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[00:00:25] **Speaker 1** The following program is part of our Here and Now 2016 Wisconsin Vote election coverage.

[00:00:33] **Speaker 2** Funding for Here and Now is provided in part by Friends of Wisconsin Public Television.

[00:00:48] **Speaker 3** Tonight, here and now from the city of Wausau, in the heart of the state, in the heart of the election season, where local voters are looking for answers to their top concerns. I personally concerned about immigration issues.

[00:01:03] **Speaker 4** Issue number one in losses, jobs. I think that's really important to everyone jobs and economic development.

[00:01:08] **Speaker 2** I believe in supporting those that need help, but there needs to be, some encouragement for them to go back to work.

[00:01:16] **Speaker 3** Welcome to Warsaw and the here and Now Wisconsin vote special. We're coming to you live from the thrive food in Warsaw's river district. What a busy night here. If drivers customers kick off their weekend with dinner and conversation, conversation that may well include politics. I'm Frederica Freiberg. Welcome to Wausau and a special edition of Here and Now. It's our first stop as we travel the state with our Wisconsin Public Radio partners to take our Wisconsin voter election project on the road. Tonight, we'll dive into the seventh congressional race. Later, a UW political scientist surveys the politics of the central part of our state. We'll learn about the deeply rooted Hmong community in the Wausau area. And reporter Zach Schultz takes a look at the lack of trust in this election season. But first Wausau seventh Congressional District is represented in Washington by Republican Sean Duffy, who is in his third term. Congressman Duffy was invited to appear together tonight with his opponent. He said he was unable to schedule. We also asked if he would sit down with us for one on one interview to be taped any time, anywhere, during this past week. He declined that request as well. The challenger in the race is Democrat Mary Heft. In addition to her years as a professor at UW Barron County and Rice Lake, Miss Heft is also a former Rice Lake School board member. Mary Half joins us, and thanks very much for being here. Thank you. Frederica. It's my pleasure. Well, now it's quite a jump from school board to Congress. Why did you decide to take on a well-financed incumbent? Well, I, I didn't take on a well-financed incumbent. I took on a mission my university students were suffering. I saw their plight. I saw the difficulty for them to pay their tuition to that full time job. Supporting moms and dads. Poverty in Wisconsin, 30 year all time high. So when Democratic leaders came to me and said, Mary, do this. I said, I have to. I'm doing this for my students. Now, you've repeatedly asked Sean Duffy to withdraw his support for Donald Trump. His response to that has been variations on this theme, which we quote now in his absence. He says Trump's recent comments are reprehensible. I never endorsed Donald Trump because of his stance on women or his family values. I endorsed him for his policies defeating ISIS, securing our border, and growing our economy. What is your reaction to that reasoning on his part? Well, it makes no sense. This is a man we're talking Donald Trump right now who has admitted to the sexual abuse of women. So, you know, he calls it Sean Duffy calls that Donald Trump's private life. But that is a man who would be president. And as a man who would be president, he's going to be addressing issues of gender and equity, violence against women and men, reproductive rights. These are all policies that a president is going to have a huge impact on. And Sean Duffy knows that. He knows that you can't separate the two. For his part, he asks how you can support Hillary Clinton or Hillary Clinton. All someone has to do is do the research on this woman, a woman who, when she graduated from law school, could have taken any prestigious job. Instead, what she has done is spend a lifetime fighting for the rights of women and children. I have great admiration for this woman and her, what she has done for us as Americans. Great admiration. What is your number one issue in this, the seventh Congressional district? It's changed right now. It's my realization that money is buying the votes of people in Congress and Senate. My opponent, Sean Duffy, recently has accepted $400,000 and political contributions from bankers. But he chairs the banking Oversight committee in Congress. He's accepted the money from the people he oversees, and he knows they want something in return for their votes, something he's for their money, something he is willing to give them. He has made it his cause to cripple the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. And that's the bureau just recently that uncovered what Wells Fargo did. Now, I took a look at the campaign finance reporting. And your says that you have raised $63,000. That's quite a difference from Congressman Shonda Frederica. I think it's better than that now. It's way down. Yeah, it's it's how I've raised my money is not from I don't have the Koch brothers in back of me like like he does. It's why he says there's no such thing as climate change. He has to. The Koch brothers right now have companies that spew 24 million tons of carbon into the air that you and I breathe every year. He has to deny it. So he. That's their big funding. By denying that there's such a thing as climate change. We should reiterate at this point that we did invite Congressman Sean Duffy to join us, and he declined that opportunity. And I think this is why he declined. And I think it's why he micromanaged the debates that we're going to have. I want to move on to health care and specifically the Affordable Care Act. There are stark differences between your positions. Here is his quoting from his website, his campaign website, again in his absence. It says Sean Duffy has voted to repeal Obamacare dozens of times now. And he has also kept his promise to introduce his own proposal. Sean's market focused proposal, it says on his website, retains the few good portions of Obamacare but puts doctors and patients in charge of health decisions rather than unelected government bureaucrats responsible. And also tell us about your support of a plan that's akin to Medicare for all. Right. Sean Duffy made a promise. His promise to the people was that he would not vote against the Affordable Care Act until he had an offer of an alternative that was viable, and that the alternative that he's talking about right now is an alternative. I haven't even seen what right now with the people need all people. Well, thanks to the Affordable Care Act, with that 20 million people who previously weren't insured, we're at almost 90% of the people in our country that are insured now, people with preexisting conditions, like, I just talked to a man who was near tears when he said, my son with diabetes, finally, no can get insurance. That's important. But what's what's the problem is, is that it's too expensive for many. And so we've got to have a single payer and that's a viable plan. All right. We need to leave it there. Mary, thanks very much. Thank you. Coming up, reporter Zach Schultz says Wisconsinites have some very definite opinions on the subject of trust in this election. Trust in the process. And the players, including the media. Here's a report in just a few moments as we continue our here on the Wisconsin Vote Special here at Thrive in Wausau.

