

Newcomb Alumnae Association President-Elect Maggie Herman Reflects on Her Career in Politics and Health Policy

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Maggie Herman (PHTM '15), a Tulane alumna and a Congressional Affairs Advisor in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Office of Legislation, was elected during the Annual Meeting of the [Newcomb Alumnae Association](#) (NAA) as President-Elect of the NAA. Herman, who graduated from Tulane University in 2015 with a bachelor's degree in public health, has been involved with the Newcomb Institute since her freshman year at Tulane University. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Herman decided she wanted to become engaged with the NAA.

The Newcomb Alumnae Association, founded in 1893, offers programming and services to Newcomb College graduates and Tulane University graduates in conjunction with the Newcomb Institute.

"Newcomb [...] invested so much in me when I was an undergrad. I was excited about the opportunity to potentially give back to them and also connect with other like-minded women."

As the President-Elect of the NAA, Hermann will act as a liaison between the association's Board of Directors, Newcomb Institute, Tulane University, and all NAA members. Herman will aid in managing the board, initiatives, and activities that various committees are leading, and provide updates about the atmosphere on campus, the alumni community, and the board.

"One of my big responsibilities is making sure that Newcomb Alumni feel like they're heard and supported, and also making sure that the alumni are aware of all the great things that the Newcomb Institute is doing," Herman said.

During the summer between Herman's junior and senior year at Tulane University, she interned at the New Orleans Office of Health Policy and AIDS Funding. The New Orleans Office of Health Policy and AIDS Funding is an organization in which a council of people who are living with HIV and leaders from community-based

organizations who work with people with HIV decide how New Orleans should spend its funding that fills the gap of care for people living with HIV.

“That was such an eye-opening experience to see how federal policy could really be on the ground. I learned so much and got to work with so many great community members, and it really was my first exposure to healthcare policy. I don't know if I would have been able to do that without the support of a grant from the Newcomb Institute,” Herman said.

Herman says that her transition from health policy to politics can be largely attributed to her academic endeavors during her senior year at Tulane University.

“My senior year gave me some flexibility to pursue classes that weren't specifically for my major, and that's kind of when I got into political science and politics,” Hermann said. “It was also influenced by the work I did at the Hullabaloo, just because news and politics are so closely intertwined,” Herman said.

In 2017, Herman began her position as a Legislative Aide in the United States Senate.

“I was in the right place at the right time and happened to know the right people. I feel very lucky that I got that role and found my way to DC,” Herman said.

When Herman first started her position as a Legislative Aide in the United States Senate, she worked for Senator Mark Warner from Virginia as a Junior Healthcare Policy Advisor. At the time, Republicans attempted to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

“Within my first two weeks of starting that job, I was there until three o'clock in the morning, sending him vote recommendations. It seemed like the ACA was going to be repealed and then at the last minute, John McCain [gave] the big thumbs down, which saved the bill. So it was very kind of fast and furious,” Herman said.

Herman noted that, during her time as a Legislative Aide, she was able to look up to other women in the office for support.

“In Senator Warner's office, there were a lot of senior women policy advisors. They really helped me understand how to navigate this very strange space, and I was able to build some of them as mentors,” Herman said.

In 2019, Herman jumped from her position as a Legislative Aide in the United States Senate to a Senior Legislative Assistant in the House of Representatives.

“I had been in Senator Warner's office for a while and I felt like I was ready to take on a bigger role and really own more of a policy portfolio, and it's hard to do that in a Senate office. So I decided to jump over to the House,” Herman said.

After Herman made her move from the Senate to the House, she began her work for Congresswoman Mikie Sherill, who now represents New Jersey's 11th Congressional District.

“She was a freshman member at the time [and a] total badass woman from New Jersey who flipped red to strict blue. I got to help her build up her office, and I got to work on a bunch of different policy areas for her,” Herman said.

Herman spent about a year working for Congresswoman Mikie Sherill before moving over to Congressman Dan Kildee's Office, which represents Michigan's Eighth District. Congressman Kildee sits on the Ways and Means Committee, which has direct jurisdiction over the Medicare program, allowing Hermann to exercise her policy expertise.

“It was such an interesting office to be able to work on health policy because Flint, [Michigan] has so many innovative public health programs following the Flint Water Crisis. I got to work with so many great community advocates,” Herman said.

While working with Congressman Kildee, Herman aided in reauthorizing the funding for the Flint Lead Exposure Registry. The Flint Lead Exposure Registry is a program that set up a collective of resources for people who were exposed to lead poisoning. At the time that Herman held her position in Kildee's office, the funding for the Flint Lead Exposure Registry was running dry.

“I got the opportunity to spearhead the reauthorization of that funding. It took a lot of support from the whole Michigan delegation, which is split 50/50 [between] Democrats and Republicans. We successfully reauthorized funding for that program, got an increase in funding, and got it set up in the law so [that] it was recurring,” Herman said.

After spending nearly two years in the United States House of Representatives, Herman decided to move to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

“I was just ready for a change of pace. I love how dynamic Congress is, especially the House. Some [people] describe it as the wild, wild west. You never know what you're going to get, and that was fun for a while, but I was ready for things to slow down a bit,” Herman said.

Herman said that, as the Newcomb Alumni Association President-Elect, she is excited to reciprocate the possibilities that Newcomb Institute provided her with during her time at Tulane University.

“I'm really grateful for the opportunity to help give back to that community of students and to help continue fundraising so that more students can have these opportunities.”