



Featuring Pilar Schiavo

**Why we need more
women lawmakers —
and how to help them
win**

IN THIS EPISODE

This time on **Code WACK!**

How does diversity in politics affect the policies that impact our everyday lives? What challenges do women face when running for office and once they get there, how do their life experiences influence their political work?

To find out, we spoke to [California Assemblywoman Pilar Schiavo](#), the only Democrat to unseat a Republican incumbent in the state assembly last November. This is the second episode in a two-part series.

SHOW NOTES

WE DISCUSS

California currently has the largest group of women ever serving in the state legislature – 50 out of 120 members. What do you think women lawmakers bring to the table?

“... it really is so important to have diversity in your legislature and any decision making body, right? And you see that as in our women's caucus where, you know, we're really prioritizing women and children.

“... women ... know what it's like to experience pay inequity or harassment in the workplace, or sexual violence, attacks on bodily autonomy. Having those firsthand experiences and then, you know, going to Sacramento and having an opportunity to make policy and shape policy to address those issues, I think is critical.” – **Pilar Schiavo**

Talk about the importance of fundraising for women candidates.

“... it's extremely hard for women to fundraise and unfortunately, your ability to fundraise has a lot to do with how you are seen in the political world about whether or not you're viable or not. That's what the whole discussion is when you start to run, ‘are they viable? Can they fundraise?’

“And so those early dollars make a huge, huge difference, especially for women. And then ... other things like offering childcare or doing a meal train or things like that that just help a candidate meet the needs of their kids and their family while they're trying to balance maybe a job and running for office.

“It's incredibly challenging. And so those little things make a huge, huge difference in people's lives. ... it really takes a village to be able to, to make it through a campaign and win.” – **Pilar Schiavo**

What are your legislative goals?

"... health care, housing, homelessness, the H's, the three H's, those are the things that we're really focusing on. You know, as I talked about earlier, homelessness has become a personal issue because of my involvement in the organization I co-founded ... that really has a lot to do with decades of underinvestment in housing ... So it's gonna take some work and some dollars, but I have four different bills focus on addressing homelessness from, you know, local governmental accountability and transparency to ... helping make sure people have IDs because you can't get a job, you can't get housing, you can't get on your feet if you don't have an id, and ... helping to end the foster youth to homelessness pipeline.

We have multiple bills ... on housing and then healthcare. ... one is going to basically bring those dollars that people are paying [for insurance] and the individual penalties if they're not ... purchasing insurance and help those dollars come back to lower the cost of insurance for people." – **Pilar Schiavo**

Helpful Links

[Women in State Legislatures 2023](#), *Rutgers - Center for American Women and Politics*

[California Legislative Women's Caucus](#), *California State Legislature*

[Homelessness & Health: What's the Connection?](#), *National Health Care for the Homeless Council*

[Issues That Could Impact Californians' Health Care Coverage in 2023 and Beyond](#), *Legislative Analyst's Office, California State Legislature*

[Struggles with housing costs during pandemic linked to lack of health care for many Californians](#), *UCLA Newsroom*

Episode Transcript

Read the full [episode transcript](#).

Biography: Pilar Schiavo

Assemblywoman Pilar Schiavo was elected to the California State Assembly in November of 2022 to represent the 40th Assembly District, representing the Northwest San Fernando Valley and the Santa Clarita Valley.

Upon her election, she was appointed as **Assistant Majority Whip** by Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon.

Prior to her election, Assemblywoman Schiavo was a Small Business Owner and Nurse Advocate who worked in the labor movement for more than 20 years on issues that deeply impact people's lives, including expanding healthcare access and affordability, winning real solutions to homelessness, advocating for housing people can afford, and delivering on good jobs that allow families to thrive.

Throughout her career, Assemblywoman Schiavo helped deliver healthcare, including reproductive healthcare, to more than one million people.

In the Northwest San Fernando Valley, she co-founded an organization that helped secure housing for Veterans experiencing homelessness, has delivered more than 50,000 meals to people in need, and increased resources to help keep our communities safe.

Assemblywoman Schiavo is the daughter of small business owners. Her father was a logger who became an electrician after two battles with cancer after exposure to Agent Orange while serving in the military, and her mom was a bookkeeper and managed the family electrical business. When her dad got a union job, she saw the life-changing impacts it had on her family – it is that formative experience, along with her desire to help children and families, that led her to the labor movement where she fought to lift up families just like hers.

Assemblywoman Schiavo lives in Chatsworth with her daughter Sofia where they love to hike in the Santa Susana Mountains. She has been involved in the PTA of her daughter's neighborhood public school. Her stepdaughter Germany graduated from Granada Hills Charter High School and is now a senior in college studying business administration.

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