[00:08:44] **Speaker 2** I think the most of the people I've talked with are really frustrated with the media coverage of both sides, in both public and public, but, general media as well as the conservative media.

[00:09:12] **Speaker 3** Welcome back. Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump have the highest unfavorable ratings of any presidential candidate in history, and one of the biggest storylines that Donald Trump has inserted into the race is whether or not the election will feature rampant voter fraud. So it's probably not surprising to hear that Americans trust in government, politics and the media have reached all time lows here and now. Reporter Zach Schultz shows us what that means on the campaign trail in Wisconsin.

[00:09:43] **Speaker 2** There's a new.

[00:09:43] **Speaker 5** Batch of emails that's all ahead this out.

[00:09:49] **Speaker 1** Over the course of four decades, Donald Trump built his personal brand, believing the old phrase there's no such thing as bad publicity. But the last few months in the spotlight may have changed his mind.

[00:10:01] **Speaker 2** How is the media dishonest? How dishonest are these people.

[00:10:05] **Speaker 1** And his supporters are fully on board?

[00:10:08] **Speaker 4** The general media I don't trust at all.

[00:10:10] **Speaker 1** I think they're very biased. They aren't out of the mainstream. According to the pollster Gallup, American trust in mass media has reached an all time low, with just 32% saying they have a fair amount or great deal of trust in the media. Broken down by party. Just 14% of Republicans have at least a fair amount of trust in the media at 51%. Democrats are considerably more confident in the media, but even they have big concerns.

[00:10:40] **Speaker 4** What I think is rough in the news coverage is that, people who get the most press are usually people making outrageous statements or doing some crazy thing.

[00:10:48] **Speaker 2** A lot of the media.

[00:10:49] **Speaker 5** Portrays politics.

[00:10:52] **Speaker 2** As a personality.

[00:10:53] **Speaker 5** Contest, as a dancing with the stars event.

[00:10:58] **Speaker 6** You're listening to News Radio six, TMJ, I'm Charlie Sykes.

[00:11:02] **Speaker 1** Charlie Sykes has spent the last couple decades building his own media brand as the most influential conservative talk show host in Wisconsin.

[00:11:11] **Speaker 6** There was a perception on the part of conservatives that the mainstream media was biased, that it was unfair, that it was selective in what it covered. And I think this was true. And as a result of this, you had a market for conservative talk radio introducing.

[00:11:25] **Speaker 5** The next president of the United States, Mr. Donald.

[00:11:29] **Speaker 1** J. Trump. But the rise of Donald Trump has led Sykes to believe conservative talk radio went too far in delegitimizing mainstream media in the eyes and ears of conservatives.

[00:11:43] **Speaker 6** Our critiques of the mainstream media had perhaps had unintended consequences that we'd been too successful.

[00:11:50] **Speaker 1** I Sykes was one of the first and loudest voices in the Never Trump.

