

Torie's TTRR opening remarks 1/28/18

WELCOME -- This is our one-year anniversary! 9 months to go to save democracy!.....And we're gonna do it!

- HOW MANY of you marched in Women's March ??? (more later on that!)
- How many are BRAND NEW to Team TO Resist and Rise today?
- How many came to Vegas for Hillary in fall 2016 with us?
- How many have come to one or more of our monthly meetings?

For those of you who are new, TEAM TO RESIST AND RISE is one of the many pop-up Resistance groups — We believe in what I call the 3 As: ANALYSIS, ALLIES, ACTION — learning together, collaborating, and ACTION for change....We focus on two ACTIONS -- Canvassing in and Grassroots fundraising for TWO of the 5 So CA flippable districts, CD 25 and 49/48.... we PARTNER with SEA CHANGE — Karen Bass' Political Action Committee

I need to speak personally for a moment.

Trump blew up my life's plan. As some of you know, from 2007 – 2012, I had the hardest 5 years of my life: a brutal divorce that broke my heart and threatened my financial security, the death of my beloved father, then my little sister was diagnosed and died of melanoma in 6 months, and finally I unexpectedly lost my Assembly race by less than 1% in the primary. 4 body blows that flattened me --

The healing came slowly, through my friends, of course — through helping Sheila Kuehl get elected County Supervisor in 2014, my sister's elder daughter Leah moving to LA and smack into my life. I EMBRACED a new chapter with an interesting job at the County, an emphasis on mentoring, and after 50 years of nonstop political organizing, I saw the opportunity for a different pace & focus for my life, to FINALLY create the time and space for my deferred dream -- to write my memoir. After 50 years of activism, in my mid-60s, I was ready to turn my life's energies toward reflection and spirituality. Tired of fighting, and ready for writing, I said. The Hillary campaign would be my last burst of activism for a while — so I threw myself into it and actually was surprised to find how much it was grist for that memoir mill — it reconnected me with my youth, my first Women's Liberation meetings in NY, then my own first experiences of learning organizing, of leadership at college. I couldn't wait for 2017 for that new phase of life: rest, reflection, writing.....

Instead of course Election Day brought shock and horror — the daily poison of 45. On a personal level, over the past year my version of "Trump Trauma" is: I have felt stunted, intellectually disabled -- unable to even access my own strengths -- -- I have experienced myself as alternately MUTE — literally lacking words — or SO FULL OF RAGE as to be entirely dysfunctional. My Blood Pressure has gone through the roof! Then there's the weight gain.... But for me, the hardest was that the very tools that I had developed and counted on over 50 years of my core identity as an activist were BROKEN -- my passion, my strategic analysis and vision, my clarity of purpose, sense of calling....Particularly WORDS. GONE! I used to be able to give speeches easily and well — and I've had 3 golden opportunities this past year and gone dark.

I even started a writing group so I could write that memoir. Nada, NO WORDS. Of course, like so many victims of trauma, AT FIRST I BLAMED MYSELF: It's my AGE! My faculties are failing in my 60s. Or, I'm not in the right job....but of course – this is a mass phenomenon -- it's 45 – he crushed my dreams, along with so many others' with so much less privilege than I have....

I tell you this because today I need to thank you from the bottom of my heart....because YOU are the reason I'm not curled in a ball of despair or consumed by rage to a point of complete dysfunction. Even stumbling and stunted, I've been able to feel useful because of having to show up for YOU– and I MUST give a special thanks to my co-leaders – Core Organizing Group – I've never in my lifetime relied so heavily on a group of people – Please stand and accept my gratitude – YOU have held me, borne the brunt of my anger sometimes, accepted my shortcomings, and helped me heal...BARRIE, LINDA, MARLEY, TRACY, JEANETTE P., JEANNETTE B., KATE C., JENNY, BLANCA (AND KATE A AND MELANIE AND KAREN ARE NOT HERE TODAY....)

Which leads me to SHARE ONE FINAL PERSONAL THING – A RECENT moment of grace and clarity that has helped me to BEGIN to find my voice and vision again.....

