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OPINION

Friendly Fire: Advice for Tammy Murphy, and why the GOP Fears Mikie Sherrill

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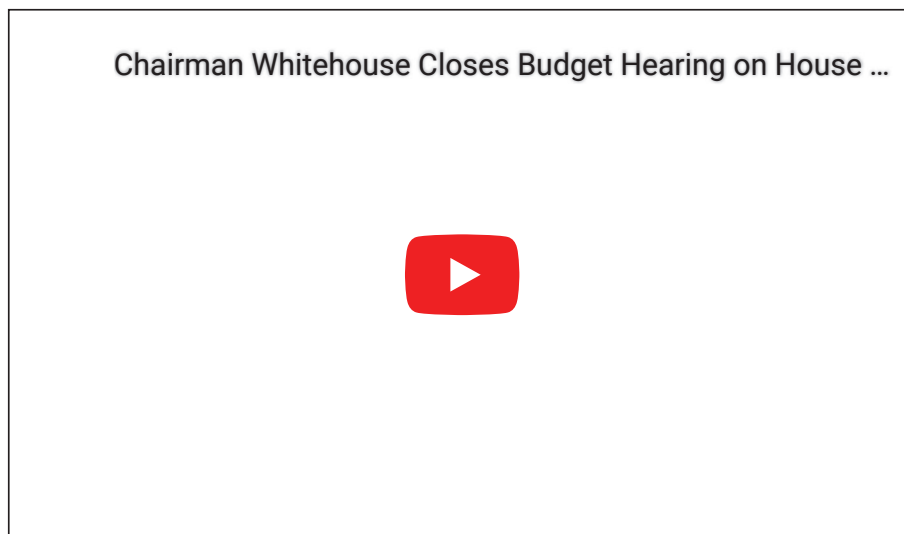
Political consultants Julie Roginsky and Mike DuHaime Photo by Stephanie Cowan

Can Americans still have a sensible and friendly political discussion across the partisan divide? The answer is yes, and we prove it every week. Julie Roginsky, a Democrat, and Mike DuHaime, a Republican, are consultants who have worked on opposite teams for their entire careers yet have remained friends throughout. Here, they discuss the week's events with editorial page editor Tom Moran.

Q. We have three weeks to resolve the debt ceiling impasse, according to the Department of Treasury, so I must ask: Are Republicans really going to pull this trigger? Do Democrats think they're bluffing?

Julie: They are not bluffing. Republicans have been threatening to blow up the full faith and credit of the United States since Barack Obama was president and they have only gotten crazier since then. What matters to them is not the health of the world's economy – it's getting the support of the MAGA crazies who vote in primaries.

Mike: We will get very, very, very close to the deadline, and voila! We won't default, just like the last 25 times the country has come to the brink of default when the parties don't agree.



Q. What's the fallout for Republicans in swing districts, like Rep. Tom Kean Jr.? If Republicans win deep spending cuts and force a retreat in the climate fight, as they are insisting, where does that leave him?

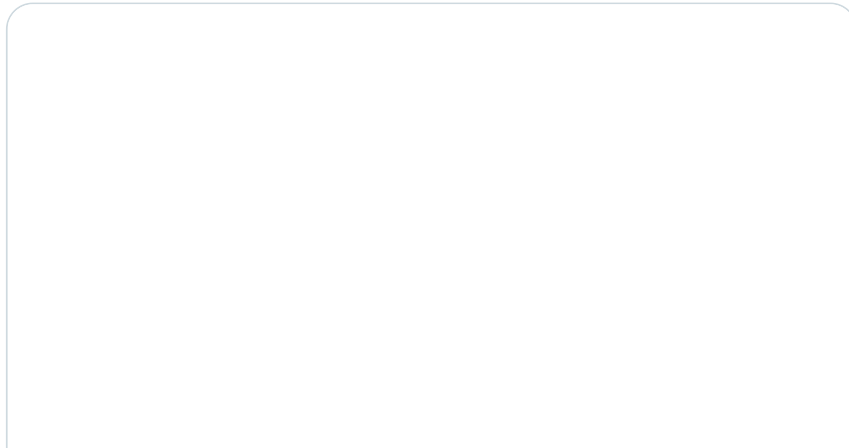
Julie: If Rep. Kean and a few other Republicans don't join Democrats to force a clean vote on the debt ceiling, he will be as culpable for the economic fallout as Marjorie Taylor Greene. Kean by no means presents as a kooky firebrand but as one of 435 members of the House, all he has is his vote. If he chooses to deploy it in service of MAGA extremists, that is on him.

