Twitter Thread by Pam Keith, Esq.



Pam Keith, Esq.
@PamKeithFL

Something you may not know is that professional Black women are hyper focused on qualification.

We are told young that there will be no leg-up for us, and that we MUST excel academically.

We work hard, compete & get into college.

For many of us, our whole family is counting

on us. We often carry the burden of inter-generational progress, where our success validates the expectations and sacrifice of those before us.

We are always aware that squandering the opportunity for an education would be disrespectful to those who never got that chance.

Then, if we get into graduate school, we see very few others like us, and feel instantly under scrutiny.

There is no hiding or blending in. All your professors are zeroed in on you, trying to ascertain if you can compete. When you produce the goods, they are delighted,

but the delight is often also telegraphing to us that the talent was not expected.

When we ascend into corporate environments, we are again closely scrutinized, not just for competence, but for “fit.”

Our bosses will test us again and again to make sure the “angry black

woman” doesn’t come out.

The onus is always on us to make those around us comfortable, never the other way around.

Once we put our colleagues at ease, things are fine.... until we start getting close to the power echelon.

Then things get dicey.

While it takes years of proving our worth and competence to get close to leadership, it takes only one misstep, or maybe not even that, for executives to decide that we aren't a good fit for a leadership role.

At base, many many people who are not racist in the sense of

hostility, can only deal with Black people if they are in a subordinate position. If that dynamic starts to change, they feel threatened.

So the Black woman who was all-of-that as a mid-level or even senior manager, is all wrong when it comes to being an executive.

The

message Black women receive in all of this is; "ambition is risky!"

Don't bother with shaking the tree because the coconuts will fall on YOU!

So, when we go through all of that, to whatever degree of success, it is an act of EXTREME audacity to decide to run for public office.

Most of us are never asked to do so, and those who are, have to be asked over and over.

Many are just compelled to do it because we don't see anyone fighting for our community, or the issues we all face with the passion and focus that we do.

We care very deeply for others,

and sometimes, we see our leaders having way too much patience w/bullshit or rank injustice, to be comfortable watching from the sidelines.

As we contemplate running for office we know that the decision will have monumental consequences on our lives.

Most of us are the bread

winners of the family, if not exclusively, as necessary contributors.

We know the kind of strain running will put on our families, and most of all, we contemplate the kind of hate we will receive for having the nerve to step into the political arena.

We know what's coming when

we make that call, and we do it anyway, because the stakes are too high not to, and to whom much is given, much is required.

So we step out and we run. And we are told in every conceivable way, from every conceivable quarter (even well intentioned Black people) that our talent,

drive and vision are irrelevant.

What matters is our “viability,” which is code for money.

Donors give to “viable” candidates, but you can’t get to “viability” unless people are willing to give. So major endorsements are super important to establishing your merit as a

candidate.

Only, major endorsements are very hard to come by if you haven’t yet raised much money. And so it swirls in a vortex.

For many talented, excellent Black women candidates, their political ambitions die in the “viability vortex” that they can’t break through.

Those who manage to negotiate those challenging waters, emerge as nominees, and then find that financial resources that flow to other nominees, dribble to us.

It is the VERY rare Black woman candidate, in the exact right circumstance, who emerges & makes it into national

prominence.

And when they do, America, all of a sudden, “discovers” a super star!

That’s why there are NO black women losers or slouches who hold major public office.

NONE!

They are all smart, strong, polished, savvy & passionate. ALL. OF. THEM!

There are ZERO Black women

Matt Gaetz, or MTG or Lauren Boebert.

The system would NEVER allow a Black woman who was that trashy

or stupid to get anywhere near power.

So when you consider Stacey Abrams, Cori Bush, Ayanna Pressley, Stacey Plaskett, Kamala Harris, Val Demings, Tish James, Keisha Lance

Bottoms, London Breed, Terrie Sewell, Lauren Underwood, Maxine Waters & many others, know that there are dozens more, as talented, as creative, as passionate and as courageous, working their way through the gauntlet laid out before us.

And perhaps, in 2022, make a special

effort to help us succeed.

Instead of waiting to see if we will make it, maybe decide EARLY that you are going to HELP us make it.

Because that shift can make ALL the difference.

That shift could ensure that the United States Senate actually looks like and reflects our

country, instead of the farce of GOP male mediocrity it is now.

I assure you, America will be so much better off for it!