[00:11:54] **Speaker 6** Movement, because I think what Donald Trump has done has been to create this perfect storm of awfulness.

[00:12:02] **Speaker 1** He tried to counter Trump supporters with facts from the New York Times or Washington Post.

[00:12:07] **Speaker 6** The the instinctive reaction was, well, those are liberal rags. We don't need to pay any attention. And that was my whoa moment. Have we actually created kind of a monster here?

[00:12:17] **Speaker 1** Conservative voters today don't need the mainstream media to feel informed beyond Fox News. They have websites like Breitbart and the Drudge Report that aggregate content from other sources, not all of them reputable or reported with the highest standards of journalism. Trump's biggest media asset is his Twitter account, with 12.5 million followers retweeting his message.

[00:12:41] **Speaker 4** His Twitter account and all the people that are promoting him on Twitter. That helps a lot.

[00:12:47] **Speaker 6** You wake up and you realize, well, there are no more gatekeepers. There's no more fact checking.

[00:12:52] **Speaker 2** We have to watch what's going on, because this is a dirty business is.

[00:12:56] **Speaker 6** A very, very dirty business. You know what I mean? Watch what's going.

[00:12:59] **Speaker 5** On.

[00:13:00] **Speaker 1** Trump doesn't stop with attacking the media.

[00:13:03] **Speaker 6** He has delegitimized all of the institutions of our society.

[00:13:07] **Speaker 1** Trump has attacked the whole system, from government to the military to political parties to the political process itself.

[00:13:15] **Speaker 2** It's all part of the rig system being run at your expense.

[00:13:19] **Speaker 3** So not really having dead people vote in Colorado.

[00:13:21] **Speaker 4** And absentee ballots, I mean, I mean, can't they can't win without cheating.

[00:13:26] **Speaker 6** You know, here we are in which you do have the wildest conspiracy theories from the far reaches of the alt right fever swamps that are now part of the mainstream political dialog. And that's and that's dangerous.

[00:13:39] **Speaker 1** It's made voters across the political spectrum nervous about whether the election will be legitimate.

[00:13:45] **Speaker 3** I'm not as comfortable with it this year. No.

[00:13:47] **Speaker 7** I keep reading stories about, you know, missing ballots and this and that.

[00:13:52] **Speaker 3** There's a lot of things on the internet, you know, where people that are in charge of. Our elections have. Been shown and proven how easily it can be removed.

[00:14:06] **Speaker 6** They're going to blame it on being rigged and this will be very important for their narrative. And I think the damage that we'll do to the country is huge, because they do have this echo chamber where they will convince an awful lot of people that somehow this was stolen from them.

[00:14:20] **Speaker 1** That's part Charlie Sykes is ending his radio show at the end of the year, and plans to write a book about what happened to the conservative movement.

[00:14:29] **Speaker 6** And I think that conservatives, honestly, at the end of this process, have to look themselves in the eye and say, okay, to what extent did we contribute to that? To what extent did we ignore that? And where do we go from here?

[00:14:48] **Speaker 3** Well, of all of the people who can hear political messaging in the media and on the trail and cut through the clutter. Our next guest gives us an experts edge. Chair of the UW Stevens Point political science department, Professor John Blakeman. Professor, thanks very much for being.

[00:15:04] **Speaker 5** Thanks for having me.

[00:15:05] **Speaker 3** Well, so answering this question of media bias helping rig the election according to the Trump campaign. What is your reaction to this talk of this election being rigged?

[00:15:14] **Speaker 5** Well, from the standpoint of media bias, I don't know. I certainly I think the media has been a little more accommodating to the claim campaign and the Trump campaign, perhaps. But the media cannot rig an election in and of itself. And when Trump goes on to talk about rigging an election, I think he's also talking about the process, which has, sort of a deeper, darker issue. So.

[00:15:41] **Speaker 3** What's so resonant in these parts is that idea of conspiracy, along with the vitriol that necessarily comes with it.

[00:15:49] **Speaker 5** Right. Well, you know, the 50% of Trump supporters buy the rigged election rigging right now, and Trump isn't the first candidate to make it John McCain. McCain made it back in 2008, but he quickly backtracked from it. Whereas it seems now to be a very solid part of Trump's campaign message.

[00:16:13] **Speaker 3** You were telling me about, something you call rural rage at work in Wisconsin. How does that manifest in this election?

