

### **Congressman Schock Recounts Rise To Power**

WASHINGTON - - U.S. Representative Aaron Schock (R-IL) spoke to a packed room of students at American University on Tuesday night and, for once, he was the elder statesman.

Schock, 30, is the youngest member of Congress, and said in a speech Tuesday that he has spent most of his life battling against the perception that he is too young to hold office.

“I’m used to being the youngest in just about everything I’ve done so far,” said Schock. “What I have found is that through my work ethic and my ability to get out there and introduce myself I’ve been able to convince people that I’m capable of serving.”

Schock’s political career began when he organized a successful write-in campaign for school board in his hometown of Peoria, Ill. at 19. Schock became school board president in just two years. He was elected to the Illinois House of Representatives at 23, and elected to the U.S. House at 26, becoming the youngest member of Congress when he was sworn in at 27.

“Once I got elected, I found out that government was a lot like high school,” said Schock. “If you show up and you have good attendance, if you do your homework and you read your material and you come forward with thoughtful ideas, you tend to rise to the top of the class.”

Schock has represented Illinois’ 18<sup>th</sup> congressional district since 2009, and was appointed to the U.S. House “Committee On Ways and Means” at the beginning of his second term in early 2011.

Even after a long day on Capitol Hill, Schock was full of enthusiasm and confidently strode around the room, cracking jokes, answering intricate policy questions, and dispensing advice to the many aspiring politicians in attendance.

“First of all, only run for an office that you really, really want to serve in,” said Schock. “If you don’t really care about what it is you’re getting into, it’s going to show really quick and you’re going to do a lousy job.”

Schock said that he applies the same principle to his current public service.

“I like to do everything to 100 percent and so I told myself that I will do this and when I’m burned-out, I’ll quit,” said Schock. “I’m kind of an all in or not in guy.”

Schock’s political tenacity is evident in his legislative record: he passed 18 bills in his first two-year term as an Illinois representative, more than any other member. He was also the first legislator in his class to pass a bill in the U.S. House.

During the Q & A portion of his speech, students jokingly asked Schock about his physical fitness. In 2009, Comedian Stephen Colbert grilled Schock about his six-pack abs in an episode of his TV show. Schock was also featured on the cover of the June 2011 issue of Men’s Health Magazine under the headline “The Ripped Representative.”

“I would say that it’s becoming harder [to maintain his abs] now that I’m 30,” said Schock, with a chuckle. “I’m pretty adamant about my workout time.”

Schock was elusive when asked about his political future.

“I think if I do a really good job as a Congressmen, eventually something perhaps will open up,” said Schock. “Then, of course, it’ll be an issue of timing and whether or not I want to run for it, but we’ll see.”

