

Yeah so for me this was a series of small decisions that kind of led in this direction. And people say don't dip your toe into something, you might get pulled all the way into the water. And that's what happened here, I sort of got sucked in over time. So right after the election in 2016, the night of the election, I decided I was going to do something. And I didn't know what, I just wanted to do something, I wanted to have an impact and have the biggest impact that I could. So I took a few days, a few weeks, and watched things other people were doing and talked to my friends, I gave my small donations here and there to different organizations. I watched the planning for the Women's March that I thought was really inspiring and a great idea, but I decided Congress is where it's at, this is where we can really push back and make a difference and stand up for our rights in the short term, in the medium term.

Pretty quickly I came back to thinking about our representative here, Tom McClintock. I said, you know, I looked at the data, I think he really is vulnerable, he doesn't represent our values, he doesn't do anything for this region, he's accomplished nothing for us in ten years. The main reason he keeps getting reelected is because people don't run against him in an effective way. So I said alright that's a difference I can make, that's a place where I can have an impact. So my goal was actually to recruit someone else to run for the seat so I started talking to people and the trouble was that, especially as of early 2017, this was viewed as a very hard race. So you have these districts across the country where, because it's seen as an uphill battle, it's very difficult to recruit qualified candidates. And then because you don't have qualified candidates or people who start early enough and really build up the apparatus you need, then they lose elections and it becomes even more difficult to recruit someone in the next cycle.

It was starting to happen again, it was very difficult to get someone to want to do this and I actually got to the point of talking to a lot of educators; I was talking to one of my former high school teachers about it, trying to get him to run, and he flipped around and said "no, you should actually run. You've got the local roots, you've got the national experience. You should consider doing this." And he wrote me a very persuasive letter; and he's a journalism teacher, so you don't want him trying to convince you to do something because he's pretty good at it. But I actually said no, I said that's crazy, no, that's not what I'm looking to do, I'm looking to find someone else.

But then it was a few days later that I went to a town hall meeting where our current representative Tom McClintock was there, he was talking to a whole gymnasium full of hundreds of people. I mean, overall I was shocked by the way he treated people. My own mom asked him a question about pre-existing conditions and he was really dismissive toward her. But then it was really that there was a twelve year old girl that was there. And she stood up and asked him a question, she asked him, she basically said, "during the election you supported Donald Trump, you defended the language he uses and his behavior toward women," (which by the way McClintock did, he actually issued a statement essentially apologizing for his performance on the Access Hollywood video), so she said, "you apologized for him, you supported him, what are you going to do for me as a young woman to make sure that my rights and security are guaranteed?" I thought that was an excellent question. All he said back to her was, "well, I believe Donald Trump did some things that were disrespectful, and that was many years ago and he since apologized." That was it! Everyone was being completely polite, waiting for the rest of his answer, and there was no rest of the answer. She even kind of gestured at him, like, "and, and?" He just wouldn't give her the time of day, he shrugged at her, he smirked at her, and then he just waved his person along with the microphone. I thought it was outrageous, because her whole question was about being valued in society and being respected and all he did was disrespect her. So I went up to her after the event was over, and was like, "look, you asked a great question, I just wanted to let you know that everyone here really values you and that you were doing something important by asking that question and I thought it was unacceptable the way he treated you."

That was what pushed me over the edge. So that was when I went and made my very first website, I used a tool called "CROWDPAC," which makes it easy for normal people to start running for office, without having the infrastructure, or consultants, or anybody working for you at the time, so I really encourage people to check that out. I just made a site that afternoon and that evening based on what I felt and saw from the town hall. It went viral in our district really quickly, thousands of people viewed it in the first 24 hours, people donated thousands of dollars, people I didn't even know, people started writing really positive comments and were really excited about the campaign. That was how it got started, it was really out of that outpouring of local support and grassroots support, all growing from my high school teacher and from that one town hall.