[00:16:21] **Speaker 5** Well, in Wisconsin, interestingly, if you look, for instance, at the most recent Marquette poll, which does divide people up according to whether they live in, an urban, suburban or rural area. Rural voters actually don't differ too much on economic issues. On other policy issues where they really differ is on immigration. And so perhaps Trump's message on immigration is appealing to people in more rural areas and driving a kind of angst or rage that will prompt them to vote.

[00:16:59] **Speaker 3** Is it your sense that the voters in rural areas are the candidates for these voters are tapping into the so-called politics of resentment?

[00:17:10] **Speaker 5** Yeah, I think there is a lot to the politics of resentment. But I think in Wisconsin, a lot of the politics of resentment are really state level issues that have to do with higher education or the role of the DNR in regulating the deer herd. And these really aren't national issues. And Trump, of course, is not going to address any of that.

[00:17:31] **Speaker 3** What kind of position does Trump put down ballot Republican candidates in, especially in this part of the state where he won the primary in the third and seventh congressional districts?

[00:17:41] **Speaker 5** Well, Ron Kind and the third has no challenger. So I, I guess there's no down ballot issue there unless a lot of people write in someone else, which can happen in the seventh district. Sean Duffy is a two term incumbent now. He's been very successful getting votes. Winning elections, I should say. I don't really see that down ballot issues in the seventh. They're going to be much of an issue at all.

[00:18:07] **Speaker 3** All right. Well, thank you very much for joining us, John Blake.

[00:18:09] **Speaker 5** Yeah. Thank you.

[00:18:11] **Speaker 3** And if you are just joining us on notice that we are not in our usual studio days, that is because we're coming to you live from Warsaw's river district, specifically from the dining room of Thrive Foundry Co, owned and operated by David Florio and Elizabeth Penner. And we want to give a shout out to David and Elizabeth for allowing us in tonight. We asked one of them to join us for an interview and they turned us down. That's not because they're shy or unfriendly, but because they say they cannot leave the kitchen on a busy Friday night. And there they are. A Louisiana native, David has grown roots in Wausau and dedicates his kitchen to the mission of sustainability and community outreach drives menu features produced from Wausau area growers, local dairy and meats, and craft beer as well.

[00:18:59] **Unidentified** He even grew up playing local warehouse. Coworker Travis Kauffman. Even the walls are roof.

[00:19:11] **Speaker 3** Materials, including the building's original overhead garage door and other doors and panels reclaimed by the Warsaw Habitat for humanity. Coming up next on our Wisconsin Road special edition of Here and Now, a look at the cultural and economic contributions of the Warsaw the Hmong people in Warsaw.

[00:19:29] **Speaker 5** It's interesting how.

[00:19:32] **Speaker 2** How businesses and different fields of study.

[00:19:35] **Speaker 5** Or.

[00:19:35] **Speaker 1** Skills are sharing, knowledge with each other. And it also seems to cultivate.

[00:19:39] **Speaker 5** That kind of a.

[00:19:40] **Speaker 2** Community sense.

[00:19:56] **Speaker 3** Welcome back to Warsaw's Pride Soldering. A prominent part of the Walsall community is the Hmong population in marathon and surrounding counties. About 9000 people of Southeast Asian descent now call Central Wisconsin home as allies of the U.S. during the Vietnam War. The first to arrive landed here following the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam. Wisconsin has the third highest Hmong population in the country and Wausau the second highest in the state. And the transition has not always been easy or smooth. But now, some 40 years on, new generations of Hmong called the Wausau area the only home they've known and are increasingly leaders in the community. For example, 22 year old Yilan Xiong was just elected to the Marathon County Board of Supervisors, and he joins us now. Thanks very much for being here.

[00:20:46] **Speaker 5** I'm glad to be here.

[00:20:48] **Speaker 3** Well, tell us about your family and when and why they arrived in Warsaw. Sure.

[00:20:52] **Speaker 5** My family arrived in the 1980s. You know, I was what? I was not the first family here. But, you know, we were one of the ones who arrived in the 1980s. So it was it was fantastic. And we chose this as a place of TV. And, you know, it's been great ever since.

[00:21:05] **Speaker 3** How would you describe the transition that came with the arrival, both for mom families and the Wausau community?

[00:21:11] **Speaker 5** Sure. You know, in the past, you know, in the past, Walsall was known as the whitest city in the entire entire country. In the last 40 years, there has been a lot of progress that has been done to the point where, you know, we have elected officials that are among the dissent, such as me and, you know, Mariupol, who sits on the on the scoreboard.

