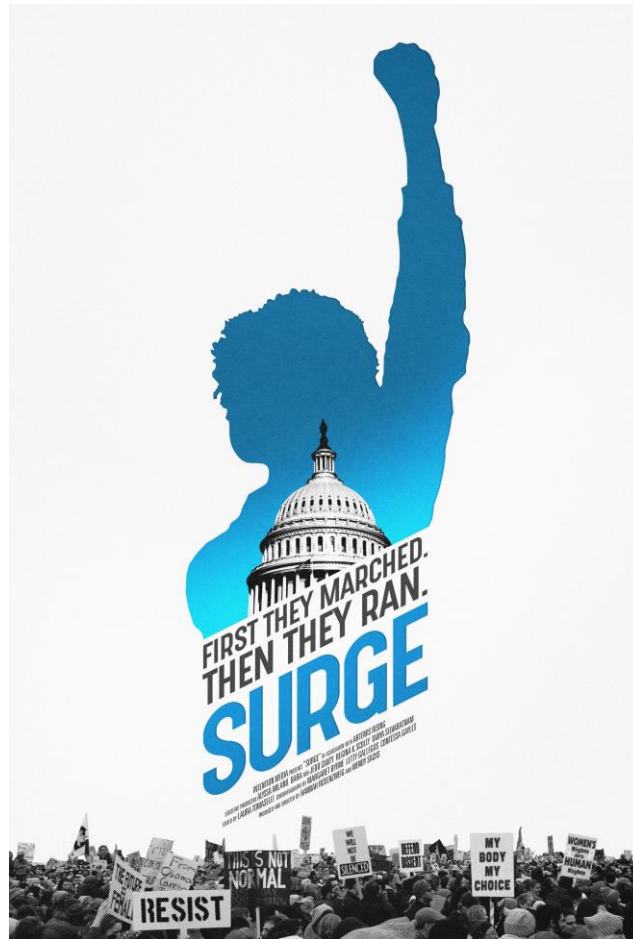


# SURGE



A film by Hannah R. Rosenzweig & Wendy Sachs  
2020 / USA / 90 Minutes

**WORLD PREMIERE on Showtime's channel SHOxBET  
on September 8<sup>th</sup> at 9:00pm ET**

**Available on the Showtime Anytime app on September 9<sup>th</sup>**

## Press Materials

<https://tinyurl.com/SurgePressMaterials>

### NY / LA / Online Publicity - Obscured Pictures

Katherine Matthews & Michaela Connell

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### Political Agency - PR Collaborative

Elizabeth Ward

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## SYNOPSIS

**SURGE** is a feature documentary about the record number of first-time female candidates who ran, won and upended politics in what became the historic, barrier-breaking 2018 midterm elections. The film explores whether this is another moment in xen's political history or the beginning of a true movement.

**SURGE** follows three congressional candidates in Texas, Indiana and Illinois, who were each looking to flip their deep red districts to blue, including Lauren Underwood, the youngest Black woman ever to be elected to Congress. A registered nurse and public health expert, Underwood is now on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic and a leading voice on racial injustice.

The film exposes the double standards, biases and brutal realities women face running for Congress — some, incredibly enough, without the support of their own party. **SURGE** is not only about women running for office, but about women getting behind women running for office. It powerfully taps into the collective urgency of this time with a hopeful message that grassroots activism works and unlikely candidates can win.

## FILMMAKER STATEMENT

As is the origin of many creative endeavors, ours was birthed from both a personal place and the need to tell an important story.

The idea for SURGE came together weeks after the Women's March in 2017. Like millions of others, we were horrified by the 2016 presidential election results and took to the streets in sisterly solidarity. Shortly after the March, our misery shifted into excitement when we saw reports of thousands of women declaring they were running for political office.

We decided to capture this historic moment with a documentary film about a diverse group of first-time female candidates. Each of our candidates in Texas, Illinois and Indiana were looking to flip their red districts to blue. These women all faced extraordinary uphill battles to defeat incumbents, disrupt the status quo and challenge stereotypes of what a congressional candidate looks like in their districts. Our initial shoots evolved into a film that asks the question — is this a moment or a movement?

SURGE is a story of women rejecting gender and racial stereotypes and norms in their communities. The film is part of a critical conversation about who gets to be a political leader in America. Rather than older, white and male, SURGE offers a different reality — leaders can and will continue to be young, people of color and female. Women make up over 50% of our country's population, but hold less than 30% of government offices.

One of the most thrilling aspects of directing SURGE was following Lauren Underwood — young, Black and a licensed nurse — on her incredible journey to making political history. Lauren beat six men, flipped her seat from red to blue, and won in an 86 percent white district. Today, between the COVID-19 pandemic and racial injustice, Lauren is at the epicenter of all that is happening in America at this moment. She is legislating and galvanizing people in her district and in the country, fast becoming one of our most important leaders.

