because then I'd be, oh, thank goodness, they're not fighting in this one. This is so nice. I'm just going to sit here and enjoy this debate.

And it brought up for me issues of how uncomfortable I am watching women in an assertive and confrontational position. I would hear from women all the time, "I'm so mad at Hillary. I just hate it when she gets so angry in those debates." Well, I think if you really go back and look at those debates, she was never expressing anger, or rarely expressing anger. She was being assertive and confrontational on policy and on positions, and women heard it as being angry. So I think—

AB Well, at the South Carolina debate, though, I mean, she said, "I was doing this for 35 years while you were helping out your friend in the slum landlord business."

EM Right.

AB So that was, you know—

EM That was one of those angry ones. I agree with that. But over and over, think of the early debates, particularly when it was Hillary versus all the guys, and I include the media or the moderators of the debate in some of those early ones. And she kept her cool and she kept focus on the issues. What I'm talking about is my emotional reaction as a woman watching that, and what does that say about how we do this?

Now, I want to contrast a little bit on the race because you brought up the issue of her saying about "the white Americans vote for me." I did a description of non-college educated women that Hillary has won over that are a swing demographic. The fact of the matter is, I left out an attribute. They are actually white, non-college educated women that are the swing voters. African American non-college women are pretty solid democratic voters. They're turnout targets. But white non-college educated women are, in fact, swing voters, and were, in fact, the group that was the core of Hillary's support.

We are very sensitive about talking about race. We are kind of awkward and uncomfortable about it, and when she basically described the demographic group who was for her, it created a firestorm. And so I, being a nice, smart political person, when I described non-college voters to you, I leave out the race part of it. But, in fact, it's inaccurate.

AB I would argue that Hillary Clinton is a smart political person.

CR Well, I think that's a classic example, too, of sort of Washington politics and the real world being really in conflict, and so I think that is, and I think in a race, in an election in which race is—we're trying to transcend race, and I think, frankly, with a whole generation of folks who are—approach these issues differently, we have got to change the way we talk about people in this country. And so I think it was a huge mistake. You can absolutely—anyone who has worked on a political campaign can see sort of a demographic chart and how that happened. But I think it's critical that we change politics in this country and we don't think about people and talk about people in the ways that we, frankly, are comfortable doing in Washington. So, even though I hear you, and you could hear when Hillary said that, you knew exactly where it was coming from. It's still, I think, not acceptable, and something we've got to really be honest about.

Can I just say one thing about what Ellen said? I think this is really interesting. When Ellen Malcolm says she's uncomfortable with a woman being confrontational (laughter), I think it's a really profound—

EM I don't know who those cameras are, but don't you put that on YouTube.

LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE

CR No, I just think it's a very profound statement, and I think it does, so I think what Ellen's saying is worth considering. And I remember back when Hillary was, when Senator Clinton was considering running for the United States Senate, and a number of women who were advising her not to do it, and it wasn't because she wasn't totally capable of doing it. It was because I think people were trying to protect her from defeat. They were trying to protect her from humiliation, all the kinds of things that we continue to handicap women who want to run for office or go higher. And I think one of the things that came out of this election that—when people look back about Senator Clinton staying in this race is that—and what she, I know, has said before, is that it was important part of her narrative is that women do not fade in the heat. They don't stand down just because all the guys want them to give up and give in. They stay in. And that is a very important part of what she did and what she did for all of us.

AB I do want to get to some more questions. Let me also just say about the white Americans.

CR Excuse me. She'll be great on the Supreme Court. She'd be great on the Supreme Court. But she'd be great legislating in the Senate.

FEMALE Is she better? Is she more helpful on the Supreme Court, especially given Roe v. Wade, or in the Senate?

CR The problem is, we need her everywhere, right? (Laughter)

AB All right, I mean, I think the media needs Hillary Clinton, too, so that will be kind of an interesting phenomenon. Let me just say on the white American thing, that I've known Hillary Clinton long enough and I've been covering her long enough to understand that she was probably doing a demographic analysis. On the other hand, I think what a lot of what America heard was the Saturday Night Live version of that, which is, "My supporters are racists." So, you know, it's one of those Rorschach test moments.

EM Or what the media defined. I mean, one of the things that's just been shocking to me is the media's lack of trust of Hillary and willingness to get into her head, supposedly, and tell you what it is she meant when she said something. And so I think you can't leave that out of the equation, either. I think Cecile raised a very important issue about our discussion about race and I think—I know we share a common value system about equality in terms of race and gender. But I think we are still very uncomfortable discussing either, and I am concerned, and I don't—I am concerned about not discussing it, in some ways, as much as I am getting out there and confronting it. And I think that what happens over time, and I'll use gender as an example. A woman named Rebecca Traister wrote a really fabulous piece in salon.com about young Obama supporters. These are the under 30 Obama supporters, and she's talking about the women and the men.