[00:21:29] **Speaker 3** Is there? Is there still work to do integrating modern families into the fabric of the Wausau community?

[00:21:34] **Speaker 5** Sure. You know, there's always you know, there can always be improvement in everything. You know, the Warsaw community and the Marathon County has been very supportive of the progress and the integrating of the Hmong community into the, you know, a larger community at large. You know, we are booming where we have businesses. You know, we have Hmong teachers, Hmong lawyers and everything. You know, where there's still work to be done. But, you know, there has been a lot of progress that has been done in the last 20 years as well.

[00:21:57] **Speaker 3** Has the presidential campaign rhetoric around immigrants brought out lingering racial divisions in this area?

[00:22:04] **Speaker 5** Sure. You know, you know, that's a very good question. From what I, from what am I experience and I it this has been the year where I seen a lot of Hmong individuals, especially people in the Hmong community, who has paid very close attention to the presidential election. You know, all of them were refugee children or or product of refugees and everything. So, you know, they were a product of immigrants. And so it makes it makes them look at the election very closely. And this and like I said before, this is the first time I see them, this, you know, this interest in, in, in election politics.

[00:22:36] **Speaker 3** And as a county supervisor, what are the issues you most want to address on behalf of your own constituency?

[00:22:43] **Speaker 5** You know, I represent the district 19, but a lot of the Hmong individuals kind of see me as my as the liaison to the Marathon County Board. I've seen many problems and obstacles actually say that it's the kind of prohibit that stops the Hmong community from advancing much further. There's been a lot of mental health problems in the Hmong community that I see. That's a very big issue. They think of the, you know, the word mental health in Hmong means crazy. So, you know, there's needs to be a lot of education in addition, I mean, you see that there's not a lot of cultural center programs are able to help our Hmong, you to be able to help them build confidence and help them and also be sensitive in the culture.

[00:23:17] **Speaker 3** Now, I know that Wausau now has a chamber of commerce to assist business startups. How needed is that in your mind? Sure.

[00:23:24] **Speaker 5** You know the Hmong community, you know, you know, we were brought to this country in the in the hopes of being able to participate with elections, get education, also be able to participate in the, you know, business field. And, you know, a lot of individuals in the Hmong community I know that wants to start business there. You know, they want to pursue the American dream in everything. And with the Hmong Chamber of Commerce here and providing that resource of providing loans and that resources to them that allows them to be able to pursue their, you know, pursue the American dream.

[00:23:50] **Speaker 3** Where do you envision the Hmong community in Wausau being 40 years from now?

[00:23:54] **Speaker 5** That's a very fantastic question. We we are and we ask that question all the time to ourselves. You know, we we want to see a, you know, a a world where, you know, where do we as the Hmong community are able to thrive as other race. But we've only been here in 40 years, but we need more progress than we have ever had in the last 200 years. And so, you know, we want to see even more and be, you know, just like everybody else. All right.

[00:24:17] **Speaker 3** Geylang Xiong, thank you very much. Thank you. Finally, tonight, in addition to programs like Here and Now, Wisconsin Public Television also produces hour long programs that explore the history of cities across the state. So tonight, a short glimpse from hometown stories.

[00:24:34] **Speaker 7** What some changes in Wausau skyline reflect new growth on the riverside, as new uses are found for the old industrial sites that once lined the banks. One of the things that really anchors, I think the history of Wausau is the Wisconsin River. It still tells the story of 1839 when George Stevens came up, started his first sawmill. It still tells the story of a variety of other people that have come and made Wausau what it is. And I think that anchor is the Wisconsin River that continues to flow down this wonderful city.

[00:25:29] **Speaker 3** Hometown Stories Wausau can be found in its entirety on our website. Stories from the banks of the Wisconsin River in the Wausau River District and Pride Parade are here in that column for the evening. We want to thank co-owners and chefs David Lauria and Elizabeth Penner for letting us set up shop and go out cast on a busy Friday night. Next week, our Wisconsin vote project hits the road again. And here and now we'll come to you from the cross on the Pearl Street view. For more on our upcoming Wisconsin Vote Road trip programs, including a joint card show here and now and our Meet the Media event, go to the events page at Wisconsin vote.org. I'm Frederica Freiberg. Have a great weekend.

[00:26:53] **Speaker 2** Funding for Here and Now is provided in part by Friends of Wisconsin Public Television.

[00:26:59] **Speaker 1** For more information on here In Now's 2016 election coverage, go to Wisconsin vote.org.