

Getting Curious with Jonathan Van Ness & Wendy Davis

JVN [00:00:02] Welcome to "Getting Curious", I'm Jonathan Van Ness. And every week I sit down for a 40 minute conversation with a brilliant person to learn all about something that makes me curious. On today's episode, I'm joined by Wendy Davis, a former state senator from the state of Texas, "Where I ask her, how are you going to flip Texas' 21st congressional district blue in 2020"? If Wendy Davis rings a bell for you, she was a former state senator from Texas who successfully performed a gorgeous filibuster. An incredible story that we're going to get in to now. So without any further ado, here we go with Wendy Davis. Welcome to "Getting Curious". I'm so excited to introduce our guest. I'm just going to jump right in. Senator Wendy Davis from Texas. You if you are like you like, why do, you're like, I can't think of that as being one of the one of the two senators from Texas. That's because she's a state senator, was a state senator. And you may remember her from doing one of the most epic filibusters to help saved, save people's rights to reproductive health care in Texas.

WENDY DAVIS [00:01:06] That's right. Hi, Jonathan.

JVN [00:01:08] Hi.

WENDY DAVIS [00:01:08] Welcome to Austin, Texas.

JVN [00:01:10] Thank you so much for having me here.

WENDY DAVIS [00:01:12] And please call me Wendy.

JVN [00:01:12] OK, OK. OK. I have as everyone probably know, I have a hard time calling people who I respect by their first names when they're senators or have been senators. Because I feel, you know what? I've always loved a title. I love PhD, Miss Universe.

WENDY DAVIS [00:01:25] That's so funny.

JVN [00:01:25] Like a cheerleader. Like I love a good title. So I feel like, you know, you work so hard to get that title. And, but you know, it's soon to be Congressperson Davis.

WENDY DAVIS [00:01:33] I certainly hope so. Yes.

JVN [00:01:35] So let's hear a little bit about that. So like what has-? So the filibuster was in?

WENDY DAVIS [00:01:39] 2013.

JVN [00:01:41] 2013. You're a state senator at the time.

WENDY DAVIS [00:01:44] Yes.

JVN [00:01:44] And then since then, you have been busy defending Texas from all sorts of stuff.

WENDY DAVIS [00:01:49] Trying.

JVN [00:01:50] Trying. And now, though. But so for the election next year, election 2020, you're running to.

WENDY DAVIS [00:01:57] I'm running to defeat Chip Roy. He is Ted Cruz's former chief of staff. He's in his freshman term. It's congressional district 21. And this district is one that is in play because it's been getting bluer and bluer over time. It's like so many of those districts in Virginia that flipped a few weeks ago in their election. The suburban and the urban populations here are starting to overwhelm the rural vote, and that means it has an opportunity to flip. And last cycle, he won it by only two and a half points.

JVN [00:02:32] Oh.

WENDY DAVIS [00:02:33] And it really put this on the map. And we really do believe it's going to turn this time. We certainly hope.

JVN [00:02:36] Was that 2016?

WENDY DAVIS [00:02:38] That was in 2018.

JVN [00:02:39] So-.

WENDY DAVIS [00:02:40] Yeah.

JVN [00:02:40] What, are some congressional seats only for two years? Or was he a special appointment or something.

WENDY DAVIS [00:02:44] The Congressional. So U.S. House seats are only two years and the U.S. Senate seats are six years and they run staggered. And so you really never know, you know, which Senate seat is going to be up when. But the congressional, the House, seats are up every two years.

JVN [00:02:58] So AOC will have to like re-run in next year?

WENDY DAVIS [00:03:03] That's right. Yes. I don't think she's going to have a bit of a problem. I don't think she will enter, but I don't think a lot of people realize that congressional seats are for every single congressman, so like Nancy Pelosi has to campaign in every two years.

WENDY DAVIS [00:03:13] You're constantly campaigning. Yes.

JVN [00:03:13] I did not know that.

WENDY DAVIS [00:03:15] Yes. It's brutal for for people who are elected and who are constantly then campaigning to be reelected. Yes.

JVN [00:03:23] I thought it was every four years. I wonder if there is, I wonder if that leads to any dysfunction within the House, because it's just always changing. But I guess also constitutionally, it kind of needs to to like represent like the shifting body of people that it represents.

WENDY DAVIS [00:03:34] Yeah. When I was in the Texas Senate, our terms were four years and I thought that was perfect because the problem with every two years is if you're constantly having to fundraise because your election is right around the corner as soon as you win, then it distracts from your ability really to be throwing yourself full throated, you know, into doing the work that people elected you to do. And it means you've got to be on the phones constantly trying to raise money for the very next election that's coming around the corner. So I wish they were four years, but they're not. The good news about that for democracy is it gives voters an opportunity every two years instead of every four years to determine who is going to serve them. And we hope they're going to decide it will be me in District 21.

JVN [00:04:20] I really-. It better be. Texas, come on. But I think, you know, the fact that the, Chip is his name.

WENDY DAVIS [00:04:26] Yes.

JVN [00:04:26] Yeah. I think the fact that he won by two and a half points. And also I do think that there is a because of the way that the economy is going and because of the way that the the gap between the middle class and like the well, there just isn't a middle class. And so I think because of that, so many people that were living in, you know, coastal towns are a lot of times like moving back home or there is just people that are trying to find a new place to live. That has a lower cost of living.

WENDY DAVIS [00:04:48] Yes.

JVN [00:04:48] So I think because of that, we're seeing this kind of purple of purple-ification, if you will.

WENDY DAVIS [00:04:53] No question.

JVN [00:04:53] Of like Georgia, Arizona, Texas. And we're seeing that more and more. And so hopefully 2020 will, you know, continue to lead us down that path. But I wanted to ask you about I mean, I got to ask you about filibusters.

WENDY DAVIS [00:05:07] Yes.

JVN [00:05:07] And, what are they? What's a filibuster?

WENDY DAVIS [00:05:11] It's such a good question. They're different in Texas than they are in the U.S. Senate. In the U.S. Senate, a filibuster can happen at any time that a bill is up for a vote. And basically, it's an opportunity for a senator to talk a bill for hours and hours and hours and try to forestall a vote being taken. In Texas, you can only filibuster a bill, meaning you talk for hours on a bill. You can only do that if you're on the very end of a legislative session and you're trying to run out the clock. So in Texas, every legislative session ends almost six months after it starts and we only meet every two years and we have literally the clock strikes midnight and the session is over. On the last day.

JVN [00:06:01] Wait, so the state senate of Texas only meets every two years?

WENDY DAVIS [00:06:04] Every two years for six months, essentially. From January through mid-May.

JVN [00:06:10] So and then for mid-May through December.

WENDY DAVIS [00:06:14] And then the whole next year, no legislative session. Thank God most people say.