SURGE reflects on the events that gave a collective sense of urgency to the 2018 election and looks at how that urgency continues to drive a surge of female candidates in 2020. In fact, more women are running in 2020 than in 2018. The film explores why women may need to lose first before they win, reframing the idea of election loss not as a failure but as an important step forward to creating political parity.

Hannah is a long-time documentarian, producer, and media maker for women candidates. She was Hillary Clinton's personal videographer in 2008. Wendy is an Emmy-award winning long format TV news producer, former Capitol Hill press secretary and author and writer who focuses on women's issues. We were passionate about documenting the stories of women who were compelled to run because they felt that democracy was at stake and women's rights were threatened. And we were awed and inspired by the candidates we followed because they had the audacity to risk everything and put themselves on the line to do their part and save America. We were struck by the insight from our expert interviews who exposed just how much more work we have to do to achieve gender parity in politics and make sure that what happened in 2018 wasn't a fluke but a real movement that is here to stay.

## **ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS**

### **HANNAH R. ROSENZWEIG, DIRECTOR & PRODUCER**

Hannah is a documentary film director and long-time producer. She is founder and president of Intention Media Inc. Since serving as Hillary Clinton's personal videographer for her 2008 presidential campaign, Hannah has worked as a producer and advisor for women candidates and elected officials. She produced the award-winning PUPPET film, which premiered at the DOC NYC festival and was distributed on Netflix, iTunes, and Sundance Selects. She has produced and filmed documentaries for the History Channel, the Sundance Channel, and PBS including the Peabody Award-winning VOICES OF CIVIL RIGHTS. Hannah was awarded a prestigious JustFilms Fellowship from the Ford Foundation for leaders working at the intersection of film, storytelling, and social justice. Her background is in health communications and she holds a masters in public health from Columbia University. Hannah is a singer with the Resistance Revival Chorus, an all women's chorus based in NYC.

### **WENDY SACHS, DIRECTOR & PRODUCER**

Wendy is a documentary film director, Emmy-award winning network news television producer (NBC, CNN and FOX), writer, author and sought-after speaker on women's issues. She is also a former Capitol Hill press secretary, media relations executive, and the author of two critically acclaimed books about women and careers: "Fearless and Free—How Smart Women Pivot and Relaunch their Careers" and "How She Really Does It: Secrets of Successful Stay-at Work Moms." Wendy has appeared on dozens of radio segments, TV shows and podcasts including: NBC's *TODAY* show, ABC's *Good Morning America*, CNN's *Headline News* and others. She is a senior columnist for Forbes Women and has written for *Fast Company*, *Time*, *Business Insider*, *The New York Times*, CNN and others. Wendy has been recognized by MAKERS and was also named in 2017 on Forbes.com as a "40 Over 40 Woman to Watch."

## **FILM SUBJECTS**

### **LAUREN UNDERWOOD**

At 33, she is the youngest Black woman ever elected to Congress. Lauren grew up in Naperville. She is a registered nurse and health policy expert, with hands-on experience in America's healthcare industry, which she now carries with her to Washington. Lauren was appointed by President Obama to serve as a Senior Advisor at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

During her time in the Obama Administration, Lauren helped communities across the country prevent, prepare for, and respond to public health emergencies, disasters, and bioterror threats. As a public servant at HHS, Lauren helped implement the Affordable Care Act — broadening access for those on Medicare, improving healthcare quality, and reforming private insurance.

In 2018, Lauren flipped this seat from red to blue in historic fashion, defeating a four-term Republican incumbent. She won every single county in our district, something an IL-14 Democrat has never achieved before.

During her first term in Congress, Lauren has proven herself to be a hard worker and an effective leader for her community: she has personally introduced 42 pieces of legislation, passed 15 out of the House, and had 3 bipartisan pieces of legislation signed into law. Lauren is a graduate of the University of Michigan and Johns Hopkins University.

### **LIZ WATSON**

Liz Watson, featured in SURGE, is a labor attorney and politician, and the current executive director of the Congressional Progressive Caucus Center. Liz was the 2018 Democratic nominee for the U.S. House of Representatives in Indiana's 9th congressional district. She has served as the Executive Director of Georgetown's Center on Poverty, Inequality and Public Policy and Director of Workplace Justice for Women at the National Women's Law Center, where she authored publications such as "It Shouldn't Be A Heavy Lift: Fair Treatment for Pregnant Workers" and "50 Years & Counting: The Unfinished Business of Achieving Fair Pay". Liz is a 5th generation hoosier, marathon runner, and mom of two young kids.

### **JANA LYNNE SANCHEZ**

Jana Lynne Sanchez was the Democratic nominee for Texas' 6th Congressional District for the U.S. House. In 2018. She lost the general election on November 6, 2018, after advancing from the primary runoff on May 22, 2018.

Jana Lynne was raised in the district (Ellis County) where her grandparents, who were migrant farm workers, settled in the 1950s. She earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Rice University thanks to financial aid and scholarships. Her career experience includes working as a political fundraiser, campaign manager, and journalist and a public relations entrepreneur. In 2005, she co-founded CitySavvy, a communication consultancy agency based in London and Amsterdam and she ran that until 2014.

