

## Hilda Solis

Question:

Well, at the time I was working as director for State Education Program to help under represented students prepare for college and a lot of my work involved outreach to community colleges and to universities. And it just so happened that I had different friends that worked at different colleges and of course, one of...several of my friends worked at this one particular college and approached me Rio Hondo Community College to be exact, in Whittier, California and they had asked me if I would be interested in running for board of trustee's and I kind of thought "no, you've got to be kidding me. You know, what is this, what is this about?" I mean I'm running a program, I don't have time. So it took a while for me to fully understand exactly what the role would be because obviously my commitment was to be doing my job, administering a program. But in the end, I met other people on campus and other folks that would support me I guess or wanted to help me, but of course it was a lot of unanswered questions that I had, is how was I going to fund this? I mean it takes money to run a campaign and you have to have volunteers. And of course I was kind of just coming back from living in Washington D.C., here for a while working in the Carter administration and OMB for a while and then just trying to get my feet on the ground and establish myself. But I never for one minute thought I would be running for public office. I always believed in public service, always. That's why education and aspiring to get a degree in political science and public administration was always something that I carried with myself, but never to put myself out there and at risk of exposing yourself to who knows what in a campaign.

[00:02:47]

Question:

Yes. And partly because I had seen what had happened while I was back here in Washington, back in the 80's when Carter just...you know he had lost badly, he was only a 1 term president and how mean politics could be and how raw it was. And I just kind of made a commitment I think to myself that gee, this is really hard work and I don't know if I could ever, if I could ever withstand that so I'm going to just focus in on what I think I know best and that's grounded in helping to run programs, to help people out and something much more secure because at that point politics to me sounded like it was on very shaky ground. And of course that had a lot to do with my feelings at that time about - an uneasiness about running, you know, running for an office because it took so much you put yourself out there, you expose yourself, your family, your friends and so called friends. You find out quickly who your friends are and who aren't among your friends that you thought you could count on.

Question:

Oh yeah.

Question:

27.

Question:

Still young, yeah.

Question:

Time, yeah.

Question:

Well I would say that again, financial, you know, financial considerations had a lot to do with as well because obviously I was just getting established and you know my husband and I were just kind of getting, you know, kind of getting settled in from living back here, now going back to California. And it was, it was a bit uneasy you know because I was also running a state program and had a lot of responsibilities and spent a lot of time out, just taking care of this organization that I was in charge of, that was also being scrutinized always by evaluators, you know, Sacramento evaluators and serving on different committees.

**[00:05:02]**

And that in a sense, actually ended up all helping me because through those contacts and networks, many of those people encouraged me to, to pursue this option of running for office. So that was good you know in that sense and you could really find out who was with you and who wasn't. So that was in some part disappointing because people that you grew up with that probably know you the best didn't really want to help out or get involved or just thought "oh Hilda, you're crazy." And I even thought that for a minute myself that yeah, I must be nuts if I'm thinking about this. But you know afterwards there were many people that I, that I met, that I had met over the course of my working back here in Washington that I reconnected with back there who had been involved in campaigns and said "hey look, don't worry about it. We'll help you. We'll help you." And I'm like "okay, what does that mean, right, and what kind of commitment?" So you find out quickly who's willing to step up, who's willing to help bring in their resources, their networks, who's going to volunteer on the Saturday's or who's going to be out there walking in the hot summer months or whatever knocking on doors and helping you prepare your literature? And at that time, it was not a very sophisticated campaign where we had posters that were printed up in a, in a specified place or you know, all that. It was a grassroots campaign. I'll never forget that one of my friends was a mayor of a local city neighboring the area that I would be running to represent and he volunteered to help me do my posters. So we silk screened posters. I mean my mom came, my sisters came, my husband and just his...the mayor's family came out, some volunteers, a few of them and it was just an incredible experience to see how people were willing to do that, to spend maybe two weekends of their time to go out and help me do that. And then, to put them on sticks and stakes and then go out and put them in homes and then write down which houses they were placed at so you could go and count on that person and then have them help you talk to their neighbors. So it was a, it was a massive effort and it was pretty, pretty daunting because I hadn't realized how much organization

it took to get a legitimate campaign going. And believe me, I was not viewed by other people in the community who were like the community leaders and at that time, the Democratic you know, leaders of the city, didn't know who I was and could care less and thought "oh, this is a fluke. Who is this young woman? She doesn't have any background and she's putting herself out there and it's silly to think that she's going to be able to make any difference here."

