

Concerned Women Today – November 17th, 2021
Living God's Way with Special Guest Rep. Vicky Hartzler

Intro: As humans, we want to plan our lives. We want to plan out where we want to go, what we want to do, what we want to be when we grow up. And that's very normal, but we also know as Christians, sometimes God has a better plan for us. Today I am interviewing Congresswoman Vicky Hartzler, and she's going to tell us a little bit about her journey from being a high school home ec teacher to becoming one of the leading women in Congress today.

Penny: Hi, I'm Penny Young Nance, CEO, and President of Concerned Women for America. I am joined today by a spectacular leader, a faithful woman of God, who I've been friends with for a number of years, and so welcome Congresswoman Vicky Hartzler from the great state of Missouri, who has been a prayer partner has been a support and sister in Christ. I am just so excited. This is the first time I've had you on Concerned Women Today. Isn't it, Vicky?

Rep. Hartzler: It is. And I'm so excited to be with you, Penny. This is great.

Penny: So you've served in Congress for 11 years and have had just an amazing career in and we'll get to that in just a second. You've been a powerhouse on the pro-life issue. You've been a fighter, a stalwart for conservative women. But I wanted to go back, tell us how you got, where you are today. Like what, how did it start out? Did you always know you wanted to serve in Congress?

Rep. Hartzler: Well, not in Congress, but I did ask Jesus into my heart when I was nine. I was making mud pies soon after that, on my friend's sidewalk, talking to God, asking Him, what do you want me to be when I grow up? I knew I wanted to be a wife and a mother, but was there something else I could do to make a difference for Him and for others? And I thought of a couple of things, and I thought, nah, I don't want to do that. And then the thought came in my head. You could be a state representative. And I thought, yeah, maybe that's something that I could do. And I kind of forgot about it. But as I look back on my life, I was always drawn to politics. After that, if I was walking through a room and the TV was on, the news was on, I'd be paying attention. In high school and there was some elected official that came, spoke at my organization, I'd be paying attention and my friends would be bored to tears. And I could hardly wait to go to the state Capitol and tour it.

So when I got married, I told my husband that, you know, maybe someday I might want to run for state representative, but I always assumed I would be a senior citizen and it would be after I'd retired. So I wasn't expecting to be only 33 and I've only taught school 11 years have no children at that point. And to be called one night while I was grading papers at home and, and to have a man asked me to run for state representative, and I. I honestly at first said, no, I just, um, just thought, I don't know anything about campaigning. It takes money. We're a farmer and a teacher, we don't have money. And politics is a dirty business. I had gotten to visit the state Capitol when I was in college, and it was very disappointing day. The day I was there, I was pointed out several people who were supposedly having affairs and alcoholics and this sort of

thing. And I was just really disappointed and discouraged, and I thought I don't want to have a thing to do with that place. But it did plant a seed in me that it shouldn't be that way and that we need good people to step up and run who are of faith or else that's all we're going to get. And so I did finally agree.

When he said, would you think about it? Would you pray about it? I said, okay, I'll pray about it. And I just became convinced that God was calling me to run after that. And we didn't know if we were gonna win, but I ran, and we did win. And I believe God gave me a ministry, that public service can be a ministry. In Romans 13, it talks about those in authority. And it says for, he is God's servant. Some versions of the Bible will say he is God's minister to do you good. And he doesn't embarrass sword for nothing, but he also is an agent of God's wrath to punish the wrongdoer. And that's, I believe the basic mission of most elected officials is to do people good and to have law in order to keep people safe.

The problem we have nowadays is what is the definition of good. We have too many people serving in office who call evil good and good evil. And that's where we need people of faith to run for office. And so, I was thankful to serve six years of the Missouri, I did get to become a mom and so I chose not to run for reelection. Went home, joined the Concerned Women for America from a letter I received in the mail from Beverly LaHaye. I read about this organization of conservative women who believe in prayer and action. And I thought that's me. And so I joined, I'd been a member ever since.