And the women started noticing that the under 30 Obama guys seemed to have this incredible emotional anger and almost hatred of Hillary Clinton. And they started saying what is this? There's something odd about this. You know, if you look at all those candidates there's not this strong visceral response to John Edwards or Bill Richardson. What's going on here? And so she started blogging with women and they said, you know, these guys, they don't say blatant, sexist things about Hillary Clinton. They're not out there making fun of her dress or whatever, but the women are starting to think there is another kind of gender bias that is having an impact. I think she's correct in that. I think we saw some of that in the sort of vitriolic almost reporting in the media, and I think it's something we have to get out there, and make public, and talk about, and think about, and wonder about, and see if it's something that we all need to confront and do something about.

AB I know there's a lot of you who want to ask questions, so I'm going to go over here. If you have a particular person that you'd like to ask your question of, why don't you state that and so, and we'll just try to have one person.

FEMALE Two questions. The first is, given what you have just described in McCain's strategy, policies, and how they affect women, what does it say about women who were ready to vote for Hillary Clinton, whose policies are very, very closely aligned with Obama's, that they would vote for McCain over Obama, and that we're hearing that—that's my first question.

EM It says that the election is not today. If the election was today, my guess is there are a number of people in this room who would not vote, or who knows what they would do, but the election isn't today. The election is in November.

FEMALE Right, or that they wouldn't vote, which is equally disturbing.

EM Wait, whoa, whoa. What's disturbing?

FEMALE That women would rather not vote than vote for a candidate whose policies are—

EM No, wait a minute. You misunderstood. I wasn't clear. There are Hillary supporters who are very angry, upset, disappointed, sad. I'm one of them.

FEMALE Absolutely.

EM It's the stages of grief that we have to go through. I haven't gone through them yet myself. I've got to come here and talk to you all, but I'm going to tell you, there are times I go home and shut the door and wail. But that is a process, and I understand that. If the election was held today, a lot of her supporters would not have gone through that process yet. They will. They'll come around because at the end of the day we cannot afford a third term of George W. Bush and another President who's going to end Roe v. Wade, so we'll come back.

APPLAUSE

FEMALE Okay, second question. Do any of you know what percentage of women Hillary hired versus men as senior advisors in the campaign? Very senior. Do you know what the breakdown was?

CR It was enormous. I mean, it wasn't—

FEMALE Was it 50/50?

CR Oh, I would say, I shouldn't hazard to—but this was a campaign run by a lot of really prominent women and a lot of really prominent African American women who I hope—women who, in the democratic party who have a long history and I think really came into their own in this campaign: Maggie Williams, unbelievable; Tina Flournoy. I shouldn't even start going through the names.

FEMALE Cheryl Mills.

CR Exactly. Cheryl Mills. I mean, there were some amazing women leaders that were front and center of this campaign, and very much so, obviously, as Maggie came on in the last three months, who are going to be critical, I think not only in the next, the last month of this election, but I think anyone who is elected President will be looking at any of these women to play prominent roles in an administration.

AB Let me just—and I know a lot of Hillary Clinton's staff and she has a lot of women working for her. Dee Dee, one of the things I thought was interesting is all of the public voices on Hillary Clinton's campaign were men: Howard Wolfson, Phil Singer, Harold Dickies, Mark Penn, Terry McAuliffe. Do you think that was on purpose?

DM No. I think there were women, too. I mean, Maggie Williams, Patti Solis Doyle for a while, until—

AB They weren't the ones speaking to us, though. I mean, not, you know.

DM Mandy Grunwald. She wasn't traveling with the campaign. I actually thought that they needed, as talented as Howard Wolfson is, I thought they needed a—they could have benefited from a female, a more prominent female voice in the media, just a slightly different tone, perhaps, on certain days. But I can promise you there were exponentially more women in senior levels of Hillary's campaign than any of the others. I challenge you to look around and find senior—

FEMALE That's not much of a standard.

DM Well, it is, but it's who's out there.

FEMALE No, it was better. It was better.

DM Who's been given opportunities in previous campaigns to rise to the levels?

FEMALE That's right.

