

T.O. Remarks after Sheila's – Making Waves for Democracy, 7/16/23

I remember vividly my Dad telling me in the 1960s when I was a teenager that the John Birch Society wanted to undo the New Deal. For my liberal Democratic father in those days, the Birchers were a stand-in for the then-marginalized ultra-Right wing. And back then, rolling back the New Deal seemed impossible. But, as I'm reminded daily by historian Heather Cox Richardson, TODAY, that ultra-Right has taken over the Republican Party and their targets include everything that I and the movements I've been part of have fought for these past 50 years. PLUS the New Deal.

So let's talk about the Supreme Court – and what we can do to change that shockingly corrupt, unethical, and reactionary body (except hope you all read the DISSENTS by Justices Brown Jackson and Kagan – they were things of beauty!)

1. Court expansion!

Last week I attended a Courage Campaign convening on the SCOTUS rulings, and I learned that there's not a shortage of solutions; there is a shortage of ACTION. I was introduced to a new coalition group UNITED FOR DEMOCRACY which already has 100 partners; Their mission is to push Congress to expand the court, an “existential fight” in the words of their spokesperson. She said that because the Court is seen as the QUOTE “mystical, magical, untouchable branch” of government, Congress needs to be pushed. BUT it is entirely within its power to expand the federal courts, as it has done 30 times since 1891. But over the past three decades, there has been NO expansion, while in that time, the US population has grown by a third – and has become far more diverse ethnically. So, the Courts are NOT diverse and are super clogged up – And, there should be more judges AND a bigger

Supreme Court. There should be 13 Federal Circuits (not including DC), and, paralleling that, 13 SCOTUS members.

2. Coalition building!

The range of recent Rightwing rulings – including last year’s horrific abortion and gun rights decisions -- by this Supreme Court creates the opportunity to link arms across communities affected: young people affected by the ruling against Biden on student debt, particularly Black and Brown young folks affected by affirmative action; women enraged about the repeal of Roe v Wade, gun safety advocates, the LGBTQ community up in arms about the outrageous “303 Creative” decision (and the anti-trans hatred spreading across the land). This is a time to connect with people whose issue might be different from your own but just as closely held!

3. And our electoral work is SO important!

As Sheila said, first and foremost, we must work harder than ever to TAKE BACK THE HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES – A blue trifecta in Washington is essential to moving anything in a progressive direction.

That means that our work at Making Waves for Democracy is vital!

As the Associated Press said last week: QUOTE “The path to the House majority in 2024 will run through California’s competitive swing districts like CA-27”.

I joined others from Making Waves who went up to East Palmdale (in CA-27) in the blazing heat a couple weeks ago to talk to voters. My team stood outside a Vallarta store – my commadres included Xiomara! And both spoke Spanish!....And together, we must have talked to 50+ voters – yes, some folks were visitors to the area, and some were undocumented, but **the vast majority of the people we talked to were Democrats and open to our message about MAGA Mike Garcia being too extreme for the district.** Importantly, I saw for

myself that it did not matter we didn't have a candidate to push! Many had voted for Garcia without knowing his Trumpist politics, but what struck me most was that the word is getting out about him being MAGA – I was also struck by the positive response to my righteous anger about him. It reminded me of 2017, tapping into the fierce anti-Trump emotion, and it made me very optimistic about getting rid of MAGA Mike and flipping that seat.

And, of course, we MUST HOLD CA-47 – Katie Porter's seat -- which you'll learn more about next....

So, to begin our dive into all things OC, I want to bring up our lead for Orange County, whom I've known through nonprofit circles for a long time. She's a resident of Irvine, and a new member of our leadership team. Over to you, Regina Birdsell!