CARRIE: There are over half a

million elected offices

in the United States,

but only two percent of Americans

have ever run for one.

And within that two percent

is a pretty narrow profile.

Only 25 percent of candidates are women.

Only point one percent

of elected officials

openly identify as LGBTQ.

And good luck even

finding that kind of data

on candidates or elected

officials with disabilities.

So what if you're all three of those?

Is there a place in politics for you?

My name's Carrie Wade

and I intend to find out.

I'm a writer and a

disability rights activist

from California, and I want

to continue my advocacy work

by running for office in the future.

The first thing that

means for someone like me

is dealing with a lot of misconceptions.

Sarah Blahovec works

with aspiring candidates

as a disability vote organizer at

the National Council

on Independent Living.

Sarah Blahovec.

SARAH: I feel like it's very similar to

the challenges we face in employment.

You know, people see

disability and automatically

make, you know, draw conclusions

about what you're able

and unable to do on the job.

And that's just not fair.

It's not right.

It's certainly not correct.

♫ upbeat instrumental music ♫

Black and white photo of disability rights activists marching.

Next, activists crawl up the steps of the Capitol building.

CARRIE: The truth is,

people with disabilities

have a long history of political

activism and engagement,

plus, the kind of initiative

that people should want

from their elected officials.

♫ music continues ♫

A protester yells as police officers forcibly remove them from their wheelchair.

(PROTESTER): No! Cuts! To Medicaid! No! Cuts! To Medicaid!

SARAH: It could give you kind of a leg up on

troubleshooting and problem solving,

which is generally a lot

of what running for office

and being in office is about,

is solving your community's problem.

CARRIE: If you're not the kind of

candidate people are used to,

it's particularly important

to find the right message.

Knowing how to talk about yourself

and the issues important to your campaign

in a way that feels honest and relatable.

Reggie Greer knows a

thing or two about that.

He's the Director of

Constituent Engagement

at the Victory Institute,

which trains LGBTQ people from

across the political spectrum

to run for office.

REGGIE: We really encourage the

people that we work with

not to shy away from the

person they've always been.

So being authentic means

being the person you've always been

and finding the narrative

that incorporates

all the things that you would

like to do for a community

with the person you've always been.

CARRIE: Amy Biviano ran for office

in Washington State in 2012 and 2014.

AMY: We do need more people with disabilities

not only running, but being open to run.

I had people straight up say,

"Well that's such a stressful job,

and doesn't that make your epilepsy worse?

So no, I shouldn't vote for you."

I find people are as comfortable

with my epilepsy as I am.

You know, just yeah, I have

a seizure disorder.

I have never worked harder than I did

when I was campaigning.

But that was freaking living.

CARRIE: So where do I start?

Well, for one thing, I

moved to Washington, D.C.

Seriously, I actually did.

♫ trumpet fanfare ♫

Carrie in front of the Capitol building.

I'm gonna be working at

the American Association

of People with Disabilities,

helping people with disabilities

increase our political

and economic power through

voter registration,

fellowships, internships and more.

But even if a cross-country

move isn't for you,

there are plenty of ways to

get involved in public service.

If you know someone who

should run for office,

share this video with them.

And hey, why can't it be you?

Visit RootedinRights.org/RunningOut

for more information

on how to get started.

CARRIE: Written and

directed by Carrie Wade.

Special thanks to Sarah Blahovec,

Reggie Greer

and Amy Biviano.

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♫ ♫ ♫