> But I think it's critical that we change politics in this country and we don't think about people and talk about people in the ways that we, frankly, are comfortable doing in Washington.
>
> —Cecile Richards

DM: I think Hillary has done a tremendous amount to bring women into prominent positions in her campaigns where the other candidates have not worked—have not done as well for whatever reasons. I think Hillary has set a new standard.

CR I think that's another residual benefit of this campaign. I think it was alluded to by Ellen, and if I could just say, too, EMILY's List has done more to recruit, train, and promote not just women candidates, but women in the political process. And I mean, if you look around at the campaigns that are being run today, there are EMILY's List veterans in every single campaign. So, it's enormously important not only that we promote candidates, but we promote women who actually are involved in elections. And I think that—I'll tell you, at Planned Parenthood I'm already the beneficiary of several of our staff who left the staff to go work with Senator Clinton who have now returned back as seasoned political operatives. And there is going to be an entire class of Clinton '08 campaign staff who will change the face, I hope, of democratic party politics.

AB Question over here?

FEMALE Sure. Well, thank you all for sharing your time with us this morning. I want to direct this question to Andrea. The question I have is, does your experience covering this campaign and the results of our collective national experience, suggest to you that something about political reporting needs to change? Even more specifically, could it be done in a way that might speak to women more? I'm thinking, for example, well, first I'm thinking about the strange distortion I'm hearing, but secondly, I'm thinking about Politico, which was one of the sites to emerge and seemingly was founded because of this campaign, and it

> I hope this is a transformational election, and I certainly know that women have a very important role in winning and turning this country around.
>
> —Ellen Malcolm

describes itself in some of its materials as having wanted to be the ESPN of political reporting. And I think of the horse races and the numbers, and I'm not sure that talking about things that way talks to women. Do you think that there is a need, and might there be a market for another way of talking about these things?

AB I think it's a question that contains its own answer, but, you know, obviously, I can't speak for all of the media. I can speak for what we try to do, which is to get into those policy issues. And I think that you're right. I mean, one of the things I found on the campaign trail, so fascinating, was that people, Hillary Clinton would give these incredibly long policy speeches. And, you know, she—on the last few days before the New Hampshire primary, she'd have these big events and people would ask her questions, and she would go on for two hours—two hours answering questions. And people would leave. It was the weekend, people had obligations, and I asked one of her press people, isn't it kind of strange to spend two hours answering these little, sometimes little, sometimes big, but over and over policy questions? And it was fascinating because people loved that level of policy detail. I mean, they really loved it and for all the acrimony that has sort of come out in this campaign and that is obviously present now, one of the things that I have found fascinating is that when you go to the voters, people really are engaged in policy this year in a way I never have seen it. I heard people talking about universal mandate versus non-universal mandate on health care; on this issue of meeting with diplomatic leaders with no preconditions on sort of global warming policies.

So, I think there is a level of engagement. I think it is something that appeals to some groups of women. But interestingly, the people that were most comforted by the level of policy detail didn't seem to be the sort of highly educated voters that you would expect. In fact, it was probably the people without high school educations that I spoke to that somehow seemed most comforted by the sort of what sometimes seemed mind-numbing policy detail. And I think one of the great benefits of the internet is that everybody has these policy papers now on the internet and they're there. So, I think there's an opening for more kinds of policy discussions. And discussions in interesting ways, not just sort of so and so thinks this, and so and so thinks that, but sort of really getting underneath it.

So, it has been—I mean, in some ways you wouldn't know it, but in some ways this campaign, I think, has been a victory for those of us who are interested in policy.

FEMALE A vignette that's really fresh and a question will follow. The vignette will be short. This weekend I was in a suburb of Philadelphia in South Jersey; Morristown, as a matter of fact, charming little place, lots of plaques on the buildings about the year the building was built, etc., etc. They were having a street fair and I got to speak to a woman who's a retired nurse midwife, who was selling crafts. And I gently probed to find out where she is in terms of the election, and this is what she said, that McCain never left his men, who were prisoners of war, and this was really an important quality of character. And then I said, well, you were a nurse midwife. I'm not sure where that places you in terms of women's choice, and she said, "I'm pro-choice." And I said, "You know, things can really be at risk. Look at the people on the Supreme Court." And she said in a really firm voice, like almost digging her heels in, "They'll never take that away from us." And I said, "Don't be so sure."

So, short conversation, I don't know a lot about this person. I'm going to be involved this fall doing everything I can to get a democrat in the White House. If this conversation continued longer, what would you say to people who have their flags out very proudly in these small towns—and I'm not going to make fun of the flag one way or the other—but people who don't seem to understand what is at stake.

