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**From:** Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 19, 2012 3:14 PM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** FW: Anthony Weiner: 'Nothing Huma can't do'

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**From:** Toiv, Nora F  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 19, 2012 2:54 PM  
**To:** Mills, Cheryl D  
**Subject:** Anthony Weiner: 'Nothing Huma can't do'

## POLITICO

### Anthony Weiner: 'Nothing Huma can't do'

By: Jonathan Allen

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The Huma Abedin fan club is growing — fast.

There's John McCain, Lindsey Graham and Ed Rollins, Republicans who leapt to the defense of Hillary Clinton's top State Department confidante when Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-Minn.) suggested that she just might be a traitor.

There's a Facebook group of folks who "stand with Huma."

(PHOTOS: Huma Abedin)

And there are countless women and men around the country who thought she handled her husband Anthony Weiner's Twitter malfunction with all the grace and elegance that he lacked.

Abedin's finding out an enduring truth of Washington politics: Yesterday's victim is tomorrow's hero.

Some Democrats are whispering that it might be Abedin, not Weiner, who has a future in elective politics.

"There's nothing Huma can't do," Weiner said in an email Thursday morning.

State Department spokesman Philippe Reines said he'd give "points for creativity" on the question of whether she might run for office when she's done at State.

Few outside of the political world had heard of Abedin before Weiner tweeted a lewd photo of his crotch, lied to the country about his online interactions with a series of

women, and finally resigned his House seat under pressure from Democratic leaders following his confession.

(PHOTOS: 8 times Weiner lied about lewd pics)

But her political stature had been on the rise for years. Now a deputy chief of staff at the State Department, Abedin began working for the Clintons in 1996, served as Hillary Clinton's body woman during the 2008 presidential primary and is as close to the secretary of State — both metaphorically and physically — as anyone. Her big public coming-out moment: A 2007 *Vogue* profile that portrayed her as Clinton's protégé.

"Abedin has the energy of a woman in her 20s, the confidence of a woman in her 30s, the experience of a woman in her 40s, and the grace of a woman in her 50s," Hillary Clinton told *Vogue*. "She is timeless, her combination of poise, kindness, and intelligence are matchless."

In 2010, the same year she married Weiner, *Time* listed her as a civic leader under 40 to watch.

Adding to the intrigue surrounding the newlywed power couple: Abedin was pregnant with the couple's first child when the scandal broke a little more than a year ago.

Combined, that was enough for Abedin to develop a bit of a cult following among liberal women, particularly Hillary Clinton fans. She stayed with her man, but she didn't stand by him — at least not literally.

Abedin proved loyal but independent, parting from so many political wives who have appeared onstage as their husbands delivered tearful televised apologies in what has become a modern cleansing ritual for unfaithful officials who hope their constituents will forgive them.

*Forbes* magazine gushed last June that she was "anything but the 'good wife.'"

Instead, she has continued to steadily build her own profile over the past year — and tried to reshape her husband's reputation at the same time.

"It took a lot of work to get to where we are today, but I want people to know we're a normal family," she told *People* magazine for a feature running in this week's issue. "Anthony has spent every day since [the scandal] trying to be the best dad and husband he can be. ... I'm proud to be married to him."

There was no shortage of outrage over Weiner's spectacular flame-out, even within her own tight circles. Hillary and Bill Clinton, who see Abedin as an extension of their family, were said to be furious about the scandal. She has been a fixture in Hillary-land since the tail end of Bill Clinton's presidency.

Another torrent of outrage flowed this week after Bachmann and four colleagues demanded the State Department's inspector general open an investigation into whether foreign policy decisions are being made as the result of an "influence operations" by the Muslim Brotherhood. In the letter, the lawmakers accused members of her family,

including her dead father, of having ties to the Muslim Brotherhood and noted that Abedin has "routine access" to Clinton and influence in the policy process.

Similar letters were sent to inspectors general at the departments of Defense, Justice, Homeland Security and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

Abedin, born in Michigan but raised in the Middle East, is Muslim. Weiner is Jewish.

McCain, the 2008 Republican presidential nominee, went to the Senate floor Wednesday to denounce his House GOP colleagues.

"These allegations about Huma, and the report from which they are drawn, are nothing less than an unwarranted and unfounded attack on an honorable woman, a dedicated American, and a loyal public servant," he said.

Rollins, a veteran GOP political operative and the onetime manager of Bachmann's failed presidential campaign, let loose in an opinion piece on the FOX News website.

"I am fully aware that she sometimes has difficulty with her facts, but this is downright vicious and reaches the late Sen. Joe McCarthy level," he wrote, referring to the Red-baiting Wisconsin senator who charged that the Pentagon, the State Department and Hollywood were full of communists.

"As a member of Congress, with a seat on the House [Permanent Select] Intelligence Committee, Mrs. Bachmann you know better. Shame on you, Michele! You should stand on the floor of the House and apologize to Huma Abedin and to Secretary Clinton and to the millions of hardworking, loyal, Muslim Americans for your wild and unsubstantiated charges," he wrote. "As a devoted Christian, you need to ask forgiveness for this grievous lack of judgment and reckless behavior."

Graham told POLITICO Huddle on Thursday that he has traveled the world with Abedin and calls the attacks on her "ridiculous."

"The person saying it has no idea what they're saying because they've never met her," Graham said. "She is about as far away from the Muslim Brotherhood view of women and ideology as you possibly could get. She's a very modern woman in every sense of the word, and people who say these things are really doing her a disservice because they don't know what they're talking about, and I don't know what their motivations are, but clearly it says more about them than it does her."

A senior House Republican who spoke to POLITICO on the condition of anonymity to speak freely about a GOP colleague added this: "This is ridiculous and extraordinarily petty. Clinton is the most pro-Israel member of this administration. Clearly, this is another dumb idea from Michele."

And that's just the fire from the friendly side.

A new Facebook page, called "I stand with Huma," sprung up in response to the letter.

"Hmmm... Huma or Bachmann???? Hmmmm... Bachmann doesn't have a fraction of the character, intellect and grace of Huma Abedin," longtime Democratic strategist Burns Strider wrote on the page. "Give me a break."

Reines called the allegations in the letter "nothing but vicious and disgusting lies," in a statement released to news outlets.

Bachmann said the letters, which were also signed by Republican Reps. Louie Gohmert (Texas), Tom Rooney (Florida), Trent Franks (Arizona) and Lynn Westmoreland (Georgia), are "being distorted."

"The intention of the letters was to outline the serious national security concerns I had and ask for answers to questions regarding the Muslim Brotherhood and other radical group's access to top Obama administration officials," she wrote in a statement posted on her Website. "I will not be silent as this administration appeases our enemies instead of telling the truth about the threats our country faces."

Bachmann, a favorite of the tea party, angered liberals during the 2008 campaign when she called on Congress to investigate "anti-American" lawmakers.

The upshot: Abedin has become an instant cause célèbre for the left and an instrument for Bachmann's Republican critics.

Travis Worl, who worked with Abedin on Hillary Clinton's 2008 presidential campaign, started the "I stand with Huma" Facebook page to illustrate the contrast he sees between the two women.

"I wanted both Huma and Rep. Bachmann to know that I and the nearly 1,100 others who have joined the group so far, stand with Huma against Bachmann's bullying tactics," he told POLITICO.

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