Following the 2018 election, Jana set up Blue Texas Strategy, a consulting firm dedicated to helping elect Democrats in Texas. Her clients include candidates for the Texas state house and the US Congress.

Sanchez is actively working to flip Texas in 2020. She is the Treasurer of Tarrant Together, which was set up by women candidates from the 2018 to flip five Texas State House seats in Tarrant County in 2020. She's also on the board of Progress Texas, working to communicate progressive values in the mainstream and social media and has served on the Dean's Advisory Board at Rice University's School of Social Sciences under three successive deans.

## CREDITS

Directed & Produced by:

Hannah Rosenzweig  
Wendy Sachs

Edited by:

Laura Tomaselli

Executive Producers:

Alyssa Milano  
Dara and Jedd Canty  
Regina Scully  
Tanya Selvaratnam

Consulting Producers:

Wendy Ettinger  
Diane Robertson  
Doris Casap Warren

Cinematography:

Margaret Byrne  
Leticia Gallegos  
Contessa Gayles

Consulting Producers:

Wendy Ettinger  
Michael Hirschorn  
Diane Robertson  
Doris Casap Warren

Additional Editing:

Robyn Braun Serrano  
Harry Schock

Associate Producers:

Julia de Guzman  
Ruth Ann Harnisch  
Suzanne Lerner

Post Production Supervisor:

Robyn Braun Serrano

Story Consultants:

Samantha Buck  
Penelope Falk  
Jason Pollard

Production Sound:

Shuling Yong  
Tyler Cardwell  
Colt Pope  
Frederick Albright  
Morgan Honaker  
Phillip Westbrook

Additional Camera:

Sheila Smith  
Amy Berg  
Ivy Chiu  
Jon Gerard  
Patty Rooney  
Jason Colston  
Joe Entemadi  
Jenni Morello  
Jenelle Pearring  
Mary Perrino  
Mike Audick

Field Producers:

Rachel Rozycki  
Rachel Murphy

Assistant Editors:

Erin DeWitt  
Noah Engel

Production Assistance:

Lindsey Schnabel

Graphics:

Sebastian Hoppe  
Erica Gorochow, Pep Rally

Design:

Pentagram  
Julie Lee Fraga  
Sally Rumble



Yen Tan

Archival Research:

Sheila Maniar

Rosemary Rotondi

Music Supervisor:

Crystal Grooms Mangano

Intern:

Joy Lee

Legal:

Innes Smolansky, Esq

Post Production Services:

Oliver Lief, Blue Table Post

Color & Online:

Kevin Barker

Polly Bryan

Sound Mixing:

Kim Howell Cates

Closed Captioning:

Brendan Kelly/Bulls Eye Captioning

Advisors:

Jennifer Bass

Shawna Brakefield

Katie Couric

Susan McPherson

Crystal Patterson

Kimberly Peeler-Allen

Meredith Shepherd

Simone Ward

Julie Zebrak

Additional footage:

JW Hammet

Duane Busick

Dan Lamourex

Sam Miropoorian

Megan Raney Aarons + Kerry Girvin

Archival Footage:

AP Archive

Everett Collection Inc / Alamy Stock Photo

Getty Images

Film Archive

Film Supply

John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies at UMass Boston, the Boston  
Globe and WBUR radio

KRON Collection

NBC News Archives

New York Public Library

NYC Department of Records

PBS Newshour

Pond5

Screenocean/Reuters

William J. Clinton Presidential Library; National Archives & Records Administration

Vimeo Stock

Fiscal Sponsor:

Aubin Pictures

Original Score:

Paul Trubachik

Additional Music provided by

FirstCom Music, Inc.

Artlist

“Orgoned”

Performed by Klasmos

Written by: Olafur Arnolds and Janus Rasmussen

Published by: Songs of Kobalt

Courtesy of Erased Tapes Records Limited

“Summer”

Written by Antonio Vivaldi

Arranged and Recorded by Dan Martinez

“Celeste Sequence”

Composed and Produced by Paul Brill

“Kyra’s Theme”

Composed by Kyra Guilleman and Paul Brill

“I’m in My Own Element”  
Composed and Produced by Paul Brill

“I’m Not Ready”  
Composed and Produced by Paul Brill

“Urail’s Mom”  
Composed and Produced by Paul Brill

“Until I Win”  
Performed by The Crazy Daysies  
Written by Rebecca Day  
Courtesy of Rebecca Day and Songtradr

“Inspiration Theme”  
Composed and Produced by Paul Brill

“Artifacts”  
Performed by Jules Blueprint  
Written by Grant William Harold  
Courtesy of Marmoset

“Samling”  
Written & Performed by Benoit Courti  
Courtesy of Marmoset

“Leap of Faith”  
Performed by Chloe Jean  
Written by Chloe Jean Bermudez, Eric Berdon  
Published by Heavy Hitters (ASCAP), John Sansone Music (SESAC)  
Courtesy of Heavy Hitters Music Group LLC

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