



**Podcast:** *Swing Left - How We Win*

**Title:** "How We Get Started with Emiliana Guereca"

**Interviewer:** Steve Pierson (SP) and Mariah Craven (MC)

**Interviewee:** Emiliana Guereca (EG)

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[Start Intro Music]

**Steve Pierson:** Welcome to Episode Two of *How We Win*.

**Mariah Craven:** The run-up to the 2020 election is going to be riveting and every week we're sharing stories from the field.

**SP:** All over the country, ordinary people are doing extraordinary things. We'll give you the tools you need to jump in and make a difference right now.

**MC:** On today's episode, Steve has a conversation with the Founder and Executive Director of Women's March Los Angeles, Emiliana Guereca. She has an incredible story that starts as an undocumented immigrant living in the Chicago projects, and culminates with her helping to organize 700,000 people in the streets of LA, and working to help win Democratic victories all over the country.

**SP:** Then you're going to hear about the North Carolina special election this Tuesday, September 10, and how we can help flip a 41st Congressional seat. I'm Steve Pearson.

**MC:** And I'm Mariah Craig,

**SP/MC:** and this is *How We Win*.

[End Intro Music]

**MC:** Hey, Steve.

**SP:** Hey, Mariah. Here we are Episode Two.

**MC:** Episode Two.

**SP:** Really excited.

**MC:** Labor Day, come and gone.

**SP:** Yes.

**MC:** Summer's overish.

**SP:** Summer is pretty much over. Kids are back in school.

**MC:** Usually, official start to campaign season, which is always exciting.

**SP:** Yeah. It's no longer about early organizing. It's everyone needs to be in this, doing it right now.

**MC:** Yeah. And there are people who are doing it. We're going to talk about a special election that's coming up.

**SP:** North Carolina. Looking to flip our 41st seat. The midterms actually aren't over yet. We have one more congressional seat to flip.

**MC:** Yeah, one thing that might impact that election is actually hurricane Dorian, which is, as of right now has been really devastating. And also concerned for people on the East Coast that look to be in its path.

**SP:** We're thinking about everyone who's being affected by it. And it's always a good time to talk about the direct and obvious effect that climate change is having on these super storms that we're seeing that get worse and worse every year. We have record breaking catastrophic storms that are direct result of climate change.

**MC:** Absolutely. The warming, rising waters are without a doubt impacting both the size and intensity of the storms, as well as the devastation and havoc that they wreak in their wake. And, I know we have a lot of climate change deniers in leadership right now.

**SP:** We do.

**MC:** It's really hard to understand what they're thinking.

**SP:** Yeah.

**MC:** This is a surprise for Donald Trump.

**SP:** Yeah, never heard it. Never heard of a cat five. Except for the, I don't know, 15, 20 times that he's talked about it over the last few years.

**MC:** Yeah. You know, who's calling him out on this, though, is Greta Thunberg, who's in the States after a boat trip across the Atlantic so that she wouldn't release any carbon emissions.

**SP:** Tell everyone who Greta Thunberg is, who doesn't know who she is, because she's spectacular.

**MC:** She's pretty impressive. She's a 16-year-old Swedish girl who just started skipping school on Fridays to protest climate change, raise awareness in Sweden. And as a result is now in the US where she's inspired other young people to do similar actions around the country on Fridays, and around the world. And she'll be speaking at the UN Climate Action Summit later this month.

**SP:** That's amazing.

**MC:** It's amazing. And it's the it's the perfect example of somebody looking at the world around them and saying, "What can I do," figuring it out, and inspiring others to do it.

**SP:** It's Greta Thunberg. Type her into YouTube, check out her video speech. I'm sure most of you have seen it, but it's incredibly compelling. She's awesome. People like Greta are going to save us all.

**MC:** Yeah, young people.

**SP:** Young people. You know, I purposely didn't say young people because I don't want to sound like really old like "These young people. They're going to save us."

**MC:** Kids today.

**SP:** The kids are going to do it. But it's true. Anyway, moving on to some more stuff that happened over the week, more mass shootings in Texas and Alabama, which is just more reason why we need to flip the Senate and get some politicians in there with the will to move forward on this great gun legislation that the House has already passed.

**MC:** Yeah, we talked about this last week with Congressmember Katie Hill, who shared a little bit of information about the bill that was passed in the House earlier this year, that of course, the Senate isn't even going to consider.