[00:07:52]

And on the one hand, that kind of upset me and it made me work harder for it.

Question:

Shunned...

Question:

Well, no one likes rejection. No one likes to be rejected and especially people that you, you lean on or you ask for advice that they're going to be in many ways, be quick to judge and say "why are you doing that? Why are you veering away?" Even my father, I'll never forget. My father kind of questioned me "well you know, you should...you really should be looking at establishing yourself in your career. What did you go study for? And blah, blah, blah, blah..." And you know "the politics, it's so bad." I mean they had, my parents had very bad experiences in politics, come from different countries so you know where politics is very corrupt. And a lot of people generally sense that too on a local level and its very rare I think at that time and even now, that you have you know, politicians that go door to door and knock on doors. So one of the, one of the things that I learned quickly is that face to face interaction with the public is very important and it couldn't be incremental and it had to be real and it had to take a lot of commitment, a lot of my time. So I would come home, I'd say after work and maybe at 5 o'clock or 6 and walk precincts or walk the different areas that we were targeting until it got late into the evening and on Saturday's and Sunday's and then I'd make phone calls to get people to come and volunteer. And I remember my campaign manger at the time who was not too much older than me but had been involved in campaigns, told me that if I was going to win, if I really wanted this to happen, that I was going to have to walk my precinct at least 3 times. And you may say, "well, what does that mean?" That was the biggest precinct in the city and it was a large city of 100,000. So can you imagine, I'm scared to death and no one shows you and tells you this is how you, how you do it and I just thrust myself into that. And believe it or not, I did walk the precinct 3 times and it did pay off because I won by a very large margin.

[00:10:17]

Question:

Well different people would walk with me so I'd have, I'd have volunteers that would walk with me. I'd have colleagues and sometimes their children would come and walk with me. So it would be like maybe another female and her kids or it would be say you know my parent, my mom or my sisters would go with me or my volunteers. You know, students, we got a lot of high school students and community

college students because they were the ones that also got involved in the campaign because they had...it would be a direct impact on them whoever helped to get elected, that they helped to elect certainly would support their views and I was that kind of a person that really wanted to help young people. So I got a lot of young folks from the surrounding area to come out and help.

Question:

Well we mapped everything out, so we had to go to the county registrar, pick up all the precinct, make all the kits. That in of itself was like a whole two days of putting maps together, census maps, cutting them up, correlating that with the roles. And then because it's a non...non partisan race, you go, you try to go to everyone. So it doesn't matter if you're a democrat or you're a republican but the point was, that we wanted to get the vote out. And I guess, because I was a newcomer, my...you know I didn't have any advantages so I would have to work harder. And clearly, what I found out was that the other folks, candidates that were also running in that seat had already previously served in that position before at one point in their, in their career. So they kind of took it lightly and just kind of blew me off so to speak. And what was amazing was that none of them worked as hard as I did and I think that really surprised them and the establishment, the people who actually make the decisions. You know, they give you your blessing that "oh yeah, you're going to be the next person in that position." I didn't have any of that quite frankly and most of the people that supported me were college friends or people that I had knew over the years. And then I did get the support of the teacher's union, the faculty association.

[00:12:33]

They and the classified union also supported me because of my father's previous involvement with some of the unions. I did get to meet some other folks and some came in, but not with a lot of money because it was considered a low level race and in order to win, I think our target was we needed at least make sure we could guarantee possibly maybe 1200 votes, which doesn't sound like a lot but in those...in off season, its even tougher to get people to go out or to vote absentee. So a lot of, a lot of planning went into this and we used different methods. At that time, cable wasn't even a big thing so we didn't have money for that. No radio because you didn't need it, it was, it was just bare knuckles. Get out there, walk, knock on doors, pass out your literature, go to events, go to churches, talk to people and expose yourself you know and listened to people. And I learned a great deal from that, just listening to people and that still helps me in my job now.