JVN [00:06:20] But so how does that work for like the laws of Texas if like so that means every other year-.

WENDY DAVIS [00:06:26] Things have to wait.

JVN [00:06:26] Things just have to wait. Is that how it is in every state or is that specific to Texas?

WENDY DAVIS [00:06:29] Some states, but very few. Texas is one of the few. Yes.

JVN [00:06:33] Do we know why that is? Is that like a-?

WENDY DAVIS [00:06:37] You know, I think the idea always was that if you were elected to serve in Texas, that you were also going to have this other full time job somewhere. Right? And so this was supposed to be a part time legislature. And the problem with that, of course, is that it does become a full time job. Even when you're not in session, you're working so hard for your constituents and in preparation for the next session and of course, trying to raise your money for reelection. And the bad part of it is that in Texas, people aren't paid to serve. And so what that means is that if you have a full time job now of being in the legislature, even those it was meant to be a part time job, if you don't have financial resources, you can't serve and so-.

JVN [00:07:19] So it's like people are making bad deals behind the scenes?

WENDY DAVIS [00:07:22] Yeah. It just means that you're cutting out a whole group of people from being able to be in these decision-making bodies whose experiences need to be there. Right? People who are working for a living and who are the ones who are facing the real struggles that need solutions. But they can't be in a legislative body because they can't afford to be there.

JVN [00:07:44] And it also seems like a good way for corruption. Like if you can't work, it's like then you're basically just like a free agent for a lot of big interests to come in and kind of like buy you off.

WENDY DAVIS [00:07:53] Absolutely. No question whatsoever.

JVN [00:07:54] Now we did look into your voting record, honey.

WENDY DAVIS [00:07:55] Yes.

JVN [00:07:56] And it's gorgeous.

WENDY DAVIS [00:07:56] Thank you.

JVN [00:07:56] It is so good. You were just like, you are so, you just you didn't get paid. You're so good. Congratulations.

WENDY DAVIS [00:08:01] Thank you.

JVN [00:08:02] So but basically, I think another thing that I just want to kind of echo back and just point out, it's like so state laws that govern sessions, filibusters, all things legislation is really different state-to-state.

WENDY DAVIS [00:08:14] Absolutely different state to state. And so back to the filibuster in Texas. What that means is you, you're trying to run a bill out to the end of the clock on the last day of a session. And it may be that that bill comes up very early in the day. And so you've got to talk the entire rest of the day. Right? For me, the bill that I was filibustering came up at 11:00, 11:00 a.m. and that meant that I had 13 hours that I had to talk to try to get to the midnight deadline. The rules in Texas are very severe. You cannot have a sip of water. You cannot lean on your desk. You cannot have a hard candy or a piece of food. And you cannot leave the floor to go to the restroom.

JVN [00:08:58] Can you put your hands on like a little desk thing?

WENDY DAVIS [00:09:01] Not if you're leaning. So you just you have to be careful not to do it or you're gonna get called out.

JVN [00:09:06] Lightly touch.

WENDY DAVIS [00:09:07] Right? And so you have to come really prepared. The way I prepared was at about 6 o'clock in the morning, the day of my filibuster, a doctor came over and inserted a catheter that I had strapped to my leg. And that's why I had that long dress on in that long blue coat, because I was, you know, trying to hide the fact that I had a catheter bag on my leg.

JVN [00:09:28] Now one thing really quick.

WENDY DAVIS [00:09:29] Yes.

JVN [00:09:29] What was the bill you were filibustering?

WENDY DAVIS [00:09:31] What this bill would have done, it had multiple provisions in it in our state of 28 million people. It was centered around trying to close all or as many of the abortion clinics that operate in Texas as possible. We currently have 42. It would have taken to a, us to 5. And what that would mean is that people all over our state would no longer have the opportunity to access their legal right to abortion.

JVN [00:09:57] And this was like, that, because the newer trend on abortion legislation that's aimed at closing Planned Parenthood is like the heartbeat bills that we're seeing being passed.

WENDY DAVIS [00:10:06] Yes.

JVN [00:10:06] This spate of them was like more about like the admitting privileges and like the hallway size.

WENDY DAVIS [00:10:11] Exactly.

JVN [00:10:12] And like-. And things that like national doctors associations are like, this is ridiculous. This is like very, like one of the safest outpatient procedures you can do. Like, you do not need to have like 18 wide hall or 18 foot wide hallways, like this is blatant trying to control people's rights and access to health care, or to reproductive health care, like clear and simple.

WENDY DAVIS [00:10:31] That's right.

JVN [00:10:31] But I think those were all defeated. Thank God. Like through the court system. But in your case, we're going back to the filibuster, because that would have created a situation where it could have gone from 42 to 5 before the courts would have had a chance to catch up with this legislation had it gone into effect.

WENDY DAVIS [00:10:45] That's right. And sadly, even though we did defeat the bill that day, and that in and of itself was quite something.

JVN [00:10:54] And let's go back to, that's, you so I think that's a good opportunity to go back to the story, because if you haven't seen this story, if you have not seen I mean, I think I've seen like 18 different documentaries like on it, and like series on it because you, you know, were and are such an inspiration to the cause and to people everywhere, because that was such an example of democracy doing its job and doing the work for the people, which I mean, just like getting chills talking about it because you came up with this strength that I don't think I've seen that since.

WENDY DAVIS [00:11:22] Thank you.

JVN [00:11:22] And in, in one, you know, epic sitting or standing, you know, I don't think we've seen a feat of strength like that since.

WENDY DAVIS [00:11:31] What was great about it here in our state was that we're a state where when things like that happen, we tend to give up before we even start. Right? Like the deck is so stacked and we are a majority Republican legislature with a Republican governor. And it's been that way for a long time. But for whatever reason, on that day, people who woke up in the morning eating their cold cereal, no intention to come into the Texas capital. They started hearing about it on social media. The power of social media. Right? And they just started showing up. And before long, thousands of people were in the Texas capital. Our capital is the biggest in the country. Of course. Texas.

JVN [00:12:10] Yeah.

WENDY DAVIS [00:12:11] And it was the first time in the history that it had to be closed because it filled to capacity. And still people came and so what was beautiful about it was that at the end of the night, we all felt like we were in this together. I knew that I wasn't standing there by myself. I had no idea what was happening on social media. But I knew that people were with me in the capital. And in the last 15 minutes before midnight. After a lot of breaking procedural rules, the

filibuster was called to an end and the people who were there rose in the Senate gallery and started screaming with all their might.

JVN [00:12:48] Because? Because you get like three call outs or something?

WENDY DAVIS [00:12:51] Exactly.