**SP:** Right.

**MC:** So there are moments like these, where we look back, where our descendants are going to look back and say, "What were they thinking? What were they thinking? Why? Why didn't they do anything?" And I think we've all had those moments where we look back on our country's history. But I think about Sandy Hook being one of those moments. And I think that August

2019, where 53 people were murdered and mass shootings is going to be one of those moments where we aren't doing enough. We're doing some things.

**SP:** It's going to boil down to taking back the Senate and having the majority there to get this legislation through, because Mitch McConnell refuses to bring any gun legislation to the floor. But, we just saw that Walmart's going to suspend their sales of handgun ammunition and they're going to stop selling handguns in Alaska, which is the last place they actually handguns. That's an incremental step, but kind of surprising to see from Walmart.

**MC:** Yeah, there was a mass shooting at a Walmart in Texas last month as everyone saw so tragic that that's what it takes to get a company to take action. But at least there's a baby step in the right direction. And I think as long as we do have leadership in the White House, in the Senate, that's so economically focused focused on the NRA, the change is going to have to come from the outside. So kudos to Walmart for taking that step.

**SP:** And to all the activists who have been pushing this to the forefront.

**MC:** Yeah.

**SP:** Presidential candidates who are all talking about it in no uncertain and strong terms. I'm looking at you, Beto and everyone else. I mean, this and climate change. Two things we've been talking about right now, are the existential issues to us and to the world right now.

**MC:** And the majority of voters want change in these areas.

**SP:** Yeah. Even Republicans. Background Check legislation is almost 90% favorable. It's like 85 to 90% favorable, don't quote me on the exact stat, but even among Republicans, even among NRA card holding Republicans, they want better background checks, they want safer schools and communities.

**MC:** Another reason for hope is that that Trump administration appears to be reversing a decision that would have deported immigrants who are here with medical emergency issues.

**SP:** Right. This just broke on Monday. And many people may have seen the story of this young woman, Maria Isabel Bueso, who is a Guatemalan woman who has a very rare disease that creates dwarfish and some abnormalities, and there's been an experimental treatment that has been saving her life, and has the potential to save other lives, because she's part of this program to test this drug. And the Trump administration was just going to send her back to Guatemala, where her doctor said she would certainly get sick and die.

**MC:** Wow.

**SP:** So because of the public outcry over this and the attention that it got, they have reversed their decision on this.

**MC:** Yeah, I think this is a really important point, because I believe that the administration had sent letters to a group of people who would have been impacted by this, that led them to believe that they had 33 days before they were going to be deported.

**SP:** They had to leave in 33 days or face deportation.

**MC:** Right. And, so thank you to all the people who spoke up on behalf of this group of people for whom deportation would have been a life or death decision.

**SP:** That's right. It happened by making this viral, by sharing these stories by you know. It just really blew up on Twitter and all that. So, we need to continue to highlight these stories and raise them up. Well, let's get started.

[Music]

**SP:** For today's interview, I sat down with our friend Emiliana Guereca, the Founder and Executive Director of Women's March, Los Angeles. Emmy, like myself, started organizing in the wake of the Trump election and ended up as the force behind the largest women's march in the country. Emmy, thank you for joining us. Let's start at the beginning. When did you first get started as an activist?

**Emiliana Guereca:** I think for me, I've always looked at activism as sort of a male space. Even as a young kid, right? I mean, I knew about Cesar Chavez before I knew about Dolores Huerta. I knew all about Martin Luther King, but not knowing about his wife. Not knowing about anything else out there. Rosa Parks, right? So I think I think for me, activism was sort of something men did. And but then moving into that space and not thinking, "Hey, this is unfair. There's a lot of women doing work, right?" And so I think, I think for me, activism started at a young age. And I didn't consider myself an activist. I just considered myself, as my mom would put it a complainer. I said, "What do you mean a complainer?" She said, "Well, you're always standing up. You're asking for equality. You're always asking." I lived in Chicago, and I lived in what people call the projects, Cabrini-Green.

**SP:** Okay.

**EG:** And, so I'm a first generation and I was born in Mexico. So I was born in Mexico. I didn't get to the states. So I was a little bit older.

**SP:** About how old?

**EG:** Close to 10.

**SP:** Close to 10?

**EG:** Yes, yes. We lived in the projects. We then wanted to move out of the projects and fair housing wasn't rental. They would ask us what like, what's your income? What's your immigration status? How many kids do you really have to my mom. She had 13.

