

= Heather Higgins =

Heather Richardson Higgins (born September 21 , 1959) is an American businesswoman , political commentator , and non @-@ profit sector executive . She is the president and CEO of Independent Women 's Voice , the 501 (c) (4) sister organization of the Independent Women 's Forum .

Described as a political " diva " by some sources , Higgins has been associated with a number of different political and policy organizations . These range from non @-@ profit , non @-@ partisan organizations like the Hoover Institution and the Council on Foreign Relations to media organizations with more pronounced political affinities , such as the National Empowerment Television network and Irving Kristol 's The Public Interest .

= = Personal background = =

Born in Atlanta , Georgia and raised in Manhattan , Higgins began her undergraduate studies in 1977 at Wellesley College . She graduated cum laude from Wellesley in 1981 , earning a B.A. She then moved back to New York City and enrolled in the M.B.A. finance program at New York University 's graduate school of business . After leaving NYU for several years to work as a research analyst , marketer , and portfolio manager at a small firm , she resumed her studies there in 1986 and was awarded her graduate degree in 1987 . She currently lives in Manhattan with her husband James and their three children .

= = Journalist and commentator = =

In the 1980s , Higgins began writing editorial columns for the Wall Street Journal . During this time , she also became an assistant editor at Irving Kristol 's now @-@ defunct quarterly , The Public Interest . Higgins ' editorial writing and policy work have led to appearances on a variety of news / commentary programs , including Hardball with Chris Matthews , Politically Incorrect , Real Time with Bill Maher , Crossfire , Equal Time and Good Morning America . With Newt Gingrich , she co @-@ hosted The Progress Report on the now @-@ defunct National Empowerment Television . When asked about Higgins ' television appearances , Bill Maher said , " Oh God , she could talk about anything . "

Higgins was co @-@ editor of The Quotable Paul Johnson (1994) , a book of collected quotations from the popular historian .

= = Investment career = =

Before Higgins ' 1991 entry into the non @-@ profit sector , she worked as a Wall Street portfolio manager for seven years , eventually attaining the position of vice president of U.S. Trust before it became a subsidiary of the Charles Schwab Corporation . On February 3 , 2006 , she was elected to be a Director and Trustee of sixteen of UBS 's registered investment companies , which consisted of thirty @-@ six mutual funds as of January 2007 .

= = Non @-@ profit roles and policy work = =

Higgins has been heavily involved with non @-@ profit organizations . She is chairman and CEO of Independent Women 's Voice , a 501 (c) (4) social welfare organization , chairman of the Independent Women 's Forum , co @-@ founder of the Alliance For Charitable Reform , and has been president and director of New York 's Randolph Foundation since 1991 . She was also the executive director of the Council on Culture & Community .

In addition to helming the above organizations , Higgins ' non @-@ profit experience includes her position on the executive committee of the board of overseers for the Hoover Institution and her membership in the Council on Foreign Relations . She is also a trustee of the Committee for Economic Development , vice @-@ chairman of the Washington , D.C.-based Philanthropy

Roundtable and a former member of the W.H. Brady Foundation 's board of directors .

In November 2013 , Campaigns & Elections named Higgins to their list of top fifty political influencers to watch in 2014 .

= = = Responses to 2010 special elections = = =

After Republican Scott Brown defeated Democrat Martha Coakley in the special election to select Ted Kennedy 's successor , Independent Women 's Voice commissioned a survey which Higgins cited as demonstrating that voters were motivated by the potential impact that the election was perceived as playing in healthcare reform and other national policy debates . Higgins also reported that the survey showed that , " while women overall voted 53 % ? 45 % for Coakley , Independent women voted 67 % ? 33 % for Brown . Given an option between reducing taxes and regulations on small business or increasing government spending , 51 % preferred tax cuts while 30 % chose infrastructure . "

In the May 2010 special House election in Hawai'i 's 2nd congressional district , Independent Women 's Voice ran advertisements critical of former Democratic Congressman Ed Case . The advertisements asserted that Case " had voted to raise taxes 72 times and had received failing grades from anti @-@ pork barrel spending groups such as the National Taxpayers Union . " According to Politico , the group spent " more than \$ 200 @,@ 000 " on the anti @-@ Case advertising campaign . Federal Election Commission filings indicate that the organization spent \$ 237 @,@ 500 on the effort as of early May 2010 .

= = = ACR advocacy for private foundations = = =

In a letter published in The Hill , Higgins and fellow Alliance for Charitable Reform co @-@ founder Dan Peters responded to discussion of legislative regulatory proposals , saying that , " ACR believes that every dollar of tax increases on foundations is to the federal government rather than a dollar to charities , and the ACR is troubled by that notion We cannot adopt a one @-@ size @-@ fits @-@ all solution that disadvantages smaller organizations . We must do everything possible to encourage philanthropy and not create barriers to charitable giving . "

= = Political views = =

Columnist Suzanne Fields , in an article discussing Higgins and IWF co @-@ founder Lisa Schiffren , states that they " are mothers and relate to women who are not ideologically doctrinaire , but who are instinctively conservative on war and taxes . "

In an interview with the Acton Institute , Higgins expressed her fundamental opposition to government social programs insofar as they compete with or replace private charities , stating ,

Government programs pose serious problems for community institutions when they directly compete with those organizations which attempt to provide charity , while seeking to assist the individual beyond materialistic ends . Properly performed charity not only feeds you , but keeps your self @-@ respect intact.'

In her review of Thomas DiLorenzo and James T. Bennett 's book Unhealthy Charities : Hazardous to Your Health and Wealth , which examines the operation of health charities , Higgins argues that ,

The problem is not that there are bad people running these organizations ; almost anyone sitting on the board of such an organization would do the same thing in this environment . The problem is having centralized government funding in the first place . Reallocate the dollars , disperse the authority , create competing funding sources , and all these problems and false incentives will be instantly mitigated .

George magazine published an article in its 1995 first issue , entitled " The Heather Report , " in which Higgins ' views were summarized as " essentially libertarian , " and in agreement with the idea that " Centralized government will matter less and less We are in the midst of a ' great shift ' from ' elitist to populist , ' from a machine ' which is controlled and planned ' to an organic system that , '

following this new paradigm , has faith in people , faith in their capacities , faith in their choices . ' " Higgins was characterized as a link between the " wide @-@ eyed " academic community and " flinty " political practitioners .

In a 1995 Wall Street Journal column , Paul Gigot described Higgins as an " idea broker , " explaining that she prefers not to be associated with political parties . Gigot included a quotation from her , in which she stated , " I am not really interested in a party If the Democrats had really been New Democrats , that would have been great . If these Republicans become Old Republicans , they 'll lose me too . " William Galston , a senior domestic policy adviser in the Clinton administration , said , " I see Heather as an intellectual and policy entrepreneur with some real moral commitments I don 't see her as a sharply partisan figure , certainly not in the way she deals with people . "