JVN [00:12:52] Actually, my producer told me you had to take a break like four minutes ago, but I didn't wanna interrupt the story. But now, since I interrupted it naturally, anyway, because I have more questions 'cause I didn't want to breeze through it so quickly? I will just take this break and I'm gonna make you guys listen to these two commercials and then come back and listen to-. I don't mean to say it like that. Like please listen, these two commercials, and thanks so much for listening. We'll be right back with more Senator Wendy Davis, who's about to be Congressperson Wendy Davis right after the break. Welcome back to "Getting Curious", this is Jonathan Van Ness. So there are when you do the filibuster for Texas rules. Like you get like three of these call-out things, correct?

WENDY DAVIS [00:13:30] Right.

JVN [00:13:30] And that means if you're leaning, if you realize you had a piece of gum or something.

WENDY DAVIS [00:13:35] Yes, if you wander off topic. You have to stay on topic. And they called me out for the most ridiculous things. One was that my back started hurting like, I don't know, five hours in and one of my Senate colleagues helped put a back brace on me. And there's a rule that you cannot be assisted in a filibuster by a fellow senator. And what that means is you've got to do it by yourself. Like you can't just give someone the floor for an hour and let them talk. Right? And they interpreted that rule to mean that he was, quote unquote, assisting a fellow senator when he was helping me to buckle the back brace. And then they called me out on talking about the history of abortion rights in Texas and reproductive rights writ large. They called me out as if those things somehow we're not germane to the topic that we were talking about. So they were just looking for ways. They were bound and determined they were going to end the filibuster, deny us the right to do what so many others had been able to do in Texas. And what was so beautiful about it was that in that moment when the filibuster was called to an end.

JVN [00:14:40] Because why? Why did they call it?

WENDY DAVIS [00:14:42] We got to the third strike and then we debated it for about an hour and a half, whether that had been a correct ruling. And my fellow senators, particularly Senator Kirk Watson, who is here in the Austin area, he just masterfully used the clock. You know, arguing the procedural points of order over and over and over again. And ultimately, we got to a final decision on it 15 minutes before midnight and the chair ruled the filibuster is over. And the people who had been sitting there so respectfully-

JVN [00:15:18] Meaning that you didn't get to finish it?

WENDY DAVIS [00:15:20] I didn't get to finish. And we thought it was over. We thought the bill was going to get voted on.

JVN [00:15:25] Yeah.

WENDY DAVIS [00:15:25] After all this. Right? And then the people rose. They started screaming in the Senate gallery and then up and down the hallway and every level of the rotunda and outside on the capitol lawn. And they created so much chaos that we got it passed the midnight deadline before the final vote was taken. It was amazing. The secretary of the Senate was like actually calling out people's names for the vote. And we were voting and the clock was ticking and we were watching it. The big hand go past the twelve. And sure enough, 12:03 was when the last vote came in. And so we killed it.

JVN [00:16:01] And so it was null and void, it was null and void? Oh, my god.

WENDY DAVIS [00:16:05] It was a beautiful moment in democracy. Just to remind us that when we show up. Right? I'm sure the people who came that day had no idea that they were going to do something that magical. Right? That they were actually going to participate in a way that was going to make a difference. And I feel like it infected us in the most beautiful way in Texas with the understanding that, yes, these fights are worth waging. And yes, the deck is stacked, but we have power if we will stand up and use it. And so I'm proud of what I was able to do that day, but I'm mostly proud of the fact that it really was a group effort. And it was such a beautiful example of what we can all achieve if we just put our minds and our hearts and our bodies forward to help make it happen.

JVN [00:16:50] And really, it's a story of protest.

WENDY DAVIS [00:16:53] Yes.

JVN [00:16:53] I mean, in the moment, protests like I don't care if I lose the money from work that day, like I'm get-, I'm going to-.

WENDY DAVIS [00:16:58] People got arrested.

JVN [00:16:59] Yeah. Yeah, I mean, those people have to go. So it's like. And so I'm just struck by how much has changed since 2013. Obviously, who would have thought we were going to elect like a host of "The Apprentice" who never even won an Emmy to be the president of the United States? Who would have known that that president, or who would have known in 2015, we would have Mitch fucking McConnell like Stonewall Merrick Garland for an entire year.

WENDY DAVIS [00:17:23] I know.

JVN [00:17:23] We now do have like the, you know, fanatical right wing religious, smaller percentage of Americans like in control, like really endangering like Roe v. Wade. I mean, we have several cases that could I mean, they're like being heard.

WENDY DAVIS [00:17:38] That's right.

JVN [00:17:39] So it's like I don't think anyone could have predicted the Merrick Garland thing. No one could have predicted Donald Trump. And then, you know, Kavanaugh, Gorsuch and now like

Roe v. Wade really does have, it is an unprecedented peril. I think now things like in the Virginia House of Delegates, like with Danica Rome and we have the 2018 midterm elections. And then more recently, we have the statehouse of Virginia and their state senate like flipping, which is incredible.

WENDY DAVIS [00:18:03] It's amazing.

JVN [00:18:03] We do have ground swell. But you do see that these like abortion laws are getting more draconian and scarier and more like straight to the point.

WENDY DAVIS [00:18:11] They are.

JVN [00:18:11] And they're more pervasive in spreading all over. And so the demonization of people who seek reproductive health care, because really abortion is not a new topic. Like people have been seeking abortions for hundreds of years in all sorts of different ways. And they always will. It is because-

WENDY DAVIS [00:18:25] That's right.

JVN [00:18:25] And so it's like we can either have young people, you know, really experiencing horrific deaths and traumas from like having abortion be illegal or we can keep it legal and keep it fully accessible as it is guaranteed in the Constitution and like keep it like that forever. But the GOP seems really intent on, you know, not wanting that to be the case.

WENDY DAVIS [00:18:46] Yes.

JVN [00:18:46] And so as a Texan and as someone who's like running for office, what do you see as, because it's like people get so upset? I was just talking about this after getting to interview Senator Warren. It's like people get so upset about presidential policies. But but look at what Donald Trump's presidential policies have been. And look at how slowly they were able to be inacted because of the checks and balances that are forth, or that our founding fathers like that.

WENDY DAVIS [00:19:10] That's right.

JVN [00:19:10] So, I mean, we would have had the Muslim ban like in its entirety without those-.

WENDY DAVIS [00:19:14] That's right.

JVN [00:19:15] I mean, he was forced like kind of change. And it still is like very clearly a Muslim ban and in my opinion, is very clearly unconstitutional. But if he would have had his druthers, that would have gone into effect full stop right away.

WENDY DAVIS [00:19:25] That's right.

JVN [00:19:25] The Affordable Care Act would have gone out the window full stop right away.

WENDY DAVIS [00:19:28] Exactly.