In late November was driving one Sunday morning North along PCH – the beautiful blue Pacific Ocean on my left -- Walt Whitman's term for the ocean -- “endlessly rocking “ --danced in my head-- and I suddenly felt my body relax, and experienced a moment of letting go -- and this odd thought crawled across my brain for the first time: THIS WAS MEANT TO BE. Trump was meant to be. America needed this to smash our complacency, for democracy to come alive in order for truth, fairness and freedom to rise again. All these thoughts I hadn't dared to entertain suddenly came rushing forward....Our backlash to THEIR backlash to OUR victories in the 60s and 70s was NECESSARY!

Until that moment – even here at TTRR – I felt like I was sleepwalking – But in the past month, I've snapped out of that surrealistic dream – From that moment of clarity, an unexpected idea has taken root and grown sure and sturdy and strong:

This current moment of #MeToo/Time'sUp or the uprising against Nazis marching last summer - would never have happened with my President Hillary Clinton!Everything is exactly as it's meant to me....

So. Here's my message today. I don't know when I'll write that fabulous memoir about my 50 years of activism – BUT it'll have an interesting new chapter! I now am again guided by political FAITH -- my vision is getting less blurred – my words are coming back.

Painful as it's been, America needed this moment of reckoning. A moment of reckoning with racism and white supremacy, long with us. With sexism. With radical economic inequality. With the very meaning of democracy. Remember, 45% of the electorate did NOT EVEN vote last November. What we are part of here today – with every doorknock in CD 25, with every ticket sold to our grassroots fundraisers – is this rising Blue Tsunami that is OUR ONLY hope for the

future. 9 months to save democracy and get back on track again.....And we can do it. We ARE doing it!

We embrace our 3 As that guide us:

Our ANALYSIS

1. Remember always we are the not just the majority of 54% that did NOT vote for 45 – we are part of a SUPER majority – 66% of America believes in decency, fairness, economic opportunity, a pathway to citizenship for immigrants (80% support DACA kids!), choice, science and environmental sanity, voting rights, commonsense gun safety laws, marriage equality.. ..E Pluribus Union! Not a tax bill with 82% going to the top 1%!
2. The Republican Party is NOT the center-Right party of the past. It has become a corrupt host body for its most RADICAL extremist RIGHT wing—whose endgame is to destroy democracy as the ideal we strive for – to install government of, by and for the 1%..... Read Nancy MacLean’s “Invisible Chains” – the Koch Brothers OWN the Repub party now; they have ALL 3 federal branches of power, most statehouses and governorships, and are only 2 states away from a Constitutional Convention!

AND WE WILL! LOOK AT WHAT HAS BEEN UNLEASHED!

Our ALLIES are many!

Look at what TTRR is part of! This civic uprising of unprecedented energy. 4.2 million marched last weekend! Proliferation of thousands of new groups we have active links to: Code Blue, Indivisible, revitalized Dem Clubs or new ones like Heart of LA. SEA CHANGE, our primary partner – understanding BOTH the need to work with the Democratic party AND to lead it through grassroots organizing, organizing, organizing...

AND the active linkage to vital social movements for racial and economic justice – Black Lives Matter, Dreamers, Labor movement. And of course this new American movement for democracy is led by WOMEN of all colors.....!

ACTION we are doing

- The culture YOU have made here – Respect, Empower, Include – Lead from LOVE not ego – focus on and feed the positive not the negative....Having a FAITH in democracy...
- NOTHING IS AS IMPORTANT as TAKING BACK THE HOUSE – there are 5 flippable seats here in So Ca – we focus like laser on 2 – raising early money and voter engagement....
- Smashing the conventional wisdom and focusing on VOTER engagement over paid media – TTRR has been doorknocking for 9 months! Give yourselves a hand: 7 trips over 9 months, over 150 people walking. Early doorknocking is how we will WIN!

- Welcome to 2018, folks! We may ADD OTHER ACTIVITIES such as joining or launching text or phone banks as we get closer – to support the doorknocking....but we are on our way

Today – after a year of hell we’ve all been through I am clear that IF WE KEEP ON KEEPING ON, We WILL WIN in November – and beyond....create a post-Trump America with liberty and justice FOR ALL. I was blind but now I see – thank you for that AMAZING GRACE -- for restoring my faith and my vision – and slowly but steadily my words are even coming back to me.

THANK YOU!