Question:

Not always. There was always a lot of dogs. There was (were) gated houses and you could tell that these houses in some cases were run down and they weren't safe, some neighborhoods were not safe and I was told that ahead of time. So I usually walk with a group of people or other folks to make sure we had teams. And it was, it was you know, it's, how could I say, a bit uncomfortable going into someone's front yard, knocking on their door and not knowing what to expect because you would get all sorts of people. You get people who wouldn't even open the door and assume that I was passing out religious material. And some people who just looked at me and just...- I actually had someone say "we don't vote for your kind." And that was something that really you know, just was very disappointing to hear that. But you

know, there's a lot of folks that you know, don't always understand what this is all about, so that was also hard. You continue to see things like that as you run for different offices only it comes in different forms.

So it also helps to prepare you because you just kind of, you know just kind of thickens and you kind of you know, put up your own kind of resistance so those things don't draw you away from what your goal is and then so you just keep moving on. That may have been a bad encounter there but then I picked up maybe a whole block somewhere else or I got someone to say "hey, guess what? I want to help you. Give me some signs." Or "I'm going to call my friends" or "I'm going to go to my church and I'm going to pass out your material," you know.

**[00:15:19]**

Question:

Minorities, women, yep. And...and my age because I was very young. People would say "well, what do you have to offer? You look too young, you don't have enough experience." So I would get on my spiel and talk about we need better education. We need more people trained. We need more people to have access to the college in Whittier because they viewed it as the college on the hill that didn't really come down to the community, especially to this part of the district which was the most low income, blue collar and access to education didn't always come easy for folks there. So that was my spiel to that community that "hey, I would do what I could to open up those doors, opportunities." More students, whether they be young students or reentry, older adults could have access that we would try to get the college to be more responsive and come down off of the hill and just open up more opportunities and create more... how could I say, more attention for this one area of the college district that had been neglected for many, many years.

Question:

Usually they'd have events, you know fiesta's as they call them in our...in California and you know just going and talking to people and really just handing out information. And you know, some people would take it and read it and some would throw it away right there. So you know you get a lot of rejection and in some cases you do get...you would find people that were supportive or interested. And then you know from there, I remember one woman who was a teacher at one of the local high schools, was just so excited that I was running and she said "I'm going to come out and walk with you and my daughter's going to come and my husband and we're going to help you because we know how important it is for young people to get education. And you're...this is great that you're sacrificing yourself to do this and it's a good way for our young people here in El Monte to want to aspire to do what you're doing and to get a higher education but also be able to run for, run for office."

**[00:17:29]**

Because a lot of people were intimidated. A lot of people were scared about running for anything, I mean so was I but it was..I was just, I guess at the right place at the right time and had the right set of circumstances kind of favoring me and you know work, work. Hard work is what really I think at the end of the day gave me the ability to get the numbers that I needed to win.

Question:

It took time. It took time, like a couple of...it took like a couple of months. And just because you declare yourself a candidate doesn't mean that everyone is going to be there. They don't know who you are. In my case, it didn't know...I didn't have any name recognition. I didn't have an enormous treasury or amount of money. So I had to work at building that and trying to do the best that I could and it was a grassroots you know, campaign, I can't put it in any other way. We were creative, I will tell you, I remember a friend of mine who had a printing organization operation and he said "hey, why don't you do a newsletter. Look, I did this one over here for this one city person, maybe you'd like to think about doing one." And I thought "wow, but who's going to write it?" He goes "oh, you can do it." So I thought now I've got to do more work. But we had someone taking pictures of events I'd be at, we'd showcase that and we'd write up stories about who I met or what groups were going to endorse me and then we kept the running tally of all the people that I would meet that would endorse me and so people kind of got a kick out of it, that hey, their name was showing up in this little throw away newsletter that we would print to give up dates on the campaign. So it was a hit. Something novice at that time.