**SP:** Oh my God. Wow.

**EG:** So we would we were fighting for Equal Housing; we were fighting for housing rights; we were fighting for employment. But, we didn't know that we were fighting, we just thought we were advocating and just wanting –

**SP:** Yeah, I was gonna ask you if your family was political, or they were just political by necessity.

**EG:** I think that when you grow up as a woman of color, as a kid of color, it's necessity. You are an activist, just by being born, because everything is so against you that you must fight for every inch of it, right? And you don't really know it as a kid. You don't know you're being an activist. But you do know that something's unfair. And that you're speaking up, right? So, my parents were not –

**SP:** But not everyone speaks up.

**EG:** Right. I think that's the problem. I think more of us need to speak up, right? But my parents were not activists. They didn't speak up, but their kids did. I know I did. I know my brothers did. My parents wanted to sort of be in the shadows. They didn't want to be out there making noise. Fortunately, for me, I did have a grandma that was like “You tell them, you speak English.” I was considered actually special by my grandma, just because I spoke English. I mean, I remember going to court with my dad at 12 for housing rights, and I was translating for my dad, right? I mean, it was a few cuss words in between.

**SP:** Did you translate those as well?

**EG:** No, I was like “Dad said a bad word.” But as a 12-year-old, I was in court because they didn't have translators. And I'm out there translating on equal housing rights. And we won the case, we actually won the case. But walking away from that experience at a young age taught me that I need to continue to speak up if we want it to be treated equally.

**SP:** Okay, so that was 12 when you started your career as a court translator. You continue going to school growing up in Chicago.

**EG:** Right. So, I don't think we had a lot of options. We were poor, with 13 kids, and just living in Cabrini-Green. But I knew that I wanted an education and most of my older brothers and sisters

didn't. My parents have a third grade education. So I was the first one to attend university. I went to DePaul for two years. And then my brother and I decided that we were going to get out of Dodge. We were going to get out of Chicago and couldn't figure out how, so I applied for a transfer to UCLA.

**SP:** Okay

**EG:** And I received a letter - this how old I am - I received a letter, there was no email.

**SP:** No, let's not bring age into this, because not gonna look good for either of us.

**EG:** So I received a letter stating that they were no longer taking out-of-state students. And I was floored, but I remember calling the woman's name is Pauline. I remember calling her and I asked "Are you taking in-state students? And she's like, "Yes, we're taking in-state students." This is Friday morning. On Monday, I was at UCLA. I drove from Chicago to LA. Naive, because I didn't know the rules. I didn't know what an in-state student was. I didn't know how things worked. I was the first one in my family to even attempt this. So she explained to me what an in-state student was and that I needed to be in the state for three years. Nevermind, I didn't have scholarships. I didn't have real funding for school. Right? So, my parents definitely didn't have money. My dad gave me like \$20 gas money to come out. But they were okay with me driving out, which is insane.

**SP:** Right.

**EG:** But I convinced UCLA to let me start the semester, because I was not going to go back home and say that I dropped out of school. That I was that dumb. That I was that naive. And, I had my cat in the car. I mean, I ended up starting the semester –

**SP:** Did you have any place to stay? Did you have a job at all? Was there any –

**EG:** I had my car and I had my cat. Once they accepted me into school I would figure it out. So once they said I could start the semester I went out and found a job. I waited tables. I started a clown company. I did –

**SP:** You started a what?

**EG:** A kids clown company.

**SP:** A kids clown company!

**EG:** I would work on the weekends at kids parties to pay for school. I waited tables at a restaurant and now I co-own the chain of restaurants that I waited tables in.

**SP:** Wow. So, did you combine the two waiting tables and clowning?

**EG:** It was sort of the same thing. Yes.

**SP:** That's amazing. So now you co-own the chain of restaurants that you started waiting tables at?

**EG:** Yes, yes. I remember telling my mom I purchased my first restaurant. She's like, "That's not what you went to school for." My degree was mass media communication. And my parents were really proud that I was going to school. And so they wanted to make sure that I didn't work in a restaurant field or in a service industry. Because I was the educated one. But, for me, it was more about making sure that now my other brothers and sisters knew the ropes of attending university because we had no idea how to even fill out an application.

