



MORE CONTROVERSY AMONG DEMOCRATS VYING FOR 17TH CONGRESSIONAL SEAT



A CONTROVERSY HAS ERUPTED AFTER NY-17 DEMOCRATIC CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATE EFFIE PHILLIPS-STALEY APPEARED ON A LIVESTREAM HOSTED BY HASAN PIKER, DRAWING SHARP CRITICISM FROM LOCAL DEMOCRATIC LEADERS AND ADDING TO AN ALREADY TENSE POLITICAL CLIMATE IN THE DISTRICT. PHILLIPS-STALEY, A TARRYTOWN BOARD TRUSTEE, JOINED PIKER'S SHOW ON MARCH 28. PIKER, ALSO KNOWN ONLINE AS "HASANABI," HAS BUILT A LARGE FOLLOWING AMONG YOUNGER AUDIENCES AND HAS PREVIOUSLY INTERVIEWED NATIONAL FIGURES SUCH AS ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ, BERNIE SANDERS, AND RO KHANNA. THE APPEARANCE QUICKLY DREW A JOINT STATEMENT FROM DEMOCRATIC PARTY CHAIRS IN WESTCHESTER, ROCKLAND, PUTNAM, AND DUTCHESS COUNTIES. THE GROUP STRONGLY CRITICIZED BOTH PIKER'S PAST REMARKS AND PHILLIPS-STALEY'S DECISION TO APPEAR ON THE PLATFORM, CALLING IT A STEP THAT COULD LEGITIMIZE RHETORIC THEY DESCRIBED AS OFFENSIVE AND UNACCEPTABLE. THE WESTCHESTER DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND OTHER COUNTY LEADERS CITED SEVERAL PAST CONTROVERSIAL STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO PIKER AND URGED PHILLIPS-STALEY TO CLEARLY REJECT THEM. THE WESTCHESTER JEWISH DEMOCRATS ALSO ISSUED A STATEMENT, SAYING THEY COULD NOT SUPPORT HER



PHILLIPS-STALEY

CANDIDACY WITHOUT A CLEAR APOLOGY AND DISAVOWAL. PHILLIPS-STALEY RESPONDED BY DEFENDING HER DECISION, SAYING THAT ENGAGING WITH PLATFORMS THAT REACH YOUNGER AUDIENCES IS NECESSARY FOR THE PARTY'S FUTURE. SHE ACKNOWLEDGED DISAGREEMENTS WITH SOME OF PIKER'S PAST COMMENTS BUT EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF CONNECTING WITH VOTERS WHO FEEL DISCONNECTED FROM TRADITIONAL POLITICAL CHANNELS. SHE ARGUED THAT MANY YOUNGER VOTERS ARE PAYING ATTENTION TO ISSUES SUCH AS HUMAN RIGHTS AND FOREIGN POLICY, PARTICULARLY REGARDING ISRAEL AND PALESTINE, AND SAID THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY MUST LISTEN TO THOSE VOICES WHILE CONTINUING TO OPPOSE ANTISEMITISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA. THE DEBATE REFLECTS A BROADER DIVIDE WITHIN THE PARTY OVER HOW TO BALANCE OUTREACH TO NEW AUDIENCES WITH MAINTAINING BOUNDARIES AROUND POLITICAL DISCOURSE. MEANWHILE, REPUBLICAN CONGRESSMAN MIKE LAWLER SHARPLY CRITICIZED

PHILLIPS-STALEY, CALLING HER APPEARANCE DISQUALIFYING AND ALSO TAKING AIM AT OTHER DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES FOR NOT SPEAKING OUT MORE FORCEFULLY. THE ISSUE COMES AMID HEIGHTENED TENSIONS AT RECENT PUBLIC EVENTS. AT LAWLER'S LATEST TOWN HALL MEETING, A VIDEO POSTED BY ROCKLAND'S PIER HAS CIRCULATED ONLINE, SHOWING A HEATED EXCHANGE IN THE CROWD THAT SOME OBSERVERS DESCRIBED AS RESEMBLING A "TEMPER TANTRUM," UNDERSCORING THE INCREASINGLY CHARGED ATMOSPHERE SURROUNDING THE RACE. PHILLIPS-STALEY, WHO HAS RECEIVED THE ENDORSEMENT OF THE WORKING FAMILIES PARTY, IS RUNNING IN THE DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY FOR NY-17 THIS JUNE.



MIKE LAWLER