Question:

In my house. We didn't have an office, I didn't have an office...my living room and kitchen table was my office.

Question:

Yeah, yeah, other people, my family or we would go to say another...the mayor for example of the local city next...you know neighboring city would let us make our signs at his home because he had all the materials. He would on the side do silk screening, so he loved that. It was...he loved being able to help out. And they were really tied in with a lot of senior citizen groups which was very helpful because it's a very reliable group that votes in higher percentage, percentages than other groups and it was smart to be able to go in and be able to talk to them and let them get to know you. And I had to spend a lot of time at...what is it, like their senior meals in the lunchtime whenever they had those when I could make it or in the evening or go to their raffles or their bingo games and spend time with them. But all of that paid off, you know it paid off and it's something that helped me in my other campaigns as well, even as a member of congress when I ran.

**[00:20:39]**

Question:

Yeah, hmm, well I think one of the things I learned is that first of all, you really have to be committed. If you're going to do something, you really have to be committed and in order to be committed, you really have to take hold of this as something very personal and when you do that, then other people around you see how serious you are. And they have to know that you're as committed and serious and confident about what you're doing as well because you also have to present that and that to me is something that you don't just learn, you don't learn that in a book. And if you can do that and impress

upon people that this is serious and its great that they're helping you because what you're doing is helping to empower the community so you kind of share that with them and they get empowered and then they want to come back and help every day or every weekend. I mean that's something that I learned and its very important and to listen to always give thanks to the folks that would come. Even if people couldn't walk a precinct, they could donate food, they could donate money or they could donate supplies. We needed like paper goods and supplies and things like that. We needed water and we needed things to give to the volunteers so people would come and they loved doing that. And I think when you ask people, sometimes people are afraid to ask for things and I learned a lot from that, that you know what, there are some people that just want to be asked and they'll be happy to help you.

Question:

**[00:22:28]**

You know what, if I won, I'd be happy if I didn't win. I mean I'd just go back to what I was doing. I mean I didn't...I never once intended on using that as kind of a stepping stone. I didn't envision you know, beyond that. And in fact, I stayed on that college board after I won for 8 years and went through a lot of what they call rotations, I served as president of the board and also was there to bring new presidents, superintendents to that campus, bring in diversity on the faculty and counseling staff and really pushed for programs that help students transfer to universities. So that wasn't just a stop gap for me, so I mean...I kind of utilized my position there to also fulfill my other aspirations of helping to see progress so students could go on and really lift kind of this campus community and help faculty members who kind of felt like nobody was listening to them. Or classified workers, I became very close. I became known as the trustee that spent more time on campus talking to people and that really worried the administrative staff, especially the superintendent because they didn't want me talking to, to people unless it was in a controlled setting. I'm like "you know what, I'm sorry but that's not how I operate."

Question:

Well I knew that there was a lot of injustice going on in our society at that...you know, at a younger age and saw a lot of the discrimination in terms of young people, even in my community who got chosen to go to college, who was directed to go into vocational classes and fields. I mean even I was a student who was directed by her guidance counselor, one of them anyway, to just aspire to be an office aid, a secretary and once I found out I could go to college, then I pursued it but I was initially told that I was not college material by that counselor. And a lot of young people at that time in my, in my group, my peer group were treated the same way so I knew that there were some things that weren't right. I mean the constitution; our government says you're supposed to have equal treatment under the law. Some guarantee's by our constitution. I didn't believe that. I knew there was injustices.

**[00:24:56]**

Question:

Yes.

Question:

Wasn't very...wasn't very...wasn't very good and I'll tell you though, they did, they were strong democrats. My father was very working class but very strongly believed at that time when I was growing up, I recall their aspirations to see someone like John F. Kennedy to succeed. And I remember our neighbors next door had this big sign in their lawn, Viva Kennedy Campaign. So my parents you know I'm like "what's that all about?" And my mom and dad would say "well he's a good guy, he's going to be our next president and he will treat people fairly and justly," and you know so that's kind of where my parents came from, from that, from that.