JVN [00:19:28] And so no president's policies can be enacted unilaterally. We have to get the Senate and we have to get Congress.

WENDY DAVIS [00:19:34] That's right.

JVN [00:19:35] And more directly, especially for southern states. You must capture your state legislatures because that provides the most protection for like you within your borders.

WENDY DAVIS [00:19:44] Exactly, I'm so glad you said that.

JVN [00:19:44] Well, I think that's it-. And I don't. And, you know, I think we, I think the biggest fault of Democrats over the last 15 years, 16 years, has been the refusal to educate our constituents on how things work.

WENDY DAVIS [00:19:56] Yeah.

JVN [00:19:57] And the refusal to answer questions like legislation at the end of the day is negotiation.

WENDY DAVIS [00:20:03] Right, that's right.

JVN [00:20:04] One side wants to do one thing. The other side wants to do-, and when you're negotiating, one side is always going to come in with its highest wants and they're going to come in hot and they you're going to settle somewhere underneath that. So it's like people don't understand. So this pushback that Elizabeth Warren is having right now on saying, look, you're not going to seek Medicare for all until the third year and like you're talking out of both sides of your mouth, blah blah blah. It's like, no. She's being prepared in both events. If she gets a super majority in some freak occasion in the Senate and Congress, she has plans for both, you know, one that involves executive, executive action plus legislation or one that's like could be with legislation altogether. But it's like the chances of us getting like retain the House and getting a super majority in the Senate are like but people probably thought the chance of you doing that filibuster were probably slim to none too, and look at what you did. So I think the power of democracy. Right?

WENDY DAVIS [00:20:49] Yeah. You're so right. I mean, I love what you're touching on here because it's about our three branches of government. Right? And, you know, I learned this. I remember when I was in elementary school about the legislative branch and the executive branch and the judicial branch. Right? And what has really held our country together over time and what is so beautiful about our constitutional parameters that have held us together is that those branches have balanced each other. We are in danger right now, though, of that balance. And the reason is that for the first time, we have a Congress whose party is the same as the president. That is literally willing to lead, to follow him off the edge of a cliff. They, they've set aside what is important for the country and they've set aside our constitutional principles and values to follow him off that cliff. That means they're not balancing him anymore. And unless we can hold that majority in the U.S. House and hopefully gain a majority in the U.S. Senate and stop Mitch McConnell from the evilness that he is up to, we're going to continue to see that. Right? And so then that leaves the courts. And that's where I, as a trained lawyer, find myself feeling most worried right now.

JVN [00:22:17] Yes, lawyer.

WENDY DAVIS [00:22:17] Yes. Because not only do we have the Supreme Court comprised of people who are also willing to go off that cliff, it seems. But Donald Trump has put more people on federal, on the federal bench of any president maybe ever, I don't know, I may be speaking out of turn when I say that. But-

JVN [00:22:40] Yeah. This is what people are sleeping on. It's really high.

WENDY DAVIS [00:22:40] It's extremely high.

JVN [00:22:42] And circuit courts are plenty. He was just reading. He's like, he's just flipped one of the circuit courts.

WENDY DAVIS [00:22:47] Yes. Yes. And that is so dangerous because the balance.

JVN [00:22:50] But that's so scary because they shouldn't be so partisan.

WENDY DAVIS [00:22:51] No, they shouldn't at all.

JVN [00:22:52] Because I feel like Obama, I've never remembered like-,,

WENDY DAVIS [00:22:55] That's right.

JVN [00:22:55] These judges are so partisan.

WENDY DAVIS [00:22:57] So.

JVN [00:22:58] And under-qualified.

WENDY DAVIS [00:22:59] That's right.

JVN [00:23:00] Because what's like that national bar association? Or there's like some national association.

WENDY DAVIS [00:23:02] The Heritage Foundation is funneling all these people to the Trump administration saying-.

JVN [00:23:08] But there's that one association that keeps saying that, like these people aren't ready. It's like this association that always-.

WENDY DAVIS [00:23:12] Oh yes. Yes. The American Bar Association is saying that. That's right.

JVN [00:23:14] Yeah, like these people don't have the experience and it's like the third one and it's like that-.

WENDY DAVIS [00:23:18] That's right.

JVN [00:23:19] That's unprecedented. We've never had a president put forward so many people that we're like not vetted.

WENDY DAVIS [00:23:24] Yeah. They're vetting as a litmus test. And the litmus test is that they have to be extreme right folks who are bound and determined to take some of our civil and other rights away that the history of the Supreme Court has put in place for us over time in this country. And so we all have to be so worried about that. And that's why we have got to regain the presidency and we've got to regain the House and the Senate at the U.S. level, because we're not going to be able to right that balance if we don't. All three branches are starting to coalesce in a way that is really dangerous for us. And that's really one of the reasons I wanted to step forward and run, right now.

JVN [00:24:12] So I have a candid question. And if it is like, if, we can really like literally cut it the fuck out. But I am like, this is what I'm concerned about. And this like what I like, this is like what my eye is on. How are we going to unify our party?

WENDY DAVIS [00:24:26] Yeah. I worry about that too.

JVN [00:24:26] Because the centrist and the, because I ended up endorsing Elizabeth Warren. I totally stand behind her. I, I believe that she is the next president. I love her policies. Even the wealth tax. And I think, you know, for Wall Street and for so many people, like there are things that just, you know, really scare them.

WENDY DAVIS [00:24:43] Yeah.

JVN [00:24:43] I think there are certain things that are said that like let's focus on things that are like really doable, that we should really like be spending like all of our time on. Like that's what people really want to talk about. Like, I feel like that particular point is like was, like does he have a history that is super questionable? Absolutely. Like, I don't think he's prepared to be a Supreme Court justice either. But the Senate confirmed him.

WENDY DAVIS [00:25:04] Right.

JVN [00:25:04] And are we really going to like you know, we have a president who's currently abusing power. And Ruth B, Ruth Bader Ginsburg said that like all of his staff is like mostly female. He's voted against the president a couple times. And so is Gorsuch.

WENDY DAVIS [00:25:16] Yeah.

JVN [00:25:17] They have actually both voted kind of against like the White House interests like a couple times so I kind of had my fingers crossed for this financial records thin. Kind of. If that feels really crazy I just said that, Julie, we could probably edit that out. But it's just like my like literal like thoughts sometimes so.

WENDY DAVIS [00:25:30] Yeah.

JVN [00:25:31] But it's like what are we going to do? Because it's like I, I think it's, like I had, I had Alicia Garza, who is one of the original founders of "Black Lives matter".

WENDY DAVIS [00:25:40] Yes, I love her.

JVN [00:25:41] I love her too. And she was really kind of like really letting me know about some of the internal workings of like some of the racism that is like goes on in the Democratic Party.