AB Cecile, do you want to take that?

CR I think it's a conversation. I don't think these are—and I think that's why it's important that, as you did, this conversation begins now. I think Senator John McCain, that is the one thing people know about him. And other than that, it's pretty much they think he's a maverick and that they know he was a POW. And so I think it's really important to begin to fill the picture. And that's what we have found with women, is that and not in a—I mean, in just a very factual way. We have a fundamental sort of disagreement about women's health, and I think there is a way to have that conversation. And what we have found at Planned

Parenthood is that when you begin that conversation it really opens women's eyes to having more information about John McCain, but it's not always a one-shot deal. It's why, too, though, this conversation has to start now.

Because the other thing we know about this whole basket of issues—Roe, women's health care, birth control—is that once people find out how far out of touch John McCain is on those issues, it opens up a whole other set of questions for them about how much they really know about him, and how prepared he is to be President now. Not that he didn't do wonderful things in his past and was a great leader for his men, but that is he prepared to be President right now, given how out of touch he is on some of the challenges of women today?

So, I appreciate you starting the conversation in Pennsylvania. It's one we need to have over the next several months.

FEMALE And the flip side of it, though, is my friends down in the D.C. area with, you know, all kinds of advanced degrees and a poker group, who came on board for Obama because of his war position against Iraq and left Hillary in the dust a long time ago, and managed—one women in particular, my closest friend—managed to convert the whole poker group to Obama. So, we've got to keep that in mind.

AB We're almost out of time. So if you could both state your questions, we'll answer them both.

FEMALE Well, okay. I'd just like to state that I, I think that there was a ratcheting down, actually, of the media's treatment of women. So, even though it's a step forward in terms of a woman being a serious candidate for President, I think there should have been an adult somewhere to say that the coverage of women and the continual insulting, I mean, the only change I saw in the media coverage is that the cable news shows brought more women to come on and develop a lethal blow. So there was one nasty woman after another, and so I must say reading really insulting articles in The Nation, reading really terrible, the columnist in the New York Times, and even though women journalists are very much a minority, I must say they played no role in being the adult. Of course, they're not in power, but their roles were particularly bad, I thought, this session. And I, I feel sorry that any woman has to think that when they run for office they have to be in a world where all, there are no bars to a commentary toward them. So I must say that I think there's a ratcheting down of the media treatment.

And one last comment. Early on in the campaign, in the primary campaign, I saw a video, very well produced, very slick, I think it was last fall, of this big woman, corporate sort of plastic figure, being destroyed by people in the audience. I don't know how many people saw that, but I think it was almost a Freudian undertone toward much of the campaign of sort of, get mother, and it was encouraged. And as I, again, to go back, there was no adult saying no. And I think that Dean should have commented on the media. I think there were any number of people who could have commented.

AB Okay, you know. Thank you. Let's take the other comment. Thank you very much, because I think we are actually overtime, so.

FEMALE This is a question that I hoped somebody would ask, but since nobody did, I was also horrified by the misogyny displayed in the media, but as a feminist who's against the war, I felt like I was being put in a very difficult position, and I'm a little surprised that the panel didn't address this at all because gender, I'm sure, played a big role, but the vote on the war and the fueling of that vote in subsequent statements left a lot of us unsatisfied.

DM Yeah.

APPLAUSE

DM I think there's no question that, again, the mistakes, the reason that Hillary Clinton lost are complicated, and clearly her vote on the war and her subsequent defense of that and her sort of slow evolution—she never apologized as John Edwards did—her slow evolution to sort of a more acceptable to the party-based position left a lot of people feeling, like you said, unsatisfied. I don't think there's any question that that was a significant factor in, you know, her campaign, and you know, she got—I think she ultimately got beyond it, but it was very damaging around February when the campaign was ultimately, in many ways, lost.

CR I also just think that the campaign changed a lot. I mean, in Iowa it was very much about the war. By the time the race got to Pennsylvania, it was all about the economy.

FEMALE Right.

CR And so there was a sense in which it was a very big dynamic earlier on in the race, but it sort of lessened in importance to the democratic base.

EM It was a primary election, and in that, people of very common values and viewpoints in many, many, ways split among candidates. That's what it's all about. That's why we have this process. But I do think at the end we were all tremendously impressed by the democratic field, particularly our two finalists, and I think that—I know for EMILY's List, we have members that supported Senator Obama.