Question:

It was bad. It was very corrupt. Very...just their experience with government in their countries was very poor, very oppressive, very abusive and not very...did not treat everyone equally and fair. So you know, that's part of why they, they left you know as immigrants to this country, to find something better where they knew there would be better education, better treatment in the workplace, better you know, overall ability to succeed here and you could do it if you worked hard.

Question:

Oh they were very...yeah, they were, they were pretty cautious. And I remember my mom's always very you know, very traditional mother, parent. You know "why are you doing this? You should just focus on what, what you prepared yourself for. I mean why do you want to go out there and spend so much time doing all these things?" And it was kind of hard for me to explain to her what that meant. My father knew a little bit more about that because he was very active in his union and he was a shop steward so he was a leader, organizing and you know I think he was...he was always supportive. He had limited time to give me at that, at that point in our life but it was very important. I'll never forget the picture I have in my mind of both he and my mom standing over a workbench, whatever, pushing back and forth making these posters and all muddied up with paint and you know, just being out there helping to encourage people to come and help volunteer. That was really, really nice.

[00:27:39]

Question:

It was...we didn't do any polling. It was such a small campaign all we could do was make sure that when we made phone calls to people to encourage them to...well, are you a yes vote or a no vote or I would be introducing myself, make sure that we made notations and tally up who those "yes" votes were, who we missed, who didn't answer their phone. And then constantly going back and calling those homes or walking the precincts and leaving personal notes that I would write and we'd use...we'd punch a hole in the mailer and put a rubber band through it and I'd put a little post-it, not even a post-it because they didn't have post-it's at that time and I'd write "Sorry I missed you, Hilda Solis. Call me if you have any questions." And you'd be surprised, some people wouldn't answer their door when I'd leave the material, they'd come running out of their house afterwards saying "did you leave this at my house? Is



this you? Can I talk to you?" And then we'd start a conversation. And it was just amazing how people would tell me...- This is one thing I'll never forget about that campaign too is that people would tell me "you're the first candidate to ever come knocking on my door." And to this day, I still see people back in that city who tell me "I remember voting for you Solis. You were the first person I voted for." That's pretty empowering.

Question:

Well you try, you try to always you know obviously be sensitive to the groups you're talking to or to the people. So if it was elderly seniors, I'd talk about you know, programs offered for seniors and how important it was to make sure that we could educate our young people so they could have good jobs and pay into social security and all that. And you know if it was a minority group, even Asian's, I mean I don't speak any Asian language but I culturally know you need to spend time. You need to feel...they need to feel that you're, that you're someone that they can trust, that you're non threatening and that you're not just there to talk but you're there to listen. So having those kinds of abilities is very helpful I think because you have to spend a lot of time gaining that trust. If it's not there and there's no reference or anyone else helping you build that, then you've got to work it. You've got to work it really hard.

[00:30:17]

I was very fortunate though to have other people help me move in those communities too. So I'd have friends say "oh, this is...this is candidate's Hilda Solis and I want to introduce you to her, she's a friend." Then they'd leave me and I'd have to go into my whole spiel of why I wanted to be a trustee, a school board member.

Question:

You know what, I think that that was...when I think about it now, it wasn't...that wasn't the main, the main objective. The main objective is that they would see me and that I was available, accessible and that I took the time to come into their neighborhood or to their house. And that's what stuck in the minds of people because people would tell me "oh yeah, you're the one that came to my house. Okay, you've got my vote, don't worry." You know or you know, I'll never forget election, like two weeks before the election on one of our main thoroughfares in the city, I saw almost every house with my sign on it as my...my election sign and one of my former employers who was a congressman, who is then now at that point a congressman, came to an event I had and said "oh my God, I know Hilda's doing really well because I can see all these signs lined up and these houses leading up to where I'm going and that tells me she has a lot of support." And to hear that from a congress person who I had worked for as an intern, was like pretty amazing.

Question:

Very serious. It was, it was...that's what I mean. You have to be very serious because...- And I say that because I run into a lot of people who say "yeah, I want to run for office" but don't have a clue as to what that commitment is, what that should be and there is, for me, I set a pretty I think in my campaigns

I set a pretty high standard.