WENDY DAVIS [00:25:50] Yes.

JVN [00:25:50] And and I bet like really following the money. And it's like a lot of state legislatures, like don't empower their black caucuses with like with their fair share of the amount of money. And we don't really invest in people of color the way.

WENDY DAVIS [00:26:02] That's right.

JVN [00:26:02] And we just assume that that they're going, that people of color are going to turn out for Democrats and it's like you-. And so one thing that I've been thinking about a lot lately is if we're going to, you know, get the Equality Act passed and attach that to that civil rights legislation, I feel like as a platform, as a party, we need to be talking. And that's one thing that Elizabeth Warren just did in Atlanta, which I thought is so great. Just, we need to talk about, talk about privilege and talk about what this country was really built on so that-.

WENDY DAVIS [00:26:29] Right. Hundred percent.

JVN [00:26:29] Because we have to show up for, like no one's free until we're all free.

WENDY DAVIS [00:26:32] That's right.

JVN [00:26:32] And there is so much racism and there's so much transphobia.

WENDY DAVIS [00:26:36] That's right.

JVN [00:26:36] Because like all white people really need to be like showing up for every oppressed community right now.

WENDY DAVIS [00:26:40] Yes.

JVN [00:26:40] Much like what happened the day that your filibuster passed.

WENDY DAVIS [00:26:43] Right.

JVN [00:26:43] So I believe that on one side. But then on this other side, it's like sometimes progressives are like, really, really, really, really, really like we struggle with perfectionism, you know?

WENDY DAVIS [00:26:52] Yes, I know.

JVN [00:26:52] And so and I've experienced that firsthand on Twitter, with people on Twitter, who honestly, the more I look at, I really do think that they might be Russian bots because they are always from Great Britain.

WENDY DAVIS [00:27:01] Very likely.

JVN [00:27:02] And they're always like really mean. Oh my god, we got to take a really quick break. We're going to be right back with more "Getting Curious" after this. Welcome back to "Getting Curious" with Senator Wendy Davis. Get it out? Do you need, have some water. Cough it out. But yeah, I mean, it's like, so what are your constituents saying? I mean, you, your future constituents? I'm hoping and I, actually I'm not hoping, I know that they will be so it's fierce.

WENDY DAVIS [00:27:30] Thank you.

JVN [00:27:31] But it's like you're on the ground. You're campaigning like you live in Texas. It's like it is, you know, in the middle south of the country. But, you know, central.

WENDY DAVIS [00:27:40] Yeah.

JVN [00:27:40] As far as like east to west. So it's like what are people saying here? Like are people like, do we feel like this was an impeachable offense? Do we feel like, are we hearing a lot of Elizabeth and Bernie? We're hearing a lot of Pete? Are we hearing, like what are people scared about?

WENDY DAVIS [00:27:53] Really what we're hearing is I feel like because Texas has been such a challenge for people of our progressive values. We are more accustomed to coalescing behind our candidate. Right? Like it, we, we know that we cannot be our own worst enemy here. We've got to come behind the people who come through these primaries and work for them with everything we've got. And I am definitely going to do that no matter whom our Democratic nominee for president is. We cannot give up, as the saying goes, the good for the perfect. Right?

JVN [00:28:33] Wait, what does that say? What is that saying? It's just went over my head.

WENDY DAVIS [00:28:37] There's a saying about the perfect for the good like you, you can't give up the perfect for the good. I can't remember. I think I'm saying it backwards.

JVN [00:28:43] No I hear what you're saying. It's like you can't-

WENDY DAVIS [00:28:45] We can't strive for perfection and then decide when we don't get it that we're going to take our ball and go home.

JVN [00:28:49] Fuck all of it. Yes.

WENDY DAVIS [00:28:50] Right? And so we need to be mindful of that. But what people are talking about here, and I've been traveling all over my district, hosting listening sessions, meeting with people one-on-one, small groups, larger groups. There are three main issues that rise to the top. People are really concerned about health care in Texas and we're concerned about it everywhere, justifiably. But in our state, we have the highest percentage of uninsured people, the highest percentage of uninsured women, the highest percentage of uninsured children. We have more than double the rate, almost double the rate of uninsured people of any other state in the country. And we're the only state that has double digit numbers for uninsured children.

JVN [00:29:37] Why is that?

WENDY DAVIS [00:29:37] And it's something to be so concerned about. Mostly because when the Affordable Care Act was enacted and most states, even Republican led states, decided that it made sense to bring their tax dollars back home and expand Medicaid and allow more working people to be covered. Medicaid covers working people. More working people to be covered. That meant they vastly helped to cut the number of uninsured people in their state. Not Texas. And that's why we still have what we have. And the consequence of that, we have one of the highest rates of maternal mortality, not just in the country, but the entire developed world. Three times as bad for black women than white women in our state, and elsewhere. And because we have so many uninsured children, we have a real problem with infant mortality and all of the challenges that families face when they can't access health care. Right? I believe as so many people do. It's, it's a basic human right. And we've got to do everything we can to make sure that we're providing it. That is top of heart and top of mind for people here in our state. So no matter where I am, that issue comes up. It will be my number one objective.

JVN [00:30:56] So do you believe like a Medicare for all sort of plan?

WENDY DAVIS [00:30:59] I believe in any plan we can get to. Speaking of the perfect and the good. Any plan that we can get to that is going to give every single person health care and whether that means transitioning, whatever it means. If people want to keep their health insurance, let them keep their health insurance. But let's have Medicare for everybody else. Right? Let's just do everything we can as quickly as we can to get every insured.

JVN [00:31:24] And, you know, with the supply and demand model. If the govern, if the Medicare for all was like really like slaying it after a couple years, then the other people might be like. I think I want that.

WENDY DAVIS [00:31:33] Yes. Well, you know, that's what should have happened unde-, under the Affordable Care Act, we should have had a public option. And that competitive force in the marketplace, not only would have driven down the cost of insurance in the private marketplace, but it probably could have developed into such a good system that people would choose to leave their private health insurance to join the public option. And the fact that that wasn't actually finally instituted in the last version of the Affordable Care Act that was passed. And by the way, we had a majority of Democrats in the House and the Senate and we couldn't get our Democrats to make that happen. It was really a disappointment.

JVN [00:32:17] Because didn't the aid-, or the Affordable Care Act didn't get passed until-?

WENDY DAVIS [00:32:21] It was in Obama's very first term.

JVN [00:32:23] It was?

WENDY DAVIS [00:32:24] When he had-.

JVN [00:32:25] All three.

WENDY DAVIS [00:32:26] He had all three chambers, right.

JVN [00:32:28] How did we not do that?

WENDY DAVIS [00:32:30] Because we had some Democratic members who would not go for it.

