

Torie's remarks, December 8, 2019

My heart is full today. I truly hope I can convey something useful to you all because this is a time both of crisis and opportunity.

Welcome to our 30 Resister sibling-guests here today from 15 groups! Welcome to the 23rd meeting of Team TO Resist and Rise since we started in early 2017 – you'll hear more later about what we do....

This week has been tumultuous. I worry I'm ever more sensitive to the velocity and intensity of the Republican evil.... It's wearing on my soul: ** Another child died in detention. And over 700,000 people tossed off food stamps while we learn how many corporations paid NO taxes last year...then to lift us all – IMPEACHMENT HEARINGS and that BADASS Nancy Pelosi once again proved herself to be our greatest woman warrior in DC. She slayed that right wing predator pretending to be a journalist. And I – recovering Catholic! - even liked that she prays for Trump!

...It's been an emotional rollercoaster for so many of us and that just seems WRONG as we head toward the Holidays – a time of healing and peace – You know I was born in Copenhagen, so this former Dane embraces the wonderful Danish concept for COZINESS, the warmth of the hearth.: HYGGE. This Holiday is our last chance to replenish before 2020 and the electoral fight of our lives...

Then I read Katie Hill's astonishing and MUST-READ op-ed in today's *New York Times*. If you haven't read it – you must, and if you saw it online, read it again. And again. And again. This is one brave and instructive piece – and inspiring and important!

Katie's piece tells the story of how one woman showed she can move beyond her own dark night of the soul, beyond the despair that drove her to the edge of suicide – and then back-- because of her

connection to and responsibility for ...well, US -- all of us who believed in her. The bonds we created saved her. The support we gave her, thousands of us who worked our hearts out for her, somehow cut through the ugly attacks that flattened her and threatened her life.

Now, I've devoted my life to social change since my teenage years in the '60s, and over those 50 years, I've made an informal study of **SOCIAL MOVEMENTS** -I've learned a few things.

First, **WE ALWAYS WIN WHEN WE ORGANIZE** a big enough, bold enough social movement behind our idea for change. **ALWAYS.** And furthermore we **ALWAYS** hit 60% support by Americans-- **EVERY SINGLE** time we've **ORGANIZED**, built networks, leaders, coalitions, a real **ORGANIZED** movement – we've **WON. BIG.** This goes back to abolitionism and suffragism and the labor movement and that New Deal it spawned – When we rise up and get organized, we have an enduring impact on America. It sticks. As a result the good guys have transformed America – Think about it – In my youth between 1960 and 1975 three new progressive ideas took root -- and remember 15 years is the blink of an eye – Civil Rights, Feminism, Environmentalism – all radical new ideas that won over America – and then inspired more civic activism -- more successful progressive movements – Chicano/UFW, disability rights, API empowerment, LGBTQ, and then in more recent years **Black Lives Matter**, criminal justice reform, immigrant rights, and the other economic and racial justice movements still active today. A full 90% of Americans believe in commonsense gun safety laws and environmental protections. And though we're only at 49% on Transgender rights cause that's still an emerging movement -- I have no doubt that we'll hit 60% support soon. (Even radical ideas on the left such as the wealth tax have 60% support!)

When we organize we win! Meanwhile the **RIGHT MARCHES ON**, steamrolling our majority will through raw political power.

How did this happen?

My generation's BIGGEST ERROR was to disdain ELECTORAL power. Because the Vietnam war was brought to us by Democrats, we grassroots activists were deeply cynical about ELECTORAL POLITICS. Our faith was in PEOPLE not POLITICAL PARTIES. Yes, some of us VOTED but we did NOT think the Democratic Party was our party. Remember the slogan "PART OF THE WAY WITH LBJ"?

So while our social movements steadily rose up to win over America's hearts and minds, the Right-wing backlash to our progressive ideas took over the apparatus of political power – via the Republican Party – (There was even a debate among right wing leaders in the early 70s about whether to take over the Democratic power because of its racist Southern base.....)

Today's Republicans have no interest in democracy. In equality. In Liberty and Justice for all. And Trump is not the cause of this Republican evil but the right fascist at the right time. They advance their agenda of inequality, white supremacy, misogyny and counter-revolution on every front with him distracting us with his madness. That's why they stick with him.

But, since the Jan 2017 Women's March-- that 60% majority is FINALLY doing what must be done: Rising up. Reinvigorating the Democratic party, owning it as the necessary political vehicle to house the promise of America to be the world's first great multi racial democracy....As we see with CLIMATE CHANGE and GUN SAFETY, public opinion is meaningless without political power!

Our Big Blue Wave in 2018 was extraordinary. And 2019 too across the land... And if we do our work well, we will do even better in 2020.

WE MUST SUSTAIN that synergy, momentum, dynamism of our electoral social movement – until we win the US Senate and the White House in 2020, and statehouses across the country.

There is a cautionary tale here: My only previous experience of the

power of an electoral campaign becoming a social movement was Obama for America in 2008. BUT that extraordinary civic revolution that was the Obama campaign was NOT sustained once he won. After 2008, we went home. And in 2010 – the Right wing, organizing for decades, far more able to mobilize its minority of reactionary voters when we let down our guard – beat the crap out of us -- the Tea Party took over Congress – and during the Obama years that evil RedMap project focused on jerrymandering and voter suppression and basically leveraged political power everywhere. 900 statehouse seats flipped red. LOOK AT THE COURTS. Today we are in danger of permanent minority rule by the anti gay/anti feminist/anti union/anti immigrant/racist Christian evangelical movement THAT AT MOST REPRESENTS a third of America.

FINALLY, and this brings me to today:

The horrors we all experience every day have one antidote: I know from the depths of the AIDS epidemic that

The ONLY way we sustain the energy of our Big Blue Wave – our contemporary and powerful sweeping social movement -- is to acknowledge and construct what Dr. King called A BELOVED COMMUNITY. We don't have to LIKE everyone on our side but we **MUST WORK TOGETHER** – and NOT let them divide us. And, we must find those among our new comrades/colleagues to whom we feel connected, who allow our best selves to emerge – who allow us each to move beyond ego ...and create our affinity groups/our “beloved community.” As Katie Hill knows, that is what will lift us.

We do this through **RITUAL – FOOD – SONG – CELEBRATING OUR VICTORIES** – taking time to care about each other and to connect!

We are entering a dangerous time – the media, old cultural habits, the Right, the Russians, **EVERYTHING** will try to divide us – I've been horrified by the attack mode in the Democratic primary – I've even found myself getting sucked in and having to delete FaceBook posts – **NOW IS A TIME TO NOT SPLIT INTO WARRING FACTIONS** – but even as we disagree – **WE MUST** stay connected.

At the end of her long op ed, Katie Hill quotes her own powerful last speech in front of the House – its final words:

“We will not stand down. We will not be broken. We will not be silenced. We will rise, and we will make tomorrow better than today...”

AND THEN SHE SAYS in this new piece:

“I meant that not just for myself, but for all of us....”

There’s the lesson for today!

Onward, friends! Let’s learn about each other’s work and then let’s party.

30-30-30. December 8, 2019, TORIE OSBORN for Team TO Resist & Rise!