

Moving Forward One Stiletto at a Time

Lessons Learned from the 2008 Election: Why Women Matter?

RightNOW kicked off to a great year with their inaugural event, "Moving Forward One Stiletto at a Time, *Lessons Learned from the 2008 Election: Why Women Matter?*" breakfast panel at the Capitol Hill Club in Washington, DC on February 24, 2009.



The event's esteemed panelists included **Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers** (R-WA-05); **Kellyanne Conway**, CEO and President of the polling company, inc/WomanTrends; **Mindy Finn**, co-founder, Engage and most recently the former director of online strategy for Mitt Romney for President; and **Susan Molinari**, Senior Principal of Bracewell & Giuliani and former congresswoman. Susan also served as the panel's moderator.

With a turnout of over 65 people, the panel and RightNOW attendees discussed the impact of President Obama's e-campaign towards the women electorate. Moreover, the discussion was focused on how the Republican Party needs to win back the women vote.

"Politics is not toothpaste," Kellyanne Conway stated early in the discussion. She explained the "women electorate will not buy it if they do not need it,

and we need to give women a reason to buy our brand of toothpaste."

Some eye-opening statistics that Kellyanne Conway provided included the fact that over the past forty years or so, a majority of women identify themselves as Democrats, but in seven out of eleven times, they will cross party lines when it comes to voting for President. In the 2008 election, married women voted for McCain by three points; unmarried women between the ages of 18-29 voted for Obama by 55 points.

In regards to fundraising, Mindy Finn pointed out that Obama raised 800 million, 500 million of that was through online avenues; compared to McCain who raised 300 million and 20 million of that was raised on the Internet. Mindy also raised the issue of women engaging in new media (Facebook, Twitter, blogging, etc.). She stated that we need to use our relationships to bring women over to the other side. "Our political views are a part of who we are, so why would we not share that through new media mediums," she explained.

Overall, the panel agreed that the Republican Party needs to get away from specific and focus on common themes, which should include: **Security, Affordability, Opportunity, and Optimism.**

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