JVN [00:32:34] Because they just thought it would be too expensive? They too centrist.

WENDY DAVIS [00:32:37] I'm really not sure what the forces were. All I know is we didn't get it. And so here we are. Right? And so the very first like most important thing we can do-

JVN [00:32:48] I mean, fucking A, god damn it. And in 2010, for fuck's sake. Do you know? What year did you win your Senate, your Senate election?

WENDY DAVIS [00:32:54] I won in '08. I was on the ballot with President Obama in '08.

JVN [00:32:58] So in 2010, I learned from "Sister District" episode of "Getting Curious". We had the largest loss of state held seats.

WENDY DAVIS [00:33:06] That's right.

JVN [00:33:07] We lost over a thousand state held seats that election 2010.

WENDY DAVIS [00:33:11] It was terrible.

JVN [00:33:11] The ushering in of the Tea Party. And it's like I think in 2008 I was turning 21 and doing a bunch of hair and I was like wasn't paying attention. Like I voted for Barack Obama but I didn't know about any of these states. I don't know what state legislature was. And I think that's part of what I was saying, my criticism for Democratic leaders is, is that like the fact that as someone who's been reading the news, like I've come from a journalist family, like I never knew that. In 2010, I had no clue that was going on. Like, I knew that, like I needed health insurance and I knew that it was like I, I knew things. But I didn't really I didn't know that there was like an eroding away of, like, things. I just thought Barack was the president, I thought we were like slaying it.

WENDY DAVIS [00:33:46] Right. Yeah.

JVN [00:33:46] And you really like behind the scenes. We were kind of all a little bit getting lulled into this like-

WENDY DAVIS [00:33:52] Complacent.

JVN [00:33:52] Yes.

WENDY DAVIS [00:33:53] We were complacent. Yes.

JVN [00:33:56] And so, so basically, health care is the first thing that you're seeing from your constituents. Second is-

WENDY DAVIS [00:33:59] Second is concerns not only about the long term health of our environment, but the short term as well. And when I say short and long. Long term, obviously, because we understand we're on this precipice right? We're, we're at the point of no return. And if people in my generation, your generation, aren't stepping forward and saying we are going to do what needs to be done to stop this. My granddaughters, who are 3 years old and 1 years old, are going to inherit a planet that we failed to do our job to make sure was sustainable for them. That's the long term vision and concern that people have. But shorter term under President Trump, the EPA, the unwinding of administrative environmental protections has been mind boggling. I cannot even, I cannot overstate it. And it has left us with so little protection for the pollution that we breathe. And the problem with the contamination of our water and I heard your episode with Erin Brockovich, which was amazing. We are finding ourselves in this very urgent situation right now in today with the air we're breathing in and the water that we're drinking. And so we got to take these-

JVN [00:35:20] What are the effects of that that we're finding in Texas? Like or, like what are, are people like having like things?

WENDY DAVIS [00:35:24] Well, what's happening in Texas is that in our beautiful Texas Hill country, most of which is in congressional District 21, the state has given over 900 permits to cement quarries without any recognition of the fact that when you have all of that activity going on and all the particulate matter that is going into the air as a consequence of it, that the cumulative impact of all of those quarries may maybe one of them wouldn't create a big problem. Right? But the cumulative impact which the EPA is no longer requiring that we look at, that's not being studied anymore. And so the people who moved out there to be in pristine, beautiful hill country of Texas are finding themselves now inundated and having to worry about their kids and asthma. And if you look at the problem with asthma, not just in Texas, but all over the country, it is one of a crippling part of our health care costs. And it's preventable, right? It's preventable if we were doing the right thing for our environment. And then that community also, we have this huge pipelines, it's called a Kinder Morgan Pipeline, cutting through the heart of the Hill country, where the precious aquifer that filters our water, cleans the water, that serves the Hill country, serves Austin, serves San Antonio. It's being threatened by that. Right? And so when we don't have the kind of protections in place and we don't have people fighting for those, we are literally creating our own worst nightmare and we're the ones doing it. Looking the other way. And so that's a big concern for people. And then the third thing that people are so upset about. As you know, in Texas, more than any other state, we have been a place where we have endured mass shootings. Churches, shopping centers, schools, parks. We feel, we mamas and grandmamas, that our babies can't go anywhere and be safe anymore. And we're so upset at the craven-ness of the Republican Party and their allegiance to the NRA versus their allegiance to our kids. Some moms and grand-moms and dads and granddads. You know, we're just done with that. Right? We're over it. And it's not just that. It's not just-

JVN [00:37:57] And everyone. I mean.

WENDY DAVIS [00:37:59] Yes.

JVN [00:38:00] Like the LGBTQ plus people after-, but it's like it's like everyone.

WENDY DAVIS [00:38:03] Yes. A hundred percent.

JVN [00:38:03] Like I feel like, I mean, every time I come to anywhere. Like I'm, security is like the number one thing I stress about everywhere I go. It is, I mean, we do live in a country where you are not guaranteed your safety because of the Second Amendment. I mean, you just aren't. And I also, I'm still looking for like a constitutional scholar so that we can really, like, break down.

WENDY DAVIS [00:38:28] Yeah.

JVN [00:38:28] 'Cause it's like I don't think that's what the second.

WENDY DAVIS [00:38:30] That's a good curious mindset to have.

JVN [00:38:30] 'Cause I don't think that that's what it says. It's about protecting, it's about us having the right to bear arms and not being infringed upon to maintain a militia against an oppressive like government. It's not so we could go to like the mall and kill everybody. Like that's not what they meant. It was like so you could like shoot bears and stuff. It was like 17 fucking 76 for crying out loud.

WENDY DAVIS [00:38:51] Yes.

JVN [00:38:51] You couldn't even shoot someone if you aimed at right at them like 20 feet away half the time. Because it was seventeen-seventy-fucking-six. So anyway.

WENDY DAVIS [00:38:59] Yeah. And you know it's not, it's not just the fact that we all have to feel the vulnerability to that. It's that our kids are having to learn to feel that vulnerability at a really young age. I had a mom who told me a story the other day that just is heartbreaking. It was in Dallas, it was someone who I was trying to help run in a state house race there. And she told a story about when the tornados came through-

JVN [00:39:30] You're such a good party leader doing that. I love that, it's really good, anyways, keep going, I didn't mean to interrupt you again.

WENDY DAVIS [00:39:36] Thank you. But when the tornadoes came through Dallas a few weeks ago, she, her husband, 7 year old daughter, 5 year old son, are hiding in the bathroom, as we're taught to do here in Tornado Alley. And her 7 year old was scared and so was talking a lot nervously. And her 5 year old son said, "Please be quiet. He'll hear us and he'll shoot us". Because her son-

JVN [00:40:03] Thought it was a shooting drill.