**SP:** Okay, so I also want to get into when you first started getting into politics. Now, was it really right after Trump? Had you done a lot before that? Or were you working on your business? Or had you always been an advocate and working in different political campaigns? What's your –

**EG:** No, absolutely never on political campaigns. I voted. I voted on presidential elections. That's as far as I went. Again, I'm going to age myself, but I had a boyfriend registered me to vote. I had a boyfriend ask, "Hey Emmy," like on our third date, "are you registered to vote?" I was like, "Register to vote? What?" Because my parents weren't. My friends probably weren't. And basically, he needed a baseline for dating.

**SP:** There you go.

**EG:** So it's like, "Are you registered to vote?" And I'm –

**SP:** It was a very cute girl that signed me up for Greenpeace, by the way. That's how I signed that petition. Like, "Yeah, I'll sign."

**EG:** But I didn't understand sort of the political process. I voted. I remember my voting. But this isn't something that I grew up with. I attended university. I attended high school. This isn't something that was drilled upon us to vote, right? So, no, I was not political. However, I do remember my parents, attending city council meetings for our district. We lived in a bad neighborhood, so they made sure that they attended meetings to see what was coming. My mom, I remember, clearly she spoke about, "They may not know us, but we know them. And if we continue to show up at these meetings, they know where we live, they know we're listening to the conversations." Besides they had donuts and coffee, and with 13 kids. But we would go to the city council meetings, and my parents did not speak a lick of English, but they would sit there and we would translate. And we would talk about what what the meeting was about. But that was as political as we were in terms of the political process.

For me, the 2016 election, I could say brought back PTSD, really, I mean, I've had my parents deported in the 80s, 90s, we had our parents deported, where they call us and they said, "We don't have the necessary paperwork to be here. And we've been deported," right? I found out haphazardly when I was applying for university that I didn't have a social security number, that I should not be here. And then going through that process, having a counselor speak to me on how to go through the process of becoming a documented citizen. So the election for me, I started listening on what could happen and what we had been through, which was deportations of our family members, and parents, I thought would start immediately.

**SP:** Yeah.

**EG:** And, we weren't wrong about it. So, I did not get political until the 2016 election, I decided, you know, after the election that I was going to organize a march in LA. So that's where I started.

**SP:** That's where you started from. "I've never gotten involved in politics organizing before, so I'm just going to organize, say 700,000 people, in the streets of Los Angeles."

**EG:** I didn't think that many would come out to be honest. I've organized like community events. I've organized like chili cook-offs, the 5K Run with my friends and figuring people to come out. So I've done community organizing, but not at that scale. And I didn't think it was political either.

**SP:** Right. But that's a really good point for people listening to this and thinking, "Well, I don't know how to organize, you know, a political event, or I don't know how to organize a rally or March." But organizing, in a way is really like throwing a party. If you know how to put together a really great party and invite some guests who are going to invite more guests. And obviously, the scale gets a little bit bigger when you're talking about a huge rally at City Hall. 700,000 people. There's police and porta potties that you have to deal with that you don't get your normal party you –

**EG:** That you never have enough of. You never have enough porta potties.

**SP:** Right, exactly. But that's how you get started, right? Now obviously, you are uniquely suited for this because you have a background running restaurants, you have a business, you're used to doing events, as you said.

**EG:** Correct. Correct.

**SP:** So what did that look like? You said I want to organize a march. Tell me how Women's March LA first started developing.

**EG:** Well, for LA, it developed online. We saw the the event happening in DC, and I, as a Latina, actually started organizing a March in LA because I thought I would get missed. I thought that

the feminists organizing DC would miss the Latina. I also think that LA has different issues than DC. I think each community has different issues that we focus on. And so I wanted to make sure that that Latinos weren't missed. I really did. That was my main thing. But also, I met so many people online that were organizing. There was a woman in North Hollywood, West Hollywood, so we were all sort of organizing pockets. And we ended up coming together as LA otherwise we would have had 20 or 30 marches across the city, right?

**SP:** Right.

**EG:** And so when we talk about power in numbers, it's more all of these women that decided, yes, we have a common focus, we should come together and figure it out. It was about at the end, it was about 30 of us that were organizing in different areas of the city. I know there was a March in Compton that ended up folding into LA. They marched in Compton early on then came to LA. Pasadena did the same thing as did Beverly Hills as did Long Beach. So although each community was organizing on their own, because this was all self organized, none of us paid for buses, none of us were coordinating efforts in the beginning. The actual coordination did not start, I remember, until after Thanksgiving. After Thanksgiving, we all decided we're all going to work together and come to the downtown streets of LA.