Then I was asked to run for Congress nine years later. And after a lot of thought and prayer, really believed it was what I was supposed to do. And we ran against a 34-year incumbent, Chairman of the Armed Services Committee and we prevailed. So, I feel so blessed.

Penny: Oh my goodness. Everything you said there hit home and brought back memories. I was also kind of the weird kid in that way. I remember going to my state office in Frankfort, Kentucky, and being just so drawn to what they were doing there, the important decisions that were being made. I sat with my dad in the city council meetings because my dad was taking on pornography in our teeny little town and not everybody loved him for it, let me just tell you. I was the weird kid watching CSPAN in college. My friends were like you are so weird, but it, it meant a lot.

And then of course like you, the pro-life issue was a great catalyst for me recognizing just the importance of speaking for the least of these. And like you said, politics and policy is, and can be a ministry for people who are called to it and people who are unwavering and certainly that's been you.

I know I've said this to you before, but it does break my heart and I'd love for you just kind of to address it directly. You know, you had that feeling when you're sitting in your state Capitol and people telling you the dirt on this representative and that representative, you know, that politics is a dirty business and that Christians shouldn't be involved, that we just need to share the gospel and, you know, everything will be fine.

Well, the truth is, I believe, if we are going to protect the church's ability to share the gospel and that we can protect the least of these, then Christians have to be involved in public policy. Certainly we're learning the importance of them being on their school boards. I'd love to hear what you think about that.

Rep. Hartzler: No, we're called to contend for the faith and to be salt and light in every arena. And we do need Christians at the table helping make those decisions. Thank goodness we had Christian men and women back at the beginning of our country who were willing to stand up and to say no to Great Britain, we're going to have freedom, including freedom of religion. We want to be able to worship as we please and were willing to help form this nation. Thank goodness. We had pilgrims, a whole boatload of Christians willing to risk their lives. And half of them gave their lives once they got here with the vision and the hope of having a country that was based on freedom.

That is our founding, but it's up to each generation to protect that. And now it is our time to do that. We can't concede that to people who do not share those basic values that our nation was established on. We have to be there. Too many times we're playing defense as people of faith. We wait till you have a verdict or something come out of the local school board that we don't like, whether it's CRT or whether it's inappropriate sexual material, or you fill in the blank and then we all show up at the school board meeting, which I'm thankful parents are doing that way. That's great. But I think the next step is to take the school board back to run for office successfully and be at the table to begin with

Then we won't have to play defense so much and try to get people to reverse their decisions. We can have people there making those decisions to begin with to ensure that we have an accurate history being taught in our schools, that we don't have inappropriate material being shown to our children, and that faith is included as part of our history story, because it is a big part of our nation and shouldn't be excluded from education.

Penny: Well you're right about all of that. I mean, truthfully, think about the amount of damage that is done before parents even catch on to what's happening. Right? You know, I think about in Loudon County, the little girl that was assaulted in the bathroom by a sexual predator and, you know, perhaps he was posing as transgender in order to get access to her in the bathroom. I suspect he probably was. Because that's what predators do, right? They'll do anything to get to their victims. And then they sent him to another school, and he assaulted another little girl. So what if we'd been on the front end of that?

What if Christians had taken over that school board early on, had run, and won and we supported them? By the way, you can't - you know better than anybody - you can't do it by yourself. In fact, I want you to tell people about your book in just a second but I just think about the fact that to your point of Christian's abandoning institutions, I'm so against that. There's been a lot of, in fact, in the *Washington Post* today, there was a piece about a new school that's being started and I'm always happy for new educational institutions to crop up. It's one in Austin by conservatives who are fleeing these secular educational institutions - they've been

run out. I'm not okay with us giving up because then our kids have to be educational refugees. We've, as a family, as the Nance family have run into that firsthand. I'm not okay with that. I think that we have to urge, in our case in Virginia, our new Governor-Elect Glenn Youngkin to appoint to the board of visitors, the right people who are right thinking and to the public institution boards.