[00:32:28]

Question:

I was tired. I was tired, in fact if anything I got a lot of exercise. I think I lost like 10 or 15 pounds, people...it was noticeable. People said "wow Hilda, what's going on?" I go "I've been walking," and it was, you know it was a fall election in California at the time, it's still summer in September and October so you're out and it was hard, it was really tough. I remember that and I'd worry a lot thinking "gee, did we do the right thing? Did we get to as many people as we could have?" And even though we thought maybe we were gaining more support in some places that wasn't necessarily the case. And what happened that also struck me as really interesting is that even though people told you they'd vote for you, they didn't go out to vote at all and so you always have to kind of factor that in, in your calculations. So you always have to over project who you're going to count on because you're always going to have a percentage that won't show up no matter what and that, that's pretty true in I think every election.

Question:

I really just remember election evening because we, we last minute got like some little restaurant down the street and there were a lot of people that started to show up around 6 o'clock and the polls didn't close until like 7 or 8, I forget exactly. But I was like "well did you all vote?" And I had my little stub pinned on me because I wanted to make sure everybody voted. Doing last minute calls, phone calls and things like that and I started to see some change because the press started coming around, the newspaper, the local paper. They hadn't up to that point, didn't write very favorable articles and things and I started to see other you know, other outlets starting to take interest so I knew something was happening. They must have been getting a different sense as to what was going on in the community.

Question:

[00:34:40]

I was there and the first results that came in were the absentee ballots and I didn't win those, I'd lost. And so my campaign person was telling me "well Hilda, you've got to remember that typically more conservative voters vote absentee and they vote early and sometimes you may not have been able to get to them in time and they may have been from another party," which was the other opposing party. So I go "okay," so I didn't, I didn't think I was going to win. I just...you know that kind of, you know it was one of the first things that happened. And then a couple hours later, I think 2 or 3 hours later the numbers started coming in and the areas where I really targeted did a lot of targeted you know, walking and get out the vote started to come in and that's when I thought "oh wow, this is pretty neat." It was a pretty... it was a very exciting campaign. It was very exciting because nobody thought I was going to win, including me. I mean I thought I was...if I won, I won, if I didn't, I give it my best.

Question:

It was the first campaign. You know you just never know and at that time it wasn't as sophisticated as it is now where you have all these instruments you can use and you know, you can do polling, you can do all kinds of tests, testing and paid walkers. We didn't have any of that so it was really a shoestring campaign but it really taught me a lot I think...at that point, to have more confidence. I didn't have as much confidence as I thought and I learned every other...every campaign after that that you really have to be sure of what you're doing and sometimes, you make wrong decisions in campaigns and sometimes you have to tell people like "hey, guess what I don't need your help after all for other reasons." And then you find out the least likely of folks will come out and do so many good things for you and help you out.

Question:

He was...he was my husband, yeah. He was very supportive.

Question:

He was very good at kind of the catering part of it, making sure everybody had coffee, they were fed, that he had the organizational part. You know if we needed tables, if we needed things to happen, he had a lot of contacts too, business contacts so he'd get a lot of people to donate things, you know supplies, refreshments and he was very good about that. So I mean it was hard because I would spend a lot of time out in the evenings you know cooking...- I would be cooking, I'd be out knocking on doors and come home half you know, tired. But it was, it was a family...it was very much a family, a small family unit.

[00:37:35]

I have a lot of brothers and sisters but not all of them thought this (campaigning) was something they wanted to do. And my younger sisters who are like 10 years younger than me were about I think they were like 15 or 14 years old. I'll never forget, they got on their bikes and made these like man made or human signs, we call them human signs and put my signs on the front and back and started going up and down the streets. And the day of the election, we had a chow, a dog, their dog actually and they put signs on the dog and they had the dog at some of the major street corners where people were coming in and out. I'll never forget that. And it worked, people would honk their horns you know in their cars and say "wow, high 5." It was pretty cool.

