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[00:00:15] **Speaker 1** So legislative Democrats made some gains. But a state budget battle looms with a probable fight over whether to cut taxes or spend the $4 billion surplus in Washington. Look for President Donald Trump to act fast on his priorities and then turn your attention back to Wisconsin for another supersized election for control of the state Supreme Court. The discussion of what's ahead politically in the new year is teed up for our panelists. Republican Bill McCUTCHEON and Democrat Scott Ross. And thanks for being here.

[00:00:45] **Speaker 2** Happy New Year.

[00:00:46] **Speaker 1** So first to you, Bill. Let's start with what we're going to see out of the new Trump administration.

[00:00:52] **Speaker 2** So I would say this is going to be the NASCAR start, all gas, no brakes. I expect more than maybe several hundred executive orders on day one. I expect them to come forward with a reconciliation package probably in February that includes immigration and energy. A second one later in the year on government reform and taxes. They have two opportunities. There are 18 votes, including for speaker. We're on to round two on that already. Hopefully Mike Johnson will get that and we can get back to business. But I think there will be a fast and furious start for the Trump administration. I think the four years between his terms, they've learned a lot. They knew what they did wrong in the first term, and they'll be more prepared this time.

[00:01:34] **Speaker 1** So it's hold on to your hats moment. Scott, do you think Democrats will work with the Trump administration in any measure? Yeah.

[00:01:41] **Speaker 3** I really hope not, because the things that they're going to do are going to just, you know, dismantle the social safety net, attack the rights of people. You know, I mean, we're going to have mass deportations. We're going to have trans people, you know, bullied into suicide with their things. I mean, it's going to be a bloodbath. And also that they can raise our treasury and give billionaires even more money. You know, and so I think so I hope Democrats are not up to it and they shouldn't be, because I'll tell you, I got an ABC roll and I'm giving you the B, which is bipartisanship is B.S. Donald Trump, you know, in 2016, he said, you know, hinted he might prosecute his political enemies in 2020. He got a little bit more aggressive in 2024. He went all in on non, you know, on attacking Democrats and that was it. I'm not working with Democrats and he did better this time.

[00:02:26] **Speaker 1** So you don't think it's incumbent on Democrats to acknowledge the electoral popularity of Donald Trump after having apparently misunderstood their base?

[00:02:35] **Speaker 3** Well, you know, I'll tell you this story. So a couple of weeks before the election, my wife is like, you know, I don't think she's going to win. And I'm like, I don't want to hear it because, like, I'll live in that world if it exists. I'm going to live in denial, like there's nothing I'm going to do about it. And after I go to her and I was like, you know, hat in hand, I'm like, What happened? She's like the joy thing. She's like, we have a comfortable life, you know? Do you feel joy? And I'm like, well, when I'm around you. But generally, no. So why were people going to feel joy, you know, who felt joy? The people who were on the gravy train, you know, and suddenly were able to, you know, be in a position where they could be president. You know, and the consultants and all that sort of thing. It wasn't you know, they weren't it wasn't it wasn't a reflection of reality, as it turns out. I bought into it, but I was wrong.

[00:03:17] **Speaker 2** I think Democrats missed the signal. The voter the voters were telling us something very specific. Trump picked up on it early on and he capitalized on it. And that's why he actually won 231 congressional seats and he won 57 Senate seats. So I think there is some room for bipartisanship in this coming Congress.

[00:03:37] **Speaker 1** Bill, how do you think day one priorities like mass deportations apparently help people with the cost of groceries?

[00:03:45] **Speaker 2** Well, I think that's one function. He got elected on that. There's no question about that. Whether it was the Trump people think it was his number one issue. I still think the economy was the number one issue. And both of those things are going to get done in the first six months. But it probably you're not going to see massive in reduced grocery prices in the first couple of months. But if you haven't by summer, I think that's a pretty good start for the Trump campaign.

[00:04:09] **Speaker 3** I mean, I think the problem is, is that like when you talk about bipartisanship, that this is not the Republican Party that deals with bipartisanship anymore. You know, there are Democrats who are thinking, I still want a Republican Party where we can come together and put a man on the moon. You know, the Republican Party basically now denies that. The man that we even landed on the moon essentially, in that way, there is no room for bipartisanship with them. Democrats do that at their peril. And again, Republicans have been saying no to Democrats since they were rolling old man Cheney off the dais June, January 20th, 2009. They have never worked with the Democrats. And suddenly they're, you know, suddenly that's they pay no price for it, basically is what I was going to say. So why would they do it now?