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7:16 AM · May 3, 2023



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Mike: C'mon, people. No one is mistaking Tom Kean Jr. for lunatic Marjorie Taylor Greene. And Kean has been pro-environment his entire career and even worked at the Environmental Protection Agency as a young man. No one is going to suddenly blame him for climate change because Republicans tried to stop some of Biden's boondoggle spending.

Julie: Except this is not some "boondoggle" future spending. *This is spending that Republicans already voted for!* It is paying off the debt that House Republicans put on the credit card. That's like saying that I am going to buy a house, live in it and refuse to pay the mortgage.

Bill Pascrell, Jr.   

@BillPascrell · [Follow](#)



Let's be clear what will happen if republicans blow up the economy:

Social Security stops
Medicare freezes
Veterans lose their health care
Small businesses die
Bank runs
Homebuyers locked out
Americans lose their life savings
Millions lose their jobs
A second Great Depression

10:09 AM · Apr 30, 2023



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Q. Donald Trump is telling friends that he'll skip one or both of the first two primary debates in August, which prompted Chris Christie to call him "afraid." Smart tactical move by Trump, though, given his big lead in the polls?

Julie: Trump skipped a debate during the 2016 primaries, and it only helped him. He does not need debates to communicate with his base. He also doesn't need to stand up on stage for two hours and have Christie and others take potshots at him to prove to his supporters that he is what they laughably consider an Alpha male.

Mike: If you're afraid to be on stage with Chris Christie or Nikki Haley, you shouldn't be in negotiations with Putin or Xi. Trump utilized Christie in debate prep in 2020 and 2016, and privately, Christie was far more effective than Clinton or Biden in public. Trump knows it. Trump was on stage when Christie ended Marco Rubio's campaign in one exchange. There's only one reason Trump won't debate, and he lives in Mendham.

For Trump, GOP primary debates a question of risk versus r...



Q. Newark Mayor Ras Baraka zapped Gov. Phil Murphy over his plan to allow a temporary surchage on corporate taxes to expire, joining with progressive groups who say the revenue is needed. Is that a hint that Baraka will indeed run for governor? What's his path?

Julie: I can think of several viable paths for anyone who wants to run for governor. Baraka is mayor of the largest city in the state. He is one of the most prominent African American leaders in a party that depends on voters of color to win elections. If Rep. Mikie Sherrill passes on a run, he could be the only home candidate from a county with the most Democratic primary voters. The largest question for me is what Mayor Baraka has done to build meaningful relationships with leaders in other counties in advance of a potential run, since it is they who will ultimately anoint the next nominee.

Mike: The most important person in this conversation right now is Essex County Executive Joe DiVincenzo. Baraka and Sherrill can't both run and be successful, so who will the county party support? Julie brought up some important selling points for Baraka, but I can tell you Republicans will be nervous if Sherrill runs. Sherrill has a compelling life story and has unapologetically remained true to progressive values in Congress. Yet, she smartly governed in a bipartisan way during COVID, working with Republican elected officials in her district to get COVID relief to businesses and families. Her district has liked that approach, and she now wins what was once a safe Republican district by 20 points. Republicans certainly see her as formidable if she were to seek statewide office.

New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy on scrapping business s...



Q. Julie, I see that Sen. Cory Booker will sponsor a bill that you and Gretchen Carlson are pushing to ban binding arbitration agreements that block employees from going to court with complaints regarding racial discrimination, matching your earlier win that banned such agreements regarding sexual harassment and discrimination. What are its prospects?

