

Interview with Senate candidate Amy McGrath

Democrat candidate for the United States Senate, Lt. Col. Amy McGrath, spoke with the Mountain Advocate last week regarding the coronavirus pandemic, abortion, and the president's reported comments on veterans among other topics.

McGrath was first asked to rate the response of her opponent, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, to the pandemic. "Terrible," she stated before blasting McConnell for "failing to replenish the national stockpile," of personal protective equipment. She added many places in Eastern Kentucky still need swabs to conduct tests. McGrath then called out McConnell for not "warning us" about the pandemic and doing nothing until the stock market crashed; pointing out "he has the highest level of intelligence briefings of any member of congress." She continued, "he failed to warn us this was coming... He failed to invest in public health, he failed to act quickly, he failed to help the president act quickly, failed to secure our social safety nets during this time, he even in the middle of the Coronavirus is still trying to take away healthcare from people."

"We have 190,000 Americans dead and does anybody think Mitch McConnell has a plan to tackle this?" McGrath asked. She then stated that McConnell put out an unworkable bill in the Senate but refused to allow the bill that passed the House to be debated, "a bill that

by the way would have a billion dollars for Kentucky schools.” The colonel pointed out that over half of Knox County students don’t have access to broadband internet for virtual learning.

McGrath was quick to respond when asked about the CARES Act, the relief bill the McConnell campaign has frequently touted. “Guess what he championed in the CARES Act, a 500-billion-dollar slush fund for big corporations,” she said. She also claimed he wasn’t “even involved,” in the negotiations of the CARES Act. She continued “the good stuff in the CARES ACT that helps people, that helps small businesses, that helps people that are out of work, that wasn’t written by Mitch McConnell.” McGrath said the CARES Act was a good start but that we “need more” and “if you can bail out Wall Street you should be able to bail out Main Street.”

“Experts say the Post Office needs more money,” McGrath said when asked about recent actions by the Trump administration and issues with the postal service. “We should be able to help the post office that delivers prescription drugs to seniors and veterans,” she added. She stated that people like her 79-year-old mother should be able to vote by mail from the safety of their home “and so should everybody else.” McGrath also added that the postal service employs tens of thousands of veterans and that those jobs need to be protected. She finished by stating the post office is important to millions of Americans and rural Kentucky, calling it “an important American function.”

McGrath was asked her thought on President Trump’s recent reported comments in which he called veterans “suckers” and “losers.” She said “I think it’s terrible, I’m shocked.” She spoke of the importance of the Battle of Belleau Wood to the Marine Corps and stated “I lost friends in combat, they’re not suckers, they’re not losers they’re patriots, they’re heroes.” She also called out McConnell for not speaking out against the statements. It’s unfortunate the Senate Majority Leader has chosen politics over what he knows to be right,” she said before also bringing up reported Russian bounties placed on American troops in Afghanistan.

“Let me be clear first, I will not de-fund the police,” McGrath stated and reiterated. She continued, “I condemn any violence anywhere in the United States.” She stated she was strongly for law-and-order but also strongly for justice and equality. McGrath said she believes we do need more funding for mental health, something she said she’s learned while traveling around the state. “We ask our police to do so many things they aren’t qualified to do,” she stated, adding that addiction assistance is another issue that needs more attention. “Mitch McConnell gets more money from big pharma than any other senator,” she stated while pointing out over one billion opioid pills had come into Kentucky since 2006; a state of roughly four million.

McGrath was asked to state her position on abortion and abortion rights. She said “I am a Catholic and I’m someone who doesn’t believe her religious beliefs should be legislated onto others.” She said it was an important issue and that she believes in the context of Roe V. Wade. “Government should not be involved in these very personal, family decisions,” she added. She further stated that McConnell’s ads are false and that she is not an “extremist.”

She stated "I think we already have clear regulations and restrictions that are good on abortion...I don't think they need to be more restrictive."

"If we had a better senator we could probably be opening our schools right now," McGrath said in regards to kids going back to in-person learning. "There is over a billion dollars sitting on his desk for Kentucky schools," reiterating her statement from before regarding McConnell not bringing the house bill to the floor. "Schools need help, they need the resources to go back safely," she stated, pointing out other countries have been able to.

McGrath says her campaign is a form of second service for her. She pointed out about she and her husband's 20-plus years of military service. There's no better reason to do this than to get rid of this man who's been in the Senate for 36 years and has been hurting Kentucky. She stated "everyone wants to go back to normal but normal is what got us here, we can't get back to normal. We've got to be better."