

# Why I'm Running for Congress

○ AMY MCGRATH · WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2017 · 4 MINUTES

When I was a young girl growing up in Kentucky, I dreamed of being a fighter pilot. Women couldn't do that then, so I wrote my congressman, and he explained women were not allowed in combat roles. I wrote every member of the armed services committees and asked them to change the law. Thankfully, society changed, laws changed, and I was privileged to attend the Naval Academy. Four long, tough years later, I was commissioned as an officer in the United States Marine Corps, and my dream to serve as an F/A-18 fighter pilot came true. But the Academy and the Corps did more than teaching me to fly; they instilled values, a desire to serve my country and a code of conduct I will never forget: honor, courage, and commitment. I have lived that code for more than 24 years.

Now I've come back home, to Kentucky - to my roots. Kentucky has always been my home. During the first year at the Academy .. the infamous "Plebe summer" .. new Midshipmen have to memorize where everyone in their class is from. I was always so proud when my fellow midshipmen knew me as being from Kentucky, and that pride stayed with me no matter where in the world my country ordered me to go.

Now, my military service has ended. I'm excited to be home, this time with my husband Erik and three young children (Teddy, George, and Eleanor). However, I'm still driven to serve my country. As a wife and a mother, I care deeply about protecting the character of the country inherited by our future generations. I owe it to my children, and yours, to take a stand when I feel I can make a difference.

The world we face is growing increasingly complex. To actually confront any of the long-term issues our country faces such as healthcare, immigration, rising social and income inequality, or world credibility, we must have leaders who are committed to working on this mission together. Our Founders set up a constitutional system that has endured more than two centuries. It was based on the idea that nothing gets done without citizen-leaders who can work with their fellow Americans of all political stripes. We have to get back to that. We have to start putting political dogma aside and tackle the issues of today. Access to healthcare, for example, affects every American. Lives are at stake, and we have to have the courage to do what's best for all citizens.

As a Marine combat veteran, I know how to focus on the mission at hand. I've spent my entire adult life serving with other Americans, each of us wrestling with the sacrifices of war and being away from our family and home. But while my fellow servicemen and women made sacrifices abroad, American families have made sacrifices here at home, and the status

quo is leaving many people behind. We need to work for jobs that pay enough to raise a family and focus on providing opportunities for hard-working Americans to get ahead.

In the military, I worked shoulder to shoulder with fellow Americans from all walks of life. It didn't matter if we shared a political philosophy or religion or ethnicity or sexual orientation. We were all just Marines, and we were successful as a team because we were patriots who wanted to serve our nation. We were people who put getting things done first. These values cannot be taken for granted. Things like honor and courage have to be earned every single day, and these qualities are desperately needed in our political system today.

We must have leaders who have more experience in actually serving the people rather than serving themselves, their party and the special interests. We must have citizen-leaders of courage, who look at public office as a service, not as a prize to be won or a stepping-stone to personal wealth. We need leaders who are brave enough to tell people the truth, instead of misleading them into thinking that a quick fix is right around the corner. We must have members of Congress — and an administration — who do not accept or promote the trampling of deeply held American values by enabling misogyny, racism, incivility, and intolerance, even when it is politically expedient to do so. We must have members of Congress willing to buck the modern trend of divisiveness and meet the challenge with leadership. The path of my life shows my commitment to those ideals. And I have the experience to go with it. I am someone who is not afraid of sacrifice and speaking truth to power. I've put my life on the line for this country, and I have fought for the American values of freedom, human rights, and equality abroad, and I will not hesitate.

That's why I'm running for Congress.