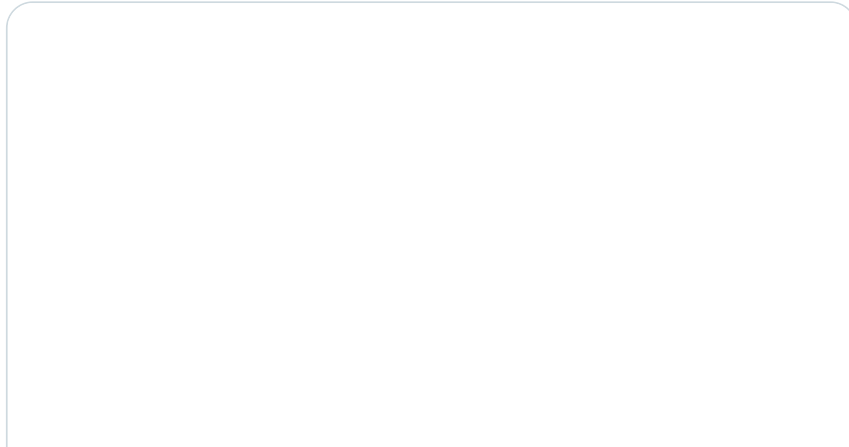
Julie: Senator Booker is an absolute hero for sponsoring legislation that will level the playing field for people of color and ensure that businesses prosper from a diverse workforce. Today, if you are a woman who is sexually harassed, you can have your day in court, thanks to our Ending Forced Arbitration for Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Act. If you are a worker facing racial discrimination, you must still go to the secret chamber of arbitration, where your odds of prevailing are literally lower than the odds of getting struck by lightning.

Paul Bland 
@FPBland · [Follow](#)



How Congress can fight racial discrimination: Pass the FAIR Act

It's time to [#Endforcedarbitration](#)



thehill.com
How Congress can fight racial discrimination: Pass the FAIR Act
Divvying up claims between arbitration and courts is not only impractical, but also a waste of judicial and litigant resources. Employe...

9:21 AM · Mar 21, 2022



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Julie: Since passage of our law, Gretchen Carlson and I have continued to meet with senators on both sides of the aisle to convince them that workers of color and other protected groups must have the same rights as survivors of sexual misconduct. There is an army standing behind Senator Booker that will gladly help him in any way to pass this crucial legislation.

Mike: I see bipartisan support for this, just as Julie earned bipartisan support for her earlier legislation.

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NEW: [@SenBooker](#), [@RepColinAllred](#), and [@RepHankJohnson](#) just introduced the Ending Forced Arbitration of Race Discrimination Act.

Corporate bad actors should never be allowed to sweep racism under the rug. [#EndForcedArbitration](#)



4:15 PM · May 3, 2023




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Q. A female state trooper assigned to guard the Murphy household claims in a lawsuit that First Lady Tammy Murphy refused her permission to use the carriage house to pump milk for breastfeeding, despite the governor's public support for accommodating breastfeeding employees and his wife's solid work on maternal health. A spokeswoman says that any claim that the First Lady would not accommodate a nursing mother is "outrageous and categorically false." Any political fallout?


Julie: I've long been out of the Murphy messaging business but I'm going to throw the governor and the First Lady a sincere freebie here. If this trooper's allegation is actually untrue, they should aggressively take it head on and explicitly outline the specific accommodation they provided the nursing trooper, rather than pivoting to the usual, "We don't comment on litigation" talking points. Here's why: Goldman Sachs is allegedly trying to settle a class action lawsuit, where 1,400 women claim they faced gender discrimination dating back to when Phil Murphy was on the bank's management committee. If settlement talks fail, there




will be an explosive lawsuit next month about how women were really treated during his time leading the bank. In his next job, Murphy was the subject of a scathing State Department report that dinged him for ignoring gender discrimination claims as ambassador to Germany.