Then to your point as Christians, we need to run for school board seats. You wrote a great book, Vicky, that I've read. For anybody that is listening right now that thinks perhaps they're being called or maybe earlier on in their youth, you know, thought maybe, maybe this is what the Lord wants me to do, but as they pray about it and think about it, I'd love for you to tell them a little bit about the book you wrote a few years ago called *Running God's Way*.

Rep. Hartzler: Yes, you bet. And we need people to run for the library boards and city councils and county government, all areas of government, for sure. But I did write a book called *Running God's Way*, a step-by-step to a successful political campaign, to encourage and equip people of faith to run successfully for office and it's based off of my successful years of campaigning. So, it's very practical - how to do various things: how to do a parade, how to go door-to-door, how to raise money, how to give a speech, but it, additionally, it also uses God's word as the basis of that, because the Bible is the source for wisdom and knowledge for having success in life, not just for eternity and salvation, which it certainly does point everyone to how to do that, but also how to have happy marriage, how to have a successful business, it's everything.

I found these scriptures one night when I was reading and I thought, oh my God, this is the steps to campaigning right here in the Bible. And then a God birthed the idea for the book. And so we wrote this book it's called *Running God's Way*. Please get it yourself or get a whole box load and be like Bill Day, who was the elderly man that called when I was a teacher that night and encouraged me to run. Go out and recruit people, take just a few minutes before that school board filing period opens and say, God, who do I know that I could encourage to run for office? I don't feel led to do it myself, but who might I encourage to run? Approach them or give them a call, say, look, I think you'd be great to run. Here's a book on how to do it. I'll support you if you run, Hey, I'm with you and go out and recruit others. Let's take back our country.

Penny: I agree. And you made a really important point there, and that is we need Christians to run at every level, the local level, all these elected boards rather than just school board, which is very important. But I think it's, there's it serves another point. You have to play, you know, farm-league ball before you're ready for the major leagues and Vicky, I know you probably run into this. We've never talked about this, but it happens a lot to me where I'll have someone call me up and say, 'God's called me to run for governor.' And I'm like, okay, well, so what have you, what have you done before? And they're like 'nothing' and I'm like, okay, well, what do you, do you know anything about raising money? No, I don't know anything about raising money and they just think like an endorsement, my endorsements magically gonna make it happen and maybe, you know, God wants them to run for another reason other than winning. And that might be true. But I think there's a lot to be said for learning. Right? And to be willing to take

that first step before you go straight to the majors, so to speak, and run like you did. You went and ran on the state level before you actually ran for Congress. And actually, I should tell our listeners, you're running for the Senate now in Missouri because Roy Blunt is retiring.

So what, what do you have to say for that person? That's, you know, thinking about it and like, no, I want to go to Congress. I mean, do you feel like it was helpful for you to learn as you go and to play the farm league before you went to the major league?

Rep. Hartzler: Well, it was. But I will say I served with several people in Congress who have never served before in a public office. They were leaders in their community. They were successful in the military. They were businesspeople. They were doctors and they ran, and they were successful here. So, you have to listen to God, but I would say you need to have a track record of showing people that, first of all, you care and that you have a record of service. So, it could be local organizations, your church, other things where you have, and that also builds your network of people. You know, because as you said, Penny, you can not run by yourself. You've got to put together a team and a movement of people who believe in a cause and together you win, but you've got to have volunteers.

So by being involved in the community at work and church, then you have a pool to draw upon friends who know you, who trust you, who believe in you, who will come alongside you and who will help you. And when I researched the book, I was struck by how the liberal organizations do purposely build a farm team for eventually running for Congress or for President or whatever. They go out and recruit and they have candidate schools for local elected office. Then they build on that to further recruit for the state level. And we are flat-footed to be honest, I think as Christians, there is not as much of an organized effort to go out, recruit, buildup candidates, and put them in office at all levels and we need to get better.

Penny: It's true. In fact, we don't even tell people to run, right? If anything, it's the opposite. I really feel very strongly that that is an area that CWA needs to lean into. And that is calling particularly Christian women to pray about it and make sure if you happen to be married, certainly, you know, that talk that needs to be a decision that as a couple you make, because it is, and you can testify, very hard work. You don't get elected by just a whim. You're talking about all the door-to-door, all the fundraising, like it is really hard work, so you've gotta be all in. And I think it is really important as a family. It's just like when I came to CWA, I talked to my husband ahead of time and I was like, well, you know, we really prayed about it as a couple because we knew it was going to be a sacrifice for both of us and I'm sure you've experienced that.