Question:

They would go you know, like someone advertising pizza you know with their crazy signs. Think about it only that was like so long ago and they were like a human sign, just advertising for people to remember to go vote, to vote for me.

Question:

No, probably not, no.

Question:

Because I gave...I gave a lot of... At least from my perspective, I gave a lot of my personal time and a lot and you know I just kind of thought "well, if it doesn't work okay, I learned something." And it took me a while to, you know after I did get elected, to even consider moving onto something else because I had a lot of people already telling me almost shortly after I won "oh now you've got to go for the next thing." I'm "what is the next thing?" "Oh, you've got to run for assembly." And I'm like "what?" So I went "let me, let me take my time here. Let me get, let me get my feet wet and figure this out." So I spent 8 years on that board.

Question:

Probably. Yeah, yeah, and thank goodness, for whatever reason that you know, every race that I have run, I have won and its usually been against some big odds. I wasn't the, the horse to bet on and I wasn't always backed by the party or the establishment and that's kind of been my legacy in the years of my 20 some years of public service.

**[00:39:53]**

Question:

Well sometimes they think he's the candidate or he's the you know, the, the person that's running for office. And you know, there's a lot of cultural things that go with that too because there aren't a lot of Latina's that run for office and didn't at that time, there were very few. So it was hard. It was hard. I mean people would say like "hey, what's...you know, what's your wife up to?" Or "what's that about?" you know and family would say the same thing, so it was hard but I was always one of these, could I say, very independent minded, strong willed and I guess every now and then I do like a good challenge.

Question:

There was a core group of people that have stuck with me from that first race even until my appointed position here and that's been the span of 25 some years. So, so you actually learn more about special people that you have around you that aren't necessarily related to you but are your friends or just believe in what you're doing and that to me is very powerful, that people believe in your message or share in that, they have shared values with you. And that has been really helpful to me and I think unique. Because politics or running a campaign can actually give you some of that and there's also good and bad, but I'm saying overall, I would say that I've made...I've met some tremendous people, tremendous role models and people that have supported me. You know I think about Delores [unintelligible] who is a co-founder of The United Farm Workers, also a woman, also someone who broke through many, many barriers and just someone who always stood by me, encouraging me where I wouldn't get that support say from my immediate relatives, I'd find it in other places.

**[00:42:13]**

[photos]

Question:

Yes, yes because there weren't very many women that ran for office at that time in the local city. There was a woman that was running again at the same time I did that had the position and she was more of the establishment and there was also a Latino. So here I was, of both right, a little different but again, I have to go back to something that they probably underestimated in me that I wasn't going to work hard, and I worked harder in my opinion when I look back than, that those other candidates. I didn't rest on anything that I had done before because this was a new experience. So I knew the odds were against me, so I knew I had to...whatever I did, I had to work harder.

Question:

Oh I think it was just you know, when you think back about you know, groups that you have to meet with, those...just preparing for what they're going to, what they're going to ask. Doing that kind of homework always is helpful, especially if they're groups that are going to support you or give you monetary support, very important to do your homework. You know, I learned that from that first campaign how important that is.

Question:

To know your issues, to know your issues or that particular group's issues.

Question:

It's kind of hard to go that far back, it really is yeah. I mean I'm drawing a blank but I just know that knowing the group and what their agenda is, is always so important if you're going to be interviewed by a group that's going to support you or can support you and can make a difference, it's always good to do your homework and know more about that. And it's just having that good preparation and since that was a shoestring campaign, I didn't have the luxury of having all that time.

Question:

**[00:45:03]**

Well now you have the internet, so you can download and get all this information where before you would really have to rely on other people or...or other resources to get that. I think just having access to better information would be helpful and I just think you know, campaigning now has changed a lot so its very different. But I think the personal contact is still very important no matter what. Some people don't even think signs are worthwhile, they're just a waste but if you go to people's homes, it does make a difference because people say "wow, my neighbor has that sign over there, I wonder what's going on. Is that person special or who is it? Maybe I need to find out." So I would tell people...- I continue to tell people that.