[00:04:47] **Speaker 1** I want I want to come back here to Wisconsin and what you call the Super Bowl of politics, that being the spring election for state Supreme Court. Why is it the Super Bowl?

[00:04:59] **Speaker 2** This is the biggest election. It's for control of the Wisconsin Supreme Court. Currently, it's A43 progressive majority. One of the four progressives is not running for reelection. And so there's an opportunity for conservatives to take back the majority. And if they don't get it this time. The next opportunity doesn't present itself until 2028. So progressives will have this majority for some time and they could undo things like Act ten, they could undo school choice, they could undo some of the welfare reforms and many, many other things. So it is the Super Bowl for conservatives and Republicans, and it's incumbent upon us to get behind Brad Schimel quickly, early. He's a battle tested candidate. He's run statewide twice before. He was successful in the first bid. He was unsuccessful in the second bid, primarily because there was a third party candidate in here who prevented him from beating Josh Kaul. So I think he's a strong candidate. It's going to be the most expensive race in Wisconsin history.

[00:05:55] **Speaker 1** How does Susan Crawford win this?

[00:05:57] **Speaker 3** I think she's a terrific candidate. She's ten years of prosecutor. You know, she's then went to private practice where she protected workers rights, abortion rights and voting rights. And then she went on to be a respected judge, which she is now. Brad Sherman, the other hand, is a partizan hack. I mean, he was fired.

[00:06:13] **Speaker 2** He was in Waukesha.

[00:06:15] **Speaker 3** Yes. And he's a judge because he and Scott Walker, you know, in the lame duck, after they both got fired for their performance, you know, voters fired them. He appointed him a judge. The fact is, is that Brad Schimel, you know, bungled prosecutions of sex offenders. The rape kit backlog was massive under him. And, you know, I'll give you I'll give you another one. You know, 71 of 72 counties begged they passed resolutions begging Brad Sherman, Scott Walker to do something about the opioid crisis. Brad Schimmel, after being the only state candidate in Wisconsin history to take a PAC check from Purdue Pharma, the big opioid kingpin, he refused to prosecute one of those, absolutely refused to prosecute. And it wasn't a lot of money. It was only $250. But like the question is, can you be bought for that little or did you actually think Purdue shouldn't be held accountable? Josh Karl, on the other hand, $750 million to help the effects of that has come into the state of Wisconsin because Brad Schimmel is no longer the attorney general.

[00:07:12] **Speaker 2** I think Democrats are going to be careful what they wish for here. This Act ten case that was adjudicated in Dane County Circuit Court is now in the appellate court could make it to the Wisconsin Supreme Court. A year ago, I think, Scott, now I will agree on this. Janet, say, what sort of changed the rules on judicial elections used to be that judicial candidates couldn't take positions on cases that might come before them. Janet Pro, to say what you've raised that bright line on whether it was the maps or abortion or a variety of other things. So Schimel is going to have to take advantage of that and tell people at ten is going to be repealed. If you don't if you elect Susan Crawford school choice, if you choose a charter school or a choice school or open, enroll your kid, That could all go away if Susan Crawford is elected. So he's going to have to motivate the same voters that elected Donald Trump, the low propensity voters, the mid propensity voters who typically don't turn out in April.

[00:08:05] **Speaker 3** So it's going to be about we're suddenly going to you know, the Wisconsin Supreme Court is going to suddenly have purview over immigration and transgender issues. That's going to be what Brad Kimmel's campaign he's already he's already talking about those things. It's going to be the sort of divisive, you know, destructive campaign that we saw from Trump that we saw from Schimel. I do not believe Schimel will be will be elected in any way, shape or form, mostly because, you know, the credentials of Susan Crawford, the, you know, the bad stuff that we have with Brad Schimel, but also the fact that it is going to be insane what the Republicans do. And Democrats are always motivated once we've lost the big battle to clean things up. And I think that that's, you know, where we're at.

[00:08:40] **Speaker 2** While ratings for a lot of progressive shows are at their all time low, I think Democrats are demotivated by what happened in November. And I think that will continue through April.

[00:08:51] **Speaker 1** We have a lot more to talk about and we will in the coming months. Bill McCUTCHEON, Scott Ross, thank you.

[00:08:57] **Speaker 2** Thank you. Thank you.

[00:09:00] **Speaker 1** You know, I say a lot.