**SP:** And that's so powerful. That's something that I've seen over the last couple of years. The coalition building, which really builds our power.

**EG:** That's huge. I think that coalition building is underestimated. I think that each one of us wants to do our own thing, but at the end of the day, there's power in numbers. There's also power in different leadership, I think is really important. When you look at coalition's and you look at their leadership structure, you're like, "Okay, this person comes with this strength, this person comes with this strength, right?" So I think grassroots and coalition building is what is going to save us in 2020.

**SP:** I could not agree more, you know, because we get to work together a bunch and hopefully much more. So, you guys came together, different groups who are organizing marches. You built your coalition. You were organizing for the first Women's March in Los Angeles. What were your expectations? How many people did you think we're going to show up? What were you prepared for?

**EG:** Well, in the beginning we did not think a lot of people were going to show up, but then we started seeing the growth on social media. We also started seeing the growth in our emails. And so we knew that it was going to be big. I signed a permit for half a million people. And I'm going to say that Metro and LAPD laughed at me. They did. They're like, "Okay, this woman out of nowhere, is signing off on a permit for half a million." And I remember people saying, "Emmy, there's a lot on the line, and you probably shouldn't sign for half a million. Why don't you say less?" I'm thinking, "No, if I say less than the city is not prepared for it. And we're not prepared

for it. We're in trouble." So we signed paperwork for half a million. So I think we did a pretty good job estimating –

**SP:** You did great! You undershot it by 250,000 people? Right? 200,000.

**EG:** Right. But I didn't say 1000, which was what we were thinking, "No one's going to come."

**SP:** Oh, my gosh. I sadly, had a hard time getting there. Because I took the metro and spent a good hour trying to get a train downtown.

**EG:** Yeah. Also, LA people do not take public transportation. This was new to everybody.

**SP:** That's another conversation we could have, because I grew up in DC and took the subway everywhere. But, yeah, I'll never forget that day, as many, many of us who joined in on marches all over the country, all over the world, really, how empowering and impactful that day was. The power in numbers. Even being stuck on a subway platform for an hour and squeezing in on a train, while people are chanting and singing, just crammed in together. I get chills right now, even thinking about it. You organized this March, that was a pivotal turning point in so many volunteers and activists lives that inspired them to say, you know what, "I'm not alone. We're in this together. And we have work to do." It was really a stepping off place for me. And for many activists. What, what does that what does that feel like?

**EG:** I think I was overwhelmed. I thought that I could say, "I've stepped into organizing this March." And we thought, we're going to go back. I thought I was going to go back to my normal life and run a restaurant, run an event production company. As did everyone that I organized with and I think that it forces us to really think about who we are as people, what we want our democracy to look like, and to use our resources, which at that point was our organizing power, our email, list our connections, to have democracy look like what we look like and demand more democracy. So I think that we went back to the table a little bit overwhelmed. I remember meeting the following day and it rained the entire day in LA and we were all sitting there and thinking, now what?

**SP:** God, you must have just been still running on adrenaline or something.

**EG:** No. For me, I just was so ecstatic that 1.) people came out, that it was safe. But I thought also that these are the people that are going to save democracy. These are the people that are going to continue to be engaged and vote and we could not just leave it hanging.

**SP:** You felt a great responsibility to not let these people fall through the cracks. Correct?

**EG:** Correct. And it was there were people that marched that said, "I've never been political." And that was me. I've never done anything like this. How can I help? So we started sort of funneling volunteers to other organizations, because we didn't know where we were headed,

right? So we put together a nonprofit, but we didn't know our mission was to march in November. So come January, we decided okay, we want to do more, we can do more. And also, I think for most that organized with me, it was also that, that feeling that as women, we had a say, and we had power, and we were going to use it to help democracy.

**SP:** You had another March a year later. Half a million people showed up for that?

**EG:** Right, right. 600,000. So yeah.

**SP:** 600,000 people. That march for me was so different. At that time, I was really involved with Swing Left, and we had our booth set up, and we were registering voters, and we were signing people up for action. Women's March LA was getting involved in some more electoral action, too and helping out with the midterms, and so there was much more focused kind of call to action in the air for that entire event. What was that like for you? How did your goals for the second March change?