WENDY DAVIS [00:40:04] Had just learned in school that day about an active shooting drill. And so our kids, teachers are telling me that children are having to leave school for mental health supports. Moms are telling me that their kids are having these anxiety stomachaches. They don't want to go to school. We've had to teach them to be afraid. Right? And when things like that are happening and we see this happening with our children, it fires something up inside of us that says we're just not going to take this anymore. Right? And and I'm hearing that more and more and more from people. And none of these people are of a mind that we ought to take people's guns

away from them or stop them from hunting. But people are of the mind that we ought to have commonsense background checks. Right?

JVN [00:40:50] Yeah. It should be harder to get a gun than to drive a car.

WENDY DAVIS [00:40:53] Right. We ought to have red flag laws to keep people in domestic violence situations who have been proven to be in danger to someone else and not be able to have weapons in the house anymore. You know, it just it shouldn't be this hard. And I think people are just so fed up with it now. That's why it's rising to the level of conversation that I'm, I'm hearing out in this district. And I think people are hearing it in districts not only all over the state, but all over the country.

JVN [00:41:23] What about immigration?

WENDY DAVIS [00:41:24] Oh, and yes, of course, immigration has been something that we are on the frontlines of facing here in Texas. And and, you know, this is another one of those issues where in our communities and I feel like Beto O'Rourke did such a beautiful job of talking about this, not only when he was running for president, but also when he was campaigning for U.S. Senate here. We know our border communities and we know how safe they are. We also know how very valuable the immigrant population is to our state and to our workforce and to our economy. This is who we are. This is part of our identity as a state. And to vilify people who are trying to be here who want nothing more than to contribute to us, to give us their time, their talent, their energy, their heart, their passion, and to claim our country as their home and who want very much to become a citizen of our country. To vilify them in the way that we have by planting fear in people's minds that somehow they are coming here to do us harm. And yes, of course, there are people who come across the border who ought not to be coming and who are here with ill intent. But the vast majority of people that are being stopped right now at the border are families in desperate situations. And it's so heartbreaking, I think about this sometimes when I get in my bed at night and I'm pulling up my warm comforter. I think about those families that have been stopped on the other side of our border and they remain in Mexico. Policy now of the Trump administration's living in shantytown tents, freezing without enough food and in danger where they actually are becoming victims of crimes on the other side of our border, when if we could bring them here and process them appropriately under the laws that have been our values, postwar World War 2, our values of providing refuge for those who need it. We learned our lesson the hard way in that regard. We held that dear, right? That we provide asylum. It's just heartbreaking that we've abandoned the principles not only of who we are as Americans, but who we are as Texans. And so I'm going to continue to fight as hard as I can to make sure that that perspective is given voice in this campaign and that the fear mongering that my opponent uses on this particular issue and he does is one that I'm going to fully address.

JVN [00:44:08] So I want to talk, two more closing questions. One.

WENDY DAVIS [00:44:12] Sorry, I'm getting so excited.

JVN [00:44:14] Hell, no, girl. Don't you ever apologize. I am obsessed. One, I was asking, you know what, when it comes to the presidency and I was saying, like, how are we going to unite? You know, kind of both sides of our party to kind of come together to get out that like Obama winning

coalition. I do somehow think that like maybe that coalition, that exact electoral map, like maybe it won't be that exact one, I think it might be-

WENDY DAVIS [00:44:34] Yeah.

JVN [00:44:35] I think it might be, end up being a different one if it's like progressive nominee because it be more, I think it could be different, but I think it could win. But it's like how are we going to unify people to do that? And would in a few sentences what do you, 'cause like that's why I was asking what are people saying here? Because it feels more central, feels more centrist, ish.

WENDY DAVIS [00:44:52] Yeah.

JVN [00:44:52] Compared to like, you know, but maybe that's not really true anymore because maybe the road map is changing. And maybe there is like a lot of liberal-. "cause that's like-. Because, you know how sometimes people are saying in Missouri, like Claire McCaskill for Senate in Missouri, like she didn't go left enough, like by playing down the middle. She didn't like fire up any of the people in St. Louis or Kansas City that were really on the left. I was in Kansas City during that election and I was talking about it a lot. And that's what a lot of people on the ground said. Is they were like, you know, by playing it safe. She didn't get people out of the house. And the other guy was doing so much fear mongering.

WENDY DAVIS [00:45:25] Yes.

JVN [00:45:25] I mean, there was commercials every two seconds about like, she's weak on this. She's weak on that. Why is she take private jets everywhere? She's not like a person of the people anymore. Like, she's, just, it was really vilifying her in every way. Where like male Republican senators, I'm sure take private planes all of the time. Like you think Mitch McConnell flies fuckin coa-, like get out of here.

WENDY DAVIS [00:45:47] Very doubtful.

JVN [00:45:48] Very doubtful. So it's like, how do we, do we play it safe with the center candidate for president? Or do we, like, really go for it?

WENDY DAVIS [00:45:59] You know, here's my feeling as a candidate. And I'm speaking only for myself right now. When I ran for governor here in 2014, I decided that I really needed to listen to people who I thought understood all of this more than me. Right? This was the biggest thing I'd ever done. How do I do this? It seems so hard. And I allowed myself to get what I call message managed. Right? Like it had to, everything I said had to filter through twelve people before it came out of my mouth practically. And when I stepped up to run this time, my advice to myself was be who you are. Be authentic. Fight for the things that really matter to you. Say what you care about. Say what you mean. And you know what? If you lose, great. You did it by going out there fighting for what you really care about and really believe in. I think that's what people look for. And maybe it means that we don't match up 100 percent. Fine. But let's have someone other than Donald Trump in the White House, please. And please, let's all decide. Let's fight like hell for our primary candidate. Right? Let's, let's do everything we can to get them elected. But if they don't win, please don't be so discouraged that you withdraw because we are needed right now more than we have ever been needed in the history of this country. We are literally in danger of losing our small

D, democracy. Literally in danger of it. And we've got to decide we're going to own our power to do something about it, even if it means a person who winds up as our Democratic nominee isn't the one we hoped it would be. We have to defeat Donald Trump.

JVN [00:47:55] Question one B.

WENDY DAVIS [00:47:57] Yes.

JVN [00:47:57] And then two. Would, so if the Texas primary was tomorrow. Not asking who you would vote for.

WENDY DAVIS [00:48:03] Yes.

JVN [00:48:03] Your, if it was further your gerrymandered-as-shit district.

WENDY DAVIS [00:48:07] Yes.

JVN [00:48:07] That you have been, you know, 'cause gerrymandering we didn't get to talk, to speak to, but you are dealing with like this is a very gerrymandered state.

WENDY DAVIS [00:48:16] Very.

