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[00:00:23] **Speaker 1** President Donald Trump and his administration have moved fast, signing a flurry of executive orders starting day one. They include everything from a tough clampdown on immigration, energy policy and the federal workforce. Attorneys general from 22 states, including Wisconsin, have sued to block Trump's executive order that moves to end a century old immigration policy known as birthright citizenship, guaranteeing that US born children are citizens regardless of their parents status. Wisconsin Republican U.S. Senator Ron Johnson is here. And this the first week of the Trump presidency. And Senator, thanks very much for being here.

[00:01:09] **Speaker 2** Fredricka, thanks for having me on.

[00:01:11] **Speaker 1** So what is your overall reaction to week one of President Trump and his administration?

[00:01:18] **Speaker 2** Well, I'm. I'm happy to see him move fast honoring the promises he made during the campaign. You know, from my standpoint, too, I'm focusing on reducing spending to some reasonable pre-pandemic level. It's gotten completely out of hand. In 2014, we were 2018, we spent $4.4 trillion. Then we had the pandemic spent almost 6.6. But, you know, a normal family would if they had medical bills and they had to borrow $50,000 for for a medical bill the next year. If their family remember that, well, they wouldn't keep borrowing $50,000 and spending to that level. But that in the fact is what we've done in the federal government, we've averaged $6.5 trillion over the last five years. Last year we spent 6.9. So it's unjustified. It's unsustainable. It's really absurd. And we need to return to some some level of pre-pandemic spending. And that's really what I'm working on right now.

[00:02:12] **Speaker 1** What's your reaction to President Trump's pardon of January 6th defendants, including 11 people from Wisconsin?

[00:02:20] **Speaker 2** Well, first of all, I think there was a grotesque miscarriage of justice throughout the Biden administration. Really a lawless administration. But as relates to January 6th, I think so many of these people were were persecuted, weren't offered speedy trial. So there was there were many harms that needed to be rectified there. Personally, I probably would have done it in different stages. Been a little more selective. But I think in the end, President Trump apparently just decided pardon them all. And I truthfully don't have any problem with that. I don't think anybody is really a true danger to society.

[00:02:54] **Speaker 1** How do those pardons, though, square with respect for police, many of whom were beaten or tased or repelled with pepper or bear spray?

[00:03:04] **Speaker 2** I think most of those people have engaged in acts of violence, did serve jail time. You take a look at again, you just need to compare the jail time they spent versus, for example, the jail time, murders and rape to spend in New York. So, again, I think you have to weigh it all. I think President Trump, you know, I would have been a little more selective. Done it in different batches. But he decided just to pardon them all. And honestly, I don't have much problem with it.

[00:03:28] **Speaker 1** Just one more question on this, and that is just this week you introduced a bill called the Thin Blue Line Act that would increase penalties for targeting law enforcement. How do the pardons and that introduction of that Bill Square.

[00:03:43] **Speaker 2** Again, the miscarriage of justice in terms of January 6th. Defendants, I think, had to be rectified. And that's what President Trump did.

[00:03:50] **Speaker 1** What's your response to former President Biden's preemptive pardons for January 6th? Committee members, members of his family and Anthony Fauci.

[00:04:00] **Speaker 2** Thinks that's a very dangerous precedent for for a president to potentially direct a members of his administration to commit crimes with the guarantee of a pardon afterwards. I think it's very dangerous precedent. It's it's a double edged sword for those that are going to obtain those pardons, though, because now they have no Fifth Amendment protections. If we decide to call them in front of Congress and testify, they have to testify fully and truthfully.

[00:04:25] **Speaker 1** Do you expect to do that?

[00:04:28] **Speaker 2** I will. Some of them, I think almost certainly.

[00:04:30] **Speaker 1** Like who?

[00:04:33] **Speaker 2** We'll see how. We'll see what documentation we get and who we have justification for for calling in to testify on immigration.

[00:04:42] **Speaker 1** How do you expect President Trump's orders to play out? What will we see at the border, in our cities and on our farms?