**EG:** Well, I think that we realize that there's more to marching. We realize that people want more, and people asked for more. People also came out to help us do more. I can tell you that I didn't know the electoral process. I didn't even know what races were going on. But we started really focusing on local races, we started focusing on local LA, Orange County, California races, because along California, you have 18 chapters of Women's March. So we all decided that we were going to work on local races, with the power that we had, which was coalition building, which was bringing in a mass amount of volunteers. I can almost say that we have an embarrassing amount of volunteers, because we don't have enough work for them. We don't. So this is where the coalition building came in.

**SP:** I can help you with that. We always have stuff for people that do.

**EG:** Well, now we've launched to C4, because we were a C3.

**SP:** Right.

**EG:** So, now we've launched Women's March Sister Network, which is the C4 arm. And so now we are going to really be involved in the local politics and local races. And making sure we get people to the polls, making sure that we talk about the issues that are out there on a local level, and how they will affect the communities. We just worked on Wisconsin, we just worked on Virginia. We text banked, we phone banked, because it's important to know that there's Women's March sister chapters across the country and across the nation. And they were ready to do some of this work. And they weren't connecting the dots as to who was out there to help them with that process. It's so that's part of why we started the C4. We've partnered –

**SP:** And just for anyone that doesn't know what a C4 is versus C3. Can you explain that a little bit?

**EG:** Women's March LA Foundation is the C3 part, which we do a lot of social justice, we do a lot of voter registration, a lot of education.

**SP:** And that's organization designation that has different rules with what kind of campaigns you can engage with and how you raise money.

**EG:** Absolutely. So the C3 is the designation of the IRS, it says that you are a civic engagement organization, you're able to donate and have a write off. The C4 designation is more of a political arm. It's more of a political organization, you don't get to write off. But, you do get to advocate, you do get to work more on the political process, which for us is key. Because if we do intend on on on having democracy represent us, then we need to be knee deep in the political process. We do want to back candidates, we do want to fundraise for candidates, we do want to put a female in the White House.

**SP:** Yeah.

**EG:** So yeah. Yes, marching is great and it's a big statement. But unless we are putting forth a feminist agenda, unless we are involved in the political process, we were not going to be happy. In all honesty.

**SP:** Right. For you personally, this has been, as you said, a very obviously life altering experience. You mentioned and I was joke laughing about it, that you thought you would do this, organize this march and then go back to your regular business and regular life. And I laughed, because this work is such a gift. For me, it has given me so much. It's introduced me to people like you, this community that I've been organizing in, you can't go back from it. And then there's a responsibility for like you said, all of these volunteers that you don't want to leave them dangling in the wind, you want to make sure that you're moving that needle that you're pushing it forward. So for you in the next couple of years leading into 2020. Personally, what role do you want to play? What What do you want to do?

**EG:** So for me, personally, I'd like to have some time off. Probably after 2020.

**SP:** Right.

**EG:** I think for me, personally, I would like to step down as Executive Director, because right now I'm co-executive director, but I'm running a C3 and a C4. That's a lot of work. And we're also a startup. Most people that have worked on startups know, what that grind is to go out and fundraise, to continue to put forth quality of work. So I think most people that really know me know, I'm a hermit. I am, I would be a crazy cat lady.

**SP:** I don't believe that. You did talk about your cat in the car. But you know, still –

**EG:** I have two cats, two kids. I mean, I'm married. I also think –

**SP:** Just for people listening, all I know about Emmy is her with the microphone, kicking ass, screaming at people. So, hermit is not the descriptor I would apply to you. You're an introvert that was forced into speaking?

**EG:** Yes, yes, I like the behind the scenes. I like that. But I think that I moved way beyond my comfort level of being in public. I mean, I've put together Coachella in the background. I don't need to be in front of cameras. But I think that this work has, you know, moved me beyond my comfort level. And I also think that most people don't realize that. And I don't know if you get this, but we get a lot of hate emails. I mean, we got kicked out of our last office because we had protesters there on a weekly basis. That did not like what we were doing, did not think that women should be in that position or in that role. And that's what people don't see, people don't see that. I mean, just yesterday, I had four people in my office looking for me, and they need to speak to me about work I did on Kavanaugh. I'm like, he is already a Supreme Court justice. We moved on and we're still continuing to organize. So I think, for me personally, I would like to take a little bit of a step back only because the being in the public eye isn't always good. We've seen the bad side of it for our organization for me personally. The first year I had cameras in front of my house, my neighbors had no idea what I was doing. I do think for me, right after 2020, I would like to see our organization grow. We all started as activists, as organizers, but I do think we need to bring in people with more policy experience. Because I don't want it to be a fad. I don't want it to be just, oh, this is it that we marched and then we go home. We can't. We have more of a responsibility.