JVN [00:48:16] But and this actually we can get there in a second, 'cause it's kind of part of the second question. But if the primaries tomorrow, do you think like and it, actually not like this, your, your district, but just Texas in general.

WENDY DAVIS [00:48:24] Yeah.

JVN [00:48:25] Who do you think Texas is vibing on? If like Beto is not in the race. Yeah. Right? Who do you think Texas is vibing on?

WENDY DAVIS [00:48:31] You know, I really don't know. I'm not trying to evade your question.

JVN [00:48:34] No, I know, you don't seem like an invasive person, Queen.

WENDY DAVIS [00:48:36] I don't know. I'm getting the sense from people as I'm traveling the district that it's a lot of different candidates. I talk to a lot of people who are crazy about Elizabeth Warren. A lot of people who are crazy about Pete Buttigieg. You know, people love Julian, our Texan, left on the ballot thus far. You know, I don't know. But I feel like people have more of a sense again, because we've been going through some really rough decades here in Texas. We're just so desperate to have a Democratic president. We're so desperate to take back the Texas house. And by the way, if I can please say one word about that. We only need nine more seats to finally regain the Texas House. We flipped 12 seats in 2018, in more than half of the seats that are in play. We have about 17 seats in play this time that are possibilities to win. Beto won nine of them. More than half of them. And so we can do this. And if we do, we will finally have a voice in redistricting. And if we have a voice in redistricting, it changes every-

JVN [00:49:49] Everything.

WENDY DAVIS [00:49:51] Thing. So please, when you're voting this time, if you're a Texan, you're listening to this. This is the first time that we are not going to have a straight ticket voting in our state. Please don't just come and vote for your presidential nominee. Please vote for your Senate nominee. Please vote for your U.S. House nominee. And keep going down your ballot. Vote for your state senator. Vote for your state house member. Vote for your school board members and city council members. And who else is on there. Just go down your ballot. Yes.

JVN [00:50:18] Especially if you're passionate about-. Any of those three things that you just said with, that your constituents talk to you about your best way to protect yourself is by voting for the races closest to you.

WENDY DAVIS [00:50:27] That's exactly right.

JVN [00:50:29] Like they affect you the most. Like they are the most important ones.

WENDY DAVIS [00:50:31] That's so true.

JVN [00:50:31] So which brings me to my final question. Lucky you. Your race, you are running in 2020 for the House of Representatives against Chip What's-his-face? Who is his first freshman? He's in his first.

WENDY DAVIS [00:50:44] He's a freshman.

JVN [00:50:45] And he was-.

WENDY DAVIS [00:50:47] He was Ted Cruz's chief of staff.

JVN [00:50:49] Yes.

WENDY DAVIS [00:50:49] And he ran his super PAC before that.

JVN [00:50:51] Which means he also probably had a finger in that one really horrific like outtakes that John Oliver found that like from like that really like cringy campaign video. Did you ever see that?

WENDY DAVIS [00:51:00] I'm not sure which one you're talking about.

JVN [00:51:01] When you need a good laugh, when you need a good laugh. John Oliver found like all these outtakes from one of his presidential campaigns. And it's just like hours and hours of footage of him like hugging his mom than them being like, "No, do it more warmly". And then he's like like that. It's really good and amusing. You should, it'll, you'll puke out your mouth a little bit but you laugh while you're doing it. So you're going around your area, you're meeting your future constituents. You're talking to the people of Texas. And what do you feel? I mean, immigration is something that Chip talks about a lot and uses to live really like whip up his base.

JVN [00:51:30] You know, he throws out those terms like so many. He's so Cruzian. He's so Cruzian. He throws out terms like we don't need any kind of Affordable Care Act or any, any universal

coverage that would come from the government level. We need freedom. We need health care freedom. And then he'll say we don't need people who are retired to have Medicare. We need them to have freedom to choose whatever care they want. Blah, blah, blah. I mean that, he's that guy, right?

JVN [00:52:05] But it doesn't mean anything.

WENDY DAVIS [00:52:05] He's that guy that believes that we should tear government apart limb from limb. That we should not have government support for. Our schools or for health care or even honestly, he believes in tearing, destructing it so much that we wouldn't even have government run systems that are supporting some of the things that we do for our military. It's it's really mind boggling. And he votes against absolutely everything. He was the single guy, you may have heard about this a couple of months ago where there was a \$19 billion disaster relief fund. It had been held up forever. Finally came out of the U.S. Senate. The full U.S. House was like, "Yeah, go for it, let's do it". He was the single guy,, he managed to knock it off, basically, what is a consent calendar. And so finally, it comes back later, three weeks later for a vote. He votes against it. And four billion dollars of it was coming to Texas. He's one of three people, there was a, in that tax code that the Republicans passed a couple or two years ago. There was an inadvertent outcome for people who have lost loved ones who are serving this country. Right? The fallen who have given the ultimate sacrifice when their families are paid the death benefit. They were being taxed at a low rate and that tax code accidentally pulled them up into a more than 30 percent tax rate. When this was realized, everyone voted to fix it except three people in the U.S. House. Chip Roy was one of them. He's that guy that doesn't do anything that makes sense for the people who elected him to serve them. And because I'm a grandmother of a 3 year old and a 1 year old who live in this community, I'm going to do everything I can to make sure that we replace him in 2020. So.

JVN [00:53:59] And also, as we've previously said, nothing will get done unless we maintain control of the House and regain the Senate.

WENDY DAVIS [00:54:06] That's right.

JVN [00:54:06] So you have, this district has been in Republican controlled hands for how long?

WENDY DAVIS [00:54:11] 40 years. And we're going to finally break that cycle.

JVN [00:54:15] Well, I can't wait to see it happen.

WENDY DAVIS [00:54:17] Thank you.

JVN [00:54:17] Texas needs it. We all need it.

WENDY DAVIS [00:54:18] Thank you , Jonathan.

JVN [00:54:19] I'm so proud of you. I'm so proud of all the work you do and the inspiration that you are. And I just think you're so amazing. Thanks so much for coming today.

WENDY DAVIS [00:54:24] Thank you.

JVN [00:54:30] You've been listening to "Getting Curious" with me, Jonathan Van Ness. My guest this week was Wendy Davis. You'll find links to her work in the episode description and whatever you're listening to the show on. Our theme music is "Freak" by Quin. Thank you so much to her for letting us use it. If you enjoyed our show, introduce a friend and show to subscribe, honey, 'cause sometimes finding that podcast app on your phone is confusing. Follow us on Instagram and Twitter at CuriousWithJVN. Our socials are run and curated by Miss Emily Bossak. "Getting Curious" is produced by me, Julie Carrillo, Rae Ellis, Chelsea Jacobson and Colin Anderson. With special guest booking by Mary O'Hara.