Julie O'Connor 
@julieoconnorNJ · [Follow](#)

Did State Police – and NJ’s First Lady – refuse to accommodate a nursing mother?

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Did State Police – and NJ’s First Lady – refuse to accommodate a breas...
Given that the First Lady has made maternal and infant health one of her key issues, we want to hear more.

10:38 AM · May 4, 2023 

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Julie: He then ran for governor, where countless women said that his 2017 campaign was rife with misogyny, that they complained to both Phil and Tammy Murphy directly and that they were ignored. When Murphy became governor, he and Tammy Murphy ignored Katie Brennan after she wrote to them asking for help after allegedly being sexually assaulted by a Murphy aide. In their spare time, the Murphys bought a professional women’s soccer team, whose players alleged that they lived in squalid conditions, that the head coach was abusive and that the Murphys did not know or care until it became a public relations nightmare. This is a damning pattern that has infected literally every aspect of Murphy’s professional life for decades. The Murphys have gotten away with staying silent on these matters in New Jersey. It will be a lot harder to remain silent on the presidential campaign trail or during a senate confirmation hearing.

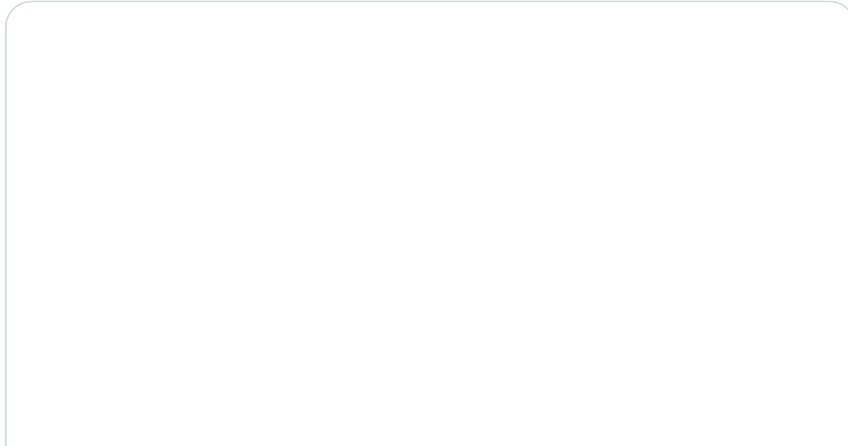
Tammy Murphy

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app.com

Cops called on mom breastfeeding at beach

A mom said a beach employee called police after she refused to stop breastfeeding her daughter in public.

5:22 PM · Aug 8, 2018



43



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Mike: That didn't sound like a freebie really. The advice was spot-on, though – don't let this languish unanswered. To avoid this looking like part of the pattern Julie laid out, it was important that they quickly and forcefully say it's untrue, which they have. If Murphy runs for higher office, the national press corps (and his primary opponents) will examine these issues much more aggressively than has been done in New Jersey.

Julie: No, my advice was to clearly explain which accommodations were provided to this trooper, not to deny her assertions without specificity. You will forgive me if I don't take anything that Murphy's comms people say at face value, since they often have a tumultuous relationship with the truth.

Mike DuHaime
@MikeDuHaime · [Follow](#)



Thanks to [@AlisynCamerota](#) for having me on CNN recently.

Among many topics, we talked about the problem with canceling high school musicals and banning books.

Books, films, tv & theater give us exposure to others, which is a first step toward empathy and understanding.

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1:57 PM · May 5, 2023



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A note to readers: Mike and Julie are deeply engaged in politics and commercial advocacy in New Jersey, so both have connections to many players discussed in this column. DuHaime, the founder of MAD Global, was chief advisor to former Gov. Chris Christie, and has worked for Rudy Giuliani, John McCain, and President George W. Bush. Roginsky, a principal of Comprehensive Communications Group, has served as senior advisor to campaigns of Cory Booker, Frank Lautenberg, and Phil Murphy. We will disclose specific connections only when readers might otherwise be misled.

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