**SP:** I want to mention one thing. I want to give you the opportunity, also, to clear up a misconception that really came to the surface during the third Women's March. And that's the split that happened with Women's March National and the anti-semitism that happened there and how, because you share that name, but it's a separate organization, you've received a lot of blowback, and there was people who didn't want to participate in the March this third time around because of that. So I want to give you the opportunity to kind of clear up the difference in those organizations and talk about that.

**EG:** Right, right. So we all organize independently. We all organize independently of what is known as National. So National is Women's March Inc, who is out of New York and organized the DC March. We all decided to organize under the banner Women's March because we were women marching. But since its first year, there was a rift because we really weren't part of a national organization and yet they spoke for us yet, no matter what we did. They were viewed as a national organization. So we were all independent organizations. There was definitely a lot of blowback, negative press, negative media that people didn't know what the difference was. And I think they still don't, right, I think they still don't. We're hoping to turn over leadership. And we're hoping to really come together as a real national organization. I think it's a sad state of affairs, to be honest. it's a sad state of affairs, that we are trying to unite the country and yet we can't unite ourselves and work together. It's also I think, bad for a woman's organization to have this bad rift. So I think we're trying to find ways to work together. The anti-semitism with Tamika

Mallory and Linda Sarsour. I don't believe they're anti-semitic, I don't. But the response from them was inadequate. Their response was slow. Their response was clumsy. And I am of the Jewish faith. I'm raising my children in the Jewish faith. And again, this is now something that I needed to respond to my temple about: why am I part of an organization that's anti-semitic? And I mean, looking at me, most people are like, "She's a Latina, why would she be Jewish, right?" So I mean, having to respond and having to also respond to my nine-year-old about why would people talk bad about Jews? Why do people hate Jews and Mexicans? Because he's a Latino Jew? Those were tough conversations. Right? And so I think that, that when we talk about anti-semitism, I think that that it's it was insidious, the way it was done. And I think that, that the response was slow, and the response was inadequate from Women's March Inc.

**SP:** I'm thrilled to see what Women's March is going to do now in their new C4 status and the way that we can all work together, continue to build coalitions, and funnel all of those volunteers.

**EG:** Right. I need to do something to give them do for sure.

**SP:** So I guess, maybe my last question for you is, if you are someone listening to this program right now, what advice would you have for them for jumping in and doing this?

**EG:** I seriously would say that you should connect to an organization. I think that part of it also is that between all of us, we're going to find a solution. I would say that there's always something to do, whether it's a local election, a city council election. I think that when we think oh, how did Ted Cruz get up there? But guess what?

**SP:** Why did you bring him up? This was such a nice interview.

**EG:** Someone locally elected him or someone locally did not show up to vote. Were you that person?

**SP:** No, I wasn't. Are you saying asking me? I didn't elect Ted Cruz, Emmy.

**EG:** Oh, they magically appeared in DC. No, they started out locally. And if we do not start to pay attention to our local elections, which are all doable, right? Then we have to reconcile that. There's something everyone can do locally on a smaller scale. You don't have to put together a big rally or a big march or any of that. But phone banking, text banking, postcard writing is important. I phone banked and text banked for Stacey Abrams.

**SP:** Proud of her. She's pretty cool.

**EG:** She's pretty cool. We actually went out door knocking in Georgia for her. Georgia, Texas, and Florida. We went door knocking, we went text banking. Women's March C4, the Sister Network was part of that group that registered voters in Florida, Puerto Rican voters. Some

Puerto Rican voters do not speak English, but they're citizens. So we registered the voters after Maria. And then we went back to actually educate them on how to vote, the early voting process. We had to translate almost everything for them on how to vote. I mean, that was an experience in itself. But I'm thinking, anybody can do this. Anybody can do this. I had no experience. So whatever you think you have as a superpower, whether it's being on social media, posting on Facebook, all of these organizations need your skill sets. And we all have a skill set. If you can write a postcard, you're in.