Rep. Hartzler: Yeah, it really is. It's like serving your nation in a different way. And it's, it's certainly not like the military where they have deployments for, you know, nine months or a year or whatever. But in Congress, you know, I leave every week and so I'm gone three or four nights a week away from the family and back and forth. So, you do miss out on somethings, but you know, whom God calls He enables, and God is also faithful. So, know that too. If God does

call you to do that, He doesn't call you to do anything where He is not there with you, and He'll make a way.

Penny: But it isn't always easy. Like you said, I had a friend that said just because God calls you, doesn't mean it's easy.

Rep. Hartzler: That's true too, but He helps you. You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you.

Penny: I wanted to mention that the Leadership Institute has a candidate school. So again, for people read Vicky's book *Running God's Way*, I assume it's available on Amazon and go to Leadership Institute's website and go to candidate school, if you're serious about it. Prepare yourself, right? Just like Esther did, she didn't just walk into the King's chamber, but she invited him to banquet. She was prepared when she did it and had the conversation with him. So we have got to prepare ourselves for that important moment. So anyway, I just thought that was really important to mention that, that there are resources. There are people who can train you to run because it is certainly very difficult. Let's switch to policy, Vicky.

We're hearing a lot and we've been working here internally at CWA, on the NDAA, which is the National Defense Authorization Act. I should point out, and I think this is so great about you, you went from being a home-ec teacher to being on the House Armed Services Committee. I mean, that's not a little thing. You are very high up, high ranking on that committee and have a lot of authority. And we're very grateful for it. We love our troops at CWA. We support our military. We have a lot of military members, wives, parents, everybody that we support.

But I am concerned because there is at least one provision, and maybe more, in this circulated draft of the National Defense Authorization Act. There may be pro-life concerns, which we're looking into, and we're not a hundred percent clear. I'm not sure anybody is yet, exactly, on how that all works. But we do know that there's concerns over Selective Service requiring women to register, basically register for the draft. I just wanted to get whatever insight you had into that.

Rep. Hartzler: Yes, that amendment was offered in committee in the House Armed Services Committee while we were marking up the National Defense Authorization Act. I spoke against it, but we did lose that vote. And so, it is currently in the House version of the bill. I'm working to try to get that out at the next stage of the bill, which will be when we go to conference in the Senate. We'll be debating their version here. Well, I'm not quite sure, but hopefully in the next week or two, but I think it's going to be equally difficult, although they may have an amendment to strike it on the Senate side.

I will be part of the conference committee and since I'm ranking member of Tactical Air and Land Forces Subcommittee, I will be at the table. I'm already starting discussions with my fellow members saying, you know, this is not a wise idea and there's several, several reasons. First, I don't think it's needed. Over the century that we have had a Selective Service, it's only been

used 35 years. It's been over almost half a century since we last had the draft and we now have the strongest, best, most professional fighting force in the world that is all voluntary. Part of the reason that it is so strong is because people want to be in there. They are of a professional caliber, they make a profession, a career of it, and we are so grateful and proud of them for that. So, there's really not a need for this draft.

The main reason the sponsor of the bill seemed to want to put this in there was because of her desire for women to be equal and to have equality. So, she's trying to use this as a women, as a political chess piece in order to make some political point when, when it is not needed. So, I've argued against it and I am going to try to just say I don't think we need the draft at all. We don't need the selective service. It's an archaic outdated system. So why don't we just eliminate the whole thing so there's no draft for men or women?

I have two versions. I've introduced legislation, one to totally do away with it. The other one would put it on ice, which it was back 1975 to 1980, Gerald Ford, put it on ice where people didn't have to register. There's just an office somewhere and in case you needed it, it could be stood back up. So, I'm going to be pushing and hoping that maybe we could get one of those versions. And also it's just not a good use of our tax dollars. It costs \$26 million a year to prop up a system that isn't needed and it's not even functioning.

