12 Rules for Newly Elected Officials 📜

Getting elected is only the beginning of your journey as a public servant. Follow these 12 rules during your first term in office:

#1: Seek Out Others' Advice
"Always open yourself up for advice; it doesn't mean you need to take it. Make sure you understand the rules wherever you're serving." - Laura Sibilia

#2: Observe Before Taking Action
"In that first 30 days, just be quiet and watch people's body language. People can lie, dissemble, or hide with their words, but they have a hard time doing that with their body language." - Cara Schulz

#3: Build Strong Relationships with Staff and Colleagues
"Get to know the people you are serving with, your fellow city council members and mayor. Do that one-on-one too, because you're trying to figure out their personality and what their goals are." - Cara Schulz

#4: Stay Flexible
"You've got to be flexible. Keep your list manageable and plan to be interrupted. It's going to happen all the time." - Laura Sibilia

#5: Don't Stop Connecting with Constituents
"If I get down, I get energized by interacting with people. I never stop campaigning." - Marty Grohman

#6: Keep Your Word and Be Trustworthy
"Be honest and be trustworthy. Be dependable and intentional in looking for opportunities to work with folks from across the aisle." - Laura Sibilia

#7: Watch for Opportunities to Make an Impact
"You're working collaboratively, but also be opportunistic. You have to know patience." - Cara Schulz

#8: Empower Staff to Execute Policy
"Lead your community where you want to go and make it easier for staff to quietly get the work done. By your out-in-the-public advocacy, make space for your staff to execute." - Marty Grohman

#9: Always Come Prepared
"I made sure that I was the most prepared person at every single meeting. I knew my facts. I knew them forward and back." - Cara Schulz

#10: Maintain Your Independence
"I maintain my independence by always showing up the same way. I do not get bullied." - Laura Sibilia

#11: Look for Common Ground
"Your goals may not coincide, but they might.... Find out the motivation, because if you can find out the motivation, now you know the lever." - Cara Schulz

#12: Maintain a "Happy Warrior" Mindset
"People ask me a lot, 'How do you keep a smile on your face?' I make an analogy to a yoga pose. I say, 'I have a happy warrior pose,' because stuff just comes in all the time. We've had difficult things." - Marty Grohman