



KATIE WALSH SHIELDS

SENIOR ADVISOR FOR DATA, RNC

NationalJournal

Life in Brief

Hometown: St. Louis, MO

Current Residence: Alexandria, VA

Education

- BA, George Washington University, 2007

Family:

- Husband Mike Shields is a partner at GOP consulting firm Convergence Media

Work history

- Senior Advisor for Data, RNC, 2017-Present
- Advisor, America First Policies, 2017-Present
- Fellow, Georgetown University Institute of Politics, 2018
- White House Deputy Chief of Staff, Jan-March 2017
- Chief of Staff, RNC, 2015-17
- Finance Director, RNC, 2013-15
- Deputy Finance Director, RNC, 2013-15
- Consultant/Officer, The Laymont Group, 2012-13
- Midwest-Regional Finance Director, McCain-Palin, 2008
- Assistant to the National Finance Director, Friends of Fred Thompson, 2007-08
- Administrative Assistant, Ashcroft Group, 2007
- Field Representative, Matt Blunt for Governor, 2004
- Intern, John Ashcroft campaign, 2000

Quick Summary

Record-breaking GOP fundraiser and data-driven campaign operative with uniquely strong connections to the RNC, GOP establishment politicians, and the Trump 2020 campaign

- Career GOP political operative who specializes in fundraising and campaign data utilization
- Strong Missouri roots with ties to state GOP; mentored by John Ashcroft
- Rapidly rose through RNC as a protégé to former Chairman Reince Priebus, eventually working as his deputy in the Trump White House
- Studies predictive modeling with voter data, and is largely credited with modernizing the RNC's voter mobilization data operation in 2014
- Balances strong relationships with Trump Administration officials, Trump campaign allies, and the RNC rank-and-file

Approach and Motivations

Guided by what helps the party and the president succeed

- Works to build an ecosystem – primarily through data and fundraising – with the purpose of electing Republicans up and down the ballot
- Stated objective while working in the White House was to “support the president in everything he wants to do”

Data-driven, evidence-based approach

- Plays key role in modernizing RNC's data operations, seeing it as the only way they could compete with Democrats electorally
- Believes using data to score voters based on likelihood of voting allows Republicans to spend money more efficiently to target voters and win elections

Policy Positions and Areas of Focus

Primarily focuses on campaign data and GOP party priorities

Data Intelligence – Instrumental in helping GOP revolutionize data-driven operations

- Favors predictive modeling over polling because it can model voter behavior over time, as opposed to presenting a snapshot
- Criticized RNC for sharing voter information with outside groups like Americans For Prosperity (AFP), arguing that allowing a group with no accountability to the RNC to use its data was problematic
- Reconciled this issue by helping forge partnership with third-party database, Data Trust, that interfaces between RNC and independent groups like AFP and American Crossroads. Data Trust is the only group with access to RNC data files, maintaining data security
- Architect of GOTV and voter ID operations for RNC in 2016; key in providing data analysis of the 2016 Trump campaign path to victory
- Influenced by the Obama 2012 campaign's method of using data to identify persuadable voters and boost contact to those voters

Campaign Finance Reform – Calls for more transparency

- Supports overturning Citizens United and revamping McCain-Feingold
- Believes that every organization that advocates on policy, issue-based, or candidate-specific issues/campaigns should be fully transparent with donations—both in reporting fundraising and spending
- Does not support limiting the amount individuals are allowed to donate

Health Care Reform – Worked to advance ACA repeal efforts upon leaving the White House

- Fervent supporter of repealing the ACA and, while at America First Policies, worked to provide media support for congressional Republicans who supported the American Health Care Act (ACHA) repeal bill

Core Communities

RNC Current Staff and Alum – Longtime figure in RNC leadership roles

- A close associate of former RNC chairman and White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus; worked as his deputy at the RNC and at the White House
- Dorinda Moss, former NRSC finance director worked with her and has praised her fundraising prowess
- Close advisor to RNC Chairwoman Ronna Romney McDaniel

Trump Campaign Team and White House – Forged many connections through White House and RNC

- Close with Brad Parscale, campaign manager for Trump 2020; worked with him at the party committee in 2016 and advised him on navigating the DC political environment after the 2016 campaign
- Trump 2020 senior advisor Bob Paduchik worked with her at the RNC when he was co-chair after her White House stint
- Chris Carr, political director for Trump 2020, served as political director for the RNC
- Worked alongside other deputy chiefs Rick Dearborn and Joe Hagin while in the White House
- Worked closely with Senior White House Advisor Jared Kushner, who called her one of the “unsung heroes” of the 2016 campaign

Beltway Consultant Class – Many former colleagues are now consultants

- Rob Jesmer, a principal at FP1 Strategies, worked with her for four years while he was head of the NRSC
- Juleanna Glover, a colleague at the Ashcroft Group who worked in the Bush 43 Administration, is a friend and described her as a calming voice

Core Communities Cont.

