

THE NEIGHBOR

Haley: ‘Red wave’ rests on electing ‘badass’ Iowa GOP women

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HIAWATHA — Standing behind a large, red campaign bus that reads “Here in Iowa ... America still works” next a large photo of Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds, Nikki Haley told a crowd of more than 200 GOP supporters that a midterm “red wave” rests on reelecting “badass” Iowa Republican women.

“You grow them strong in Iowa. This is a group of badass women right here,” said Haley, a former governor of South Carolina who served as former Republican President Donald Trump’s ambassador to the United Nations.

A 2024 presidential prospect who has been a regular presence in the state over the last two years, Haley stopped Tuesday in Davenport and Hiawatha for rallies with Republican women seeking election in the Nov. 8 election, including Reynolds, U.S. Reps. Ashley Hinson and Mariannette Miller-Meeks and Iowa Attorney General candidate Brenna Bird.

The rallies were hosted by Winning For Women Action Fund as part of its Women on a Mission tour. The Super PAC is dedicated to electing Republican women.

Haley praised Reynolds for pushing and signing into law tax cuts that will reduce state income taxes, enacting a ban on transgender girls playing high school girls sports and avoiding pandemic-era lockdowns in schools and businesses.

“She’s cut your taxes. She’s put parents in charge,” Haley told the crowd. “She’s making sure that she’s watching out for Iowans.”

Reynolds noted she earned top marks for fiscal responsibility among the nation’s governors in a report issued by the conservative Cato Institute. The biennial report grades governors on their fiscal policies from a limited government perspective, and awards higher grades to governors whose states have cut taxes and spending.

Which Reynolds, Haley and other speakers said contrasts with “reckless” spending approved by Democratic President Joe Biden and congressional Democrats, which they blamed for inflation, high gas prices, "a wide-open border" and increased crime rates.

“We have a dynamic group of hard-charging, battled-tested Republican women that are taking the battle to Biden and Democrats every single day. And they’re getting things done,” Reynolds told the crowd.

Democrats contend the investments and new taxes on large companies and stepped-up IRS enforcement on wealthy individuals and entities will decrease the deficit and improve the lives of Iowans by lowering drug costs for seniors, fixing roads, bridges and other ailing infrastructure, and helping move the nation past fossil fuels and identify additional sources of energy.

Hinson said House Republicans are committed to combating inflation and strengthening the economy. Their plan calls for cutting government spending, ramping up energy production and increasing funding to border enforcement and police officers.

“That contrast is what’s on the ballot in November,” she told the crowd. “And Inflation is not just a number. It’s a senior on a fixed income. It’s the mom that’s only putting \$5 or \$10 of gas in her car to get her kids around. I’m a minivan driving mom myself. ... This is real pain that Iowans and Americans are feeling, and it’s a direct result of Democrat policies in Washington, D.C.”

Miller-Meeks called Biden “tone deaf” for getting the COVID-19 vaccine booster on TV while there is record inflation.

Reynolds faces Democrat Deidre DeJear, a businesswoman from Des Moines. Hinson, of Marion, faces Democratic state Sen. Liz Mathis of Hiawatha. Miller-Meeks, of Ottumwa and LeClaire, faces Democrat Christina Bohannon, a University of Iowa law professor and state representative from Iowa City.

DeJear has argued Reynolds has pushed tax cuts that will largely benefit the wealthiest Iowans and advocated for taxpayer-funded scholarships for Iowa families to send their children to private schools, while shortchanging the state’s public schools and mental health care system.

Haley pointed behind her at Tuesday's event to Bird, saying her election would be a “thank you gift to Gov. Reynolds, and she needs it.” Bird is running to unseat Democratic incumbent Tom Miller.

Reynolds, too, referred to Bird, stating: “I sure could use my own attorney general.”

Democrats have criticized Reynolds for her rhetoric on wanting her "own" attorney general, decrying the notion that the independently-elected statewide office is there to serve the interests of the governor.

“I need an attorney general who will challenge and take on the Biden administration,” Reynolds said. “So what are we going to do? We are going to send Tom Miller the bird — Brenna Bird.”

The latest Des Moines Register/Mediacom Iowa Poll released Tuesday, showed Miller leading Bird by 16 points. Bird told reporters after the event that the poll, conducted Oct. 9-12, does not reflect what she described as momentum from the past two weeks.

Asked how she would work to maintain the independence of the office if elected, Bird said she would she “will be Iowa’s attorney general, not Biden’s attorney general.”