I respect that decision. I think we're all going to come together. I think the Clinton people are going to go through their process of healing and that we are going to unify behind Barack Obama and the democrats because we've had many, many, many, too many years of George W. Bush and the republicans. I hope this is a transformational election, and I certainly know that women have a very important role in winning and turning this country around.

APPLAUSE

FH Let me try and wrap up for a moment. One, this is going to be a long and a frequent conversation this fall and in the years to come. Seventy percent of our students are women; one of the reasons I thought this was an important panel discussion to have today. So first I just want to thank our—let's give a round of applause to our panel.

APPLAUSE

FEMALE Thank you.

APPLAUSE

FH I didn't realize fully the lack of diversity in hair color until I sat in the audience. I also just want to say a couple of thank yous. I want to thank Molly Watkins of Glover Park, who really helped me conceive and organize this. We have a few of our Board members here: Susan Halpern, Anne Hess, Emily Youssouf, and Sally Minard, so I want to thank them for their support.

APPLAUSE

FH And when I looked at the audience, I realized when I walked onstage I added to the proportion of men. I increased it by about 20 or 15% by my just showing up onstage. I want to thank the men for the courage to join us today.

APPLAUSE

FH And the men who support women candidates, I will tell you, over the weekend I was up in Cambridge. It was my partner's 25th reunion from college, and we had lunch with a couple. They're both in their 80's, and his wife, Neitza, told me this—I promised I would give her credit—that today is also a Jewish holiday and today is Shavuot, and it's a festival and in many ways it's the beginning of the Jewish religion, and it all started with Moses receiving the tablets. So I would submit that part of the issue and part of the problem we're having today is the person who received those tablets was a man. Had a woman received those tablets in the Bible, we might be having a very different discussion. So thank you for joining us. Have a great day, and thanks for coming this morning.

PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES

Andrea Bernstein is the WNYC Political Director. Since joining the station in 1998, Bernstein has covered national, local, and state politics extensively. She's reported on Hillary Clinton since rumors began of a New York Senate race (including the short-lived senate race against Rudy Giuliani) and has covered City Hall extensively during both the Giuliani and Bloomberg administrations.

Her work has been honored with numerous prestigious awards, including the 2003 Investigative Reporters and Editors prize for radio, the 2003 Heyward Broun Award, the 2003 Society for Professional Journalists award, for her series, with Amy Eddings, on New York's "Handshake Hotels for the Homeless."

Fred P. Hochberg was dean of Milano The New School for Management and Urban Policy from 2004–08. Dean Hochberg has had more than 30 years of experience in business, government, and philanthropy. From 1998 through 2001, he served as deputy then acting administrator of the Small Business Administration (SBA). Prior to joining the Clinton administration, he was president and chief operating officer of the Lillian Vernon Corporation, where he led the transformation of a small family mail order company into a publicly traded direct marketing corporation. He has served on numerous civic and charitable boards including the Citizens Budget Commission, FINCA International Micro Finance, Fusion Communications, Seedco, and the Howard Gilman Foundation, and is an appointed representative to the NYS Financial Control Board.

Ellen Malcolm founded EMILY's List, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping pro-choice Democratic female candidates win political elections on the federal, state, and local levels. "EMILY" is an acronym for Early Money Is Like Yeast (it makes dough rise). The list has contributed to the successful campaigns of at least 11 senators, 55 congresswomen and 7 governors. There are currently some 85,000 members of EMILY's List.

Malcolm is also the former president of Americans Coming Together (ACT), a voter-registration activist group intent on "harnessing the passion, energy and commitment of millions of Americans who reject the extremist policies of George W. Bush and his right-wing conservative allies across the nation."

Dee Dee Myers is a political analyst, commentator, and writer. Her most recent book is *Why Women Should Rule the World*. She is a contributing editor to *Vanity Fair*, a lecturer on politics and current events, and was a consultant to NBC's *The West Wing*. Myers served as White House Press Secretary under President Clinton from 1993 until 1994, and became the first woman and the youngest person ever to hold that position. After leaving the White House, she co-hosted the CNBC talk show *Equal Time*. Before joining the Clinton campaign in 1991, Myers worked on a variety of local, state, and national campaigns.

Cecile Richards is president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) and the Planned Parenthood Action Fund. Over the course of her career, she has become a nationally recognized progressive leader and a fierce advocate for reproductive health and rights. Since coming to Planned Parenthood in February 2006, Ms. Richards has led the organization to many significant achievements, including its success in ensuring FDA approval of over-the-counter status for emergency contraception, and the launch of a nationwide campaign to provide comprehensive, medically accurate sex education for all young people in America.

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