

## Military Spouse Group Pushes the Political Envelope

On the heels of widespread pension cut debate, Military spouses are rallying on the Hill next week to learn about what it takes to run for office, from both sides of the aisle.

*Washington, D.C. – For Immediate Release.*

Congressional decisions affect every aspect of military family life: wages, whether to go to war, how often and where families move, and what happens to their pensions. Highly educated and professionally-trained military spouses are increasing in numbers, and noticing the lack of understanding about them in Congress. They've decided the best way to remedy the problem is to elect more of their own to serve on Capitol Hill.



To change the conversation in Washington, D.C., In Gear Career and the Military Spouse JD Network (MSJDN) have teamed up to deliver insider tips for military spouses interested in running for Congress. On Tuesday February 11, 2014 at the Reserve Officers Association, Republicans and Democrats alike are lined up to present "Homefront Rising" to the group of 50 spouses. The packed agenda includes instructions about how to build a public image, understand the financial requirements and responsibilities of campaigning, pitch policy to lawmakers, and staff and manage an effective campaign.

Presenters include US Army veteran and double amputee Rep. Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill), military spouse and South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley (R), USMC veteran and Rep. Scott Rigell (R-Va), military brat and Congresswoman Niki Tsongas (D-Mass), Naval Aviator and Iraq/Afghanistan veteran and reservist Rep. Jim Bridenstine (R-Ok), Current National Guardswoman and Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-Hi), and USAF Veteran and Rep. Dave Reichert (R-Wa).

MSJDN President Mary Reding and In Gear Career founders and Wittenberg Weiner co-owners Lauren Weiner and Donna Huneycutt came up with the idea because they wanted to see the talents of their colleagues used for the entire community. "We're excited about seeing highly qualified candidates who happen to be married to the military step forward, and we're educating them with the best tools available. They're representatives that can give our entire military community a place at the table," says Reding.

The trio sees the program as exactly the kind of progress that's needed in Washington, D.C. right now. "When these military families have a clear place at the table, our country will be stronger for it," says Weiner. Huneycutt points out why it makes sense to tap into the military spouse community: "Military spouse businesswomen, policy experts, volunteers and academics among us understand and personally experience the relationship between government policy decisions and real world ripple effects on families. Our time has come to lead."

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- Lauren Wiener  
Wittenberg Weiner Consulting

Details about how to attend the event can be obtained from the Eventbrite.com listing at:  
<http://www.eventbrite.com/e/homefront-rising-military-spouse-political-summit-tickets-9262754147?err=29>



**Additional information and media passes for the event:**  
Lori Volkman, MSJDN Communications Director  
[volkman.lori@gmail.com](mailto:volkman.lori@gmail.com) and (360) 521-7555



**About the Military Spouse JD Network:** An international association of legal professionals dedicated to improving the lives of military families, MSJDN advocates for licensing accommodations for military spouses, including bar membership without additional examination, and includes military spouses and partners from all branches of the United States Military, spouses and partners of retired service members and legal and military organizations who support their mission. [www.msjdn.org](http://www.msjdn.org)

**About In Gear Career:** Through local chapters and a strong national network, In Gear Career strives to improve the quality of life, morale and stability for military families by helping military spouses find professional employment and maintain long term career paths despite the transient nature and demands of the military lifestyle. Through local and online community building efforts they enable the exchange of accurate, timely and topical information and promote advocacy programs. [www.ingearcareer.org](http://www.ingearcareer.org)



**About Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth:** In 2004 on a National Guard deployment to Iraq as one of the first women pilots to fly combat missions, Tammy Duckworth's helicopter was hit by an RPG and she lost both her legs. While recovering she became an advocate and testified before Congress regarding care for wounded warriors. After her recovery she served as the Illinois Dept of Veterans Affairs Director and the Asst Sec of Veterans Affairs by appointment of President Obama. She was elected to Congress in 2012, and still serves as a drilling reservist in the Illinois Army National Guard. Her husband Bryan is also an Army Major.



**About Congressman Jim Bridenstine:** Before being elected to serve in Congress in 2012, Bridenstine was an E-2C Hawkeye and F-18 Hornet pilot for the United States Navy, serving in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Naval Strike and Warfare Center. Following active duty, he obtained an MBA at Cornell and continues to serve as a LCDR in the USN Reserve. He and his wife Michelle live in Tulsa, Oklahoma with their three children, ages 7, 5, and 2. Bridenstine currently serves on the House Armed Services Committee and the Science, Space and Technology Committee.



**About Governor Nikki Haley:** Nikki R. Haley was elected the 116th Governor of South Carolina in November 2010 and has focused on creating jobs and improving the business climate in South Carolina. With more than \$9.9 billion in capital investment and over 43,000 new jobs, the state now has one of the fastest growing manufacturing sectors in the U.S. and consistently ranks as a top place for doing business. Gov. Haley's common sense and reform minded approach to government regulation, combined with an unwavering support for manufacturing has greatly contributed to the increase in jobs and manufacturing in South Carolina.



**About Congresswoman Niki Tsongas:** When she was elected to the House of Representatives in 2007, Rep. Niki Tsongas was the first woman in 25 years to serve in Congress on behalf of Massachusetts. Combining the deep tradition of military service running throughout her district with values instilled by her father, an Air Force Colonel who survived the attack on Pearl Harbor, Tsongas is especially honored to serve on the House Armed Services Committee. She has authored multiple pieces of legislation that provide new tools to the armed forces to combat sexual assault and quicker, more effective support resources for victims.



**About Congressman Dave Reichert:** Congressman Reichert began his public service career in the United States Air Force Reserve and as lead detective in the King County Sheriff's Office on the Green River Task Force, bringing to justice one of the most notorious serial killers in U.S. history. Reichert, a two-time Medal of Valor recipient, became King County Sheriff in 1997. In 2004, Reichert was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and is now serving his third term.



**About Congressman Scott Rigell:** A USMC Veteran, Rigell was elected to represent Virginia's Second Congressional District in 2010, and serves on the House Armed Services Committee and the House Budget Committee. He has made creating jobs, strengthening our military, and controlling federal spending his most urgent priorities. Rigell was instrumental in the successful effort to keep all East Coast aircraft carriers based in Norfolk, and introduced language improving military housing, which was later included in the FY2013 National Defense Authorization Act.



**About Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard:** After becoming the youngest person ever elected to the Hawaii State Legislature in 2002, Gabbard joined the National Guard and deployed to Iraq in 2004, eventually serving two tours of combat duty in the Middle East. In between her two tours, she worked in the U.S. Senate as a legislative aide where she advised on state issues including homeland security and veterans' affairs. Rep. Gabbard is currently Vice-Chair of the Democratic National Committee.