- Longstanding ties working for John Ashcroft first as an intern on his Senate campaign and then at his consulting firm, considers him a mentor
- Friend and colleague of Brian Walsh, President of America First Action and Partner at RedPrint Strategy
- Married to Mike Shields, Partner at media consulting firm Convergence Media

Missouri GOP – Longstanding ties to Republican party in home state

- Worked for Gov. Matt Blunt's campaign and still maintains close ties
- Jack Oliver, prominent Missouri GOP donor, spoke highly of her leadership skills at the RNC
- Father was treasurer for Josh Hawley's attorney general campaign and Hawley later hired her to assist with fundraising during successful 2018 senate campaign

Media Appearances

Favors a mix of traditional and new media and often talks to collegiate outlets and publications from her hometown of St. Louis

Collegiate Publications – Speaks about her experience in politics

- [Harvard Political Review](#): Gave candid interview that touched on her beliefs about campaign finance
- [Georgetown Public Policy Review](#): Discussed importance of digital operation, fundraising, and gerrymandering on GPPR podcast

Cable Television – Has appeared on shows supporting Trump Administration policies

- This Week with George Stephanopoulos: Participated in panel discussions on This Week defending President Trump and his agenda

St. Louis Publications – Speaks with local publications about career

- [St. Louis Magazine](#): Spoke about how she helped modernize voter ID and mobilization with the RNC, her work in the White House, and her role at America First Priorities, July 2017

Speaking Engagements

Primarily talks about the mechanics of running campaigns but also speaks to young conservatives about the future of the party

- Led discussion group about how national campaigns work at Georgetown University, Spring 2018
- Featured speaker alongside husband Mike to discuss being a national "power couple" at The Roanoke Conference alongside husband, January 2018
- Featured speaker who discussed being a young conservative millennial and the current political climate at Georgetown University, 2018

Criticisms and Controversies

Michael Wolff "Fire and Fury" Book Comments

- Drew criticism from Trump White House staff for comments attributed to her saying that managing the president was "like trying to figure out what a child wants"
- Wolff's book quotes her describing a lack of organization among then-senior staff Jared Kushner, Reince Priebus, and Steve Bannon
- Walsh denied the comments directly to Kushner then issued a public statement distancing herself from the book

Profiles Others Have Written

Profiles touch on her career and rise in politics and role in Trump Administration

Chuck Raasch: "[Inside the Trump White House, St. Louis native Katie Walsh plays key role,](#)" *The St. Louis Dispatch*, February 2017

- Profile covering her day-to-day role in the White House and what has been accomplished by the Trump Administration

Matthew Boyle: "[Meet Deputy Chief of Staff Katie Walsh: The Woman Who Helps Coordinate Trump's White House,](#)" *Breitbart*, February 2017

- Profile from conservative outlet detailing her early political career leading up to her time in the Trump Administration

Hobbies

- Devoted St. Louis Cardinals fan

Info From Formative Years

Growing up in a political household laid the groundwork for an interest in politics, which an internship with John Ashcroft ultimately cemented

- Grew up in a political household
- Father, Tom Walsh, helped with John Ashcroft's races and was treasurer for Josh Hawley's attorney general campaign
- Mother ran a county executive race in St. Louis
- Credits seeing mother involved in politics helped inspire her to do the same
- Her interest in politics was cemented when she moved to DC for a summer in high school and interned at the DOJ with Attorney General Ashcroft

Family Background

- Father, Tom Walsh, is an attorney in St. Louis
- Mother, Chris Walsh, is executive director of the InvestMidwest Forum
- Husband, Mike Shields, is the founder of the media and public affairs firm Convergence Media
- Met husband when both worked at the RNC in 2013, married in 2017 in Kiawah Island, SC
- One stepson, Aidan
- Supporters of the Washington Literacy Center; requested that wedding guests donate to WLC in lieu of gifts