**SP:** That's right. Yeah, there is something for everyone to do. And please do it. We just finished, thankfully, a successful midterm that we talked about as the most important election of our lives. And it was, but now, this is the most important election of our lives coming in 2020.

**EG:** Absolutely.

**SP:** And so thank you for sharing that because there's something for everyone. Now, if someone wants to get involved with Women's March, where do they find you?

**EG:** [womensmarchla.org](http://womensmarchla.org)

**SP:** [womensmarchla.org](http://womensmarchla.org)

**EG:** Or [wmsisternetwork.com](http://wmsisternetwork.com)

**SP:** Okay, cool. So go there, right now, [wmsisternetwork.com](http://wmsisternetwork.com). And bookmark that, sign up. I can vouch for Emmy and her Amazon powerhouse warriors who will get you into action. Where you're going to really make a difference. Where you're going to really help me. Thank you so much for taking the time to talk to me.

**EG:** Thank you. Thank you for having me.

[Music]

**SP:** We want to talk about now how you can get into action. We have an election this Tuesday.

**MC:** Yes.

**SP:** The midterms aren't over yet.

**MC:** No, still going on. Thanks to a corrupt GOP consultant.

**SP:** Yeah.

**MC:** Voters in North Carolina's ninth Congressional district to get to vote again.

**SP:** Just a wee bit of election fraud led to a redo election for that seat. And Dan McCready, who ran last time and came very close to winning, is running again. This time against Republican State Senator Dan Bishop. You may know him from his greatest hits, sponsoring that heinous North Carolina bathroom bill.

**MC:** Right. Yeah. Remember when we were all boycotting?

**SP:** North Carolina. The whole state of North Carolina because of his good work.

**MC:** Yeah. Yeah. Well, this is this is going to be a big one. It's an opportunity to flip a 41st seat, like you were saying. Last time, even with the corruption, Dan McCready lost by less than a percentage point.

**SP:** Right.

**MC:** He's currently up by four points. And he's got the Republicans running scared. Trump is actually going to North Carolina on Monday for a rally.

**SP:** The Republicans are funneling loads of resources into it. It's a big deal for them. It's also at this stage where we are right now since the midterms kind of feel like they were while ago.

**MC:** Yeah.

**SP:** And the presidential is coming up on the horizon. It's a good litmus test to see where our activists are right now, are they really going to show up on a special election?

**MC:** Yeah.

**SP:** Or are the republicans going to be able to hold on to the seat? So the answer is, we're going to show up.

**MC:** Right.

**SP:** Because we have to. We have to win this seat. And we have to show Trump and the republicans that we are still here, and the blue wave has not subsided.

**MC:** Yeah, and this is a really important time in a in a campaign cycle. Right before election day, when every door knocked, every phone call made, every donation that can help get the word out through TV and radio ads counts. So there's a number of ways to support Dan McCready's race. But now is the time to do it. There's still time to make a difference. But it has to happen in the next few days.

**SP:** So go to danmccready.com, sign up to volunteer, if you're close by and you can knock on doors, do it if you're further away, make phone calls. Again, hurricane Dorian, we don't know the effect it's going to have, but certainly, it will affect the early voting, which is already underway right now. So we don't need more reasons to show up, we may know that we need to show up in a big way.

[Music]

**SP:** Thank you for joining us today. And thank you for stepping up and taking action. This is *How We Win*. We win when we all get involved in our work has to start now

**MC:** We want to know what you would like to hear on the show. What topics should we discuss? Who do you want to hear interviewed? Let us know by emailing us at podcast at swingleft dot org.

**SP:** And we want to hear your story. Record yourself on your phone or wherever it's easy for you to do that and share a meaningful experience that you had as a volunteer and we'll feature you on our show. Try to keep it about one minute.

**MC:** Thank you so much to everyone who has subscribed, rated, and given nice reviews. If you haven't yet, please do subscribe on Apple or wherever you get your pods. Share us on social media and use the hashtag how we win 2020. Check out our page at swingleft.org slash podcasts. And of course, don't forget to sign up to volunteer.

**SP:** We really appreciate you being here with us and we're excited to bring you more from the field next Wednesday. We'll talk to you then.