



By **DOUG SHERWIN**, The Daily Transcript
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U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) was inspired by Hillary Clinton to enter public service, and Gillibrand wants to provide that same inspiration for other women.

Gillibrand was at California Western School of Law Wednesday to discuss her book "Off the Sidelines," which chronicles the stories and mentors that led her to be appointed to fill Clinton's Senate seat.

"I think women can be very good and strong advocates," Gillibrand said. "And if more women were advocating for what they wanted in their communities, in their companies, in their cities and in Congress, the agenda would be very different. And so I believe if women's voices were heard, not only would the agenda be different but the outcomes would be different."

After eight years as an associate at a New York City law firm, Gillibrand started her public life as a special counsel to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development secretary Andrew Cuomo.

"I spent the next seven months really loving my job," she said. "Getting up early every day and working late every night and just loving what I was doing because my whole job was to help people. I realized that I really was built for public service."

Gillibrand said one key to being a strong advocate is to let your emotions show.

"That fury, that anger, that drive that comes from your heart is the most powerful leverage you have," she said. "It's the most powerful tool anyone has. Raw emotions are good."

"Advocacy is feeling passionately about what drives you, and being heard on that issue."

One of the issues that drives Gillibrand is ending sexual assault and other crimes against women on college campuses, in the military and in society at large. She said change needs to happen.

"We're failing our students; we are failing the men and women in the military; we are failing when it comes to the NFL," she said. "The failure is pervasive and goes to the fundamental problem of a lack of valuing survivors, particularly women."

"Schools have a responsibility under Title IX to maintain a safe environment, and we have a criminal justice system that is designed to put criminals in jail. Neither system is working today for a victim of sexual assault."

She also is a big believer in publicly funded elections.

"The unlimited spending with no disclosures is distorting our democracy," she said. "It is so problematic and what all that unlimited expenditures is doing is creating enormous numbers of negative campaign ads."

Those negative ads deter people from wanting to participate, she said, especially women.

Gillibrand said it's important to have women in politics and in boardrooms across the country for the difference in perspective they can lend.

According to Gillibrand, if a company has at least one woman on its board of directors, it is 40 percent less likely to have to re-state its earnings.

The female members of the Armed Services Committee, of which Gillibrand is a member, helped change the direction of military readiness talks from simply being about ships and guns to personnel issues, like the high rates of divorce, suicide and domestic violence among military members.

Gillibrand's appearance was sponsored by Warwick's book store, UCLA School of Law Alumni, Run Women Run, California Western School of Law, American Constitution Society.