We are facing China, North Korea, Iran, Russia, you name it. We could better use that \$26 million in other places to meet the threats that we are facing or to make sure our current, all voluntary force has the equipment that they need, the training that they need. We don't need to send it to an empty office and certainly don't need it to prove that women are equal. As I said, in committee, women are equal and have been equal for a long time, equal in worth equal in value, equal in opportunity. You don't have to force them to go to war to prove they're equal.

Penny: So the difference, just to make the point here, we're not talking about women who want to serve, who volunteer or are even in combat, because women are in combat now. We're talking forcing women to serve, and 18-to -26 year old's signing up for the draft. By the way, there's many women who, at that point, especially later in their, earlier in their twenties or late mid-twenties that are already moms, right? So key childbearing years, you know, it's this lack of distinction between the sexes, that the other side's really after.

That's really what this is about. We do not believe the military should be sex blind any more than any other institution, because we are equal, but we are different and we welcome and we embrace those differences. That's the one point. The other point is, as much as we don't like it, we got to admit that the government has an incredible amount of data on all of us and if they needed to get in touch with us, they certainly will. So that Selective Service signing up, signing a form when you're 18 is at this point necessary, considering that the government has everything they need on us, including our social security numbers. So, um, it is a little bit perplexing.

The key thing is if the government, the woke people within the government, want to push women into forced - into conscription - if that's what you want to do, then we think perhaps we need to rethink the whole thing.

Rep. Hartzler: Yeah, I agree. And the public is with us on this. In fact, a support for women having to be as part of the Selective Service system and be drafted has dropped 20 points in the last five years. Currently there's only 45%, less than half of Americans that think that's a good idea. So, you know, we don't have public opinion to do that anyway. You know, continue with the system we have without females or do away with it completely. We have, for instance, 17 million males now between 18-and-25 years-old, we have about one and a half million people in the armed services right now.

So even if you double the size, there's plenty of males that have already signed up that could be, you know, called upon. I feel confident in an actual large-scale war that both men and women would voluntarily step up and serve. And I'm very grateful for the 17% of the military that now is women and I support them and they do phenomenal roles to keep us safe. But you know, it's voluntary, so we don't need to change the system. Uh, we don't need to start conscripting when. It's not necessary. It's a poor use of our tax dollars.

Penny: Well Concerned Women for America will be standing strong on this and we're working on the Senate side, you're working on the House side. So just wanted to bring it to the attention of our listeners and ask for their prayer. Before we go, and you've got a lot to do, thank you so much for your time. How can we pray for you, Vicky? What can we be praying for you as you go back to work?

Rep. Hartzler: Well, thank you so much, Penny. I certainly would pray. I appreciate you praying about this issue because I'm at the tip of the spear in these negotiations trying to get some common sense here in this national defense bill, the final version. As it relates to women in the draft, I just pray for success and favor and wisdom on how to do that. But also we have this large bill, they call it the reconciliation bill, Build Back Better, whatever you call it. I call it Build Back Beijing Bill, over a trillion dollars. That's going to be coming up potentially this week and it's a terrible idea.

So, if we could pray against this wasteful spending, that's going to stand up more, 150 new socialist programs, raising taxes and spending money we don't have. We need to pray that is stopped.

Penny: Amen. Well, we will. And we'll pray for you, Vicky. And just again, thank you for your service and thank you - it's it is like a deployment, you've done such incredible work. I had a great clip of you standing for life and standing for little babies on the House floor, and it was just so beautiful to see a woman, a strong woman, stand there and speak up for the least of these. So, thank you for everything you do. Thank you for your work on life. And thank you for being a great Christian leader.

Rep. Hartzler: No, it's an honor. And thank you Penny, for all that you do. It's wonderful to get to be friends with you and to serve in this way, serve the Lord in this way. So, thank you so much.

Penny: That's all we have for today. Thank you so much for joining us at Concerned Women Today.