[00:04:50] **Speaker 2** Well, I think you'll see a secure border. I think you'll see an immediate return to the remain in Mexico policy. You'll you'll see departing deportations, you know, focusing primarily on criminals and people who are a real danger to society. And that's that's what President Trump ran on. It's what a large majority the American public supports. And he's moving swiftly to honor that promise as well.

[00:05:14] **Speaker 1** Do you think that the president's call to end birthright citizenship will survive legal challenges as it's written, into the 14th Amendment of the US Constitution?

[00:05:25] **Speaker 2** I certainly support his attempt to get this adjudicated. And I think it's, you know, quite honestly, absurd policy. We're one of very, very few nations that allow that. I think it had its, you know, justification at one point in time. And I understand why why the 14th Amendment was passed, but it really should not be applying to the current circumstance right now. And I think it really incentivizes people. I mean, there's there's birthing tourism. There's there's all kinds of abuses as a result of that. I think we need to end that.

[00:05:57] **Speaker 1** What do you say to insulin dependent people who may now see their costs rise above the $35 a month cap with a Trump order rescinding a Biden order on lowering prescription drug costs?

[00:06:10] **Speaker 2** I don't think that'll happen.

[00:06:13] **Speaker 1** The fact that drug costs would go up.

[00:06:16] **Speaker 2** These people I mean, people still be able to being insulated with those types of pricing.

[00:06:22] **Speaker 1** And so what do you think about the rescinding of the order that was designed to lower prescription drug costs?

[00:06:33] **Speaker 2** Again, I don't really like government price controls on things. So let me see how this thing plays out. I mean, these are drug pricing is a highly complex issue. When government involves itself, the marketplace generally screws it up. One of the problems we have right now with our health care system was we have a completely broken health care financing system, largely driven by government's intervention into it. So, you know, from my standpoint, we need to bring more consumerism, more free, free market disciplines into our health care system. That includes drugs, that includes hospital care, that includes, you know, what we pay for doctors as well. So government intervention, third party payer systems have, by and large, and move the benefits of free market competition. And that discipline, we need to bring those benefits back.

[00:07:18] **Speaker 1** You've spoken critically in recent years about the security risks of the China own tick tock, and the Supreme Court upheld the ban. Now President Trump has put on hold that ban. Where do you stand now on tick tock?

[00:07:34] **Speaker 2** Well, I voted against the Ukraine funding bill where that ban was slipped in. Yeah, I actually I have sympathy with both sides of the argument here, which means I'm somewhat ambivalent in terms of how it all plays out. I'm not a big user of tick tock. I know a lot of people are understand the freedom of speech aspect of this, but I also understand that you know how China is using it. So I'll let the courts decide. I'll let this process play out. And we have so many other challenges facing this nation. It's just not one of the big ones on my radar screen.

[00:08:02] **Speaker 1** Will you vote to confirm Pete Hegseth and RFK Jr? And if so, why? Why?

[00:08:09] **Speaker 2** Because president won a very convincing victory. You know, elections matter. I think the president gets to decide who he wants serving alongside him in his administration. And, you know, barring some disqualifying factor, which I don't see in any of his nominees so far, I'm going to vote to confirm.

[00:08:27] **Speaker 1** In your mind what other kind of out of the troops actions on the part of President Trump stand out as most important to you?

[00:08:36] **Speaker 2** Well, I do appreciate the fact that he's not defining for America for government policy, that, you know, there are two genders, you know, men and women. He's moving to protect women from having to compete against male athletes, from having biological males invade their their locker rooms and other private spaces, their bathrooms. So, you know, I certainly appreciate that. That's something that I think is also very popular. That's what the American people support. But again, across the board, securing our borders is incredibly important to tapping in and using our God given energy resources. Extremely important from the standpoint of national security as well as keeping costs down. So across the board, what President Trump is doing will see the the effect of this, you know, what we're going to have to do in terms of legislation to to codify these things. But I'm very pleased with how quickly President Trump is honoring the promises he made during the campaign.

[00:09:30] **Speaker 1** All right, Senator Ron Johnson, thanks very much.

[00:09:33] **Speaker 2** Every day.

[00:09:38] **Speaker 1** Thank you.

[00:09:39] **Speaker 2** Appreciate it. We'll see if they get.