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[00:00:20] **Speaker 1** Steven Ola car, Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate. Thank you for joining us.

[00:00:23] **Speaker 2** Thanks for having me, Steven.

[00:00:25] **Speaker 1** Your Brookfield native. Professionally, you were the founder of a national political organization and an entrepreneur. What do you want to be a U.S. senator?

[00:00:33] **Speaker 2** Well, for the last ten years, I've focused on the root issues of why our politics are not producing good results for us, why members of Congress are working for big money, special interests, and not for the vast majority of Americans. My organization, Millennial Action Project, activated a generation of rising young legislators. And so I'm proud to bring the most federal legislative experience to this race. But while doing that work, even though we're able to be very productive legislatively, getting 35 bills passed through Congress on issues ranging from gun violence to clean energy funding, I also saw the incentives at play. And so that's why I decided to run in this race for the U.S. Senate. If we don't have candidates who are serious and focused and know how to take on the structural impediments to change, who have a vision and an agenda for structural reform that includes everything from money in politics to gerrymandering to opening up the primary system. You're not going to see the kind of significant progress we need on issues ranging from climate change to abortion access, for example. There is just way too much money to be made in demonizing each other, vilifying each other and preventing progress. And so I want to take that on in this race for the U.S. Senate.

[00:01:56] **Speaker 1** If elected, what would your legislative priorities be?

[00:01:58] **Speaker 2** I announced that our first piece of legislation would be the issue at play, where you see politicians profiting on the dehumanization of women. The issue at play where you see politicians kicking the can down the road on climate change, the issue where politicians enable the substance abuse crisis in our country as a result of Big Pharma funneling in millions of dollars into the political system. And that is getting big money out of politics and restoring integrity to our election system, because money is really at the root of why members of Congress don't do their job. Most members of Congress actually spend a majority of their time fundraising and not legislating. That's the dirty truth they don't want you to know. So I believe in this pretty simple concept that we should have legislators representing us, not corporate telemarketers.

[00:02:50] **Speaker 1** On the economy, inflation has reached a 40 year high. How do you think federal lawmakers should address inflation?

[00:02:56] **Speaker 2** I'm the kind of Democrat who's not going to deny this problem. Who's actually going to take it on full throttle? And what's happening with the root causes of this issue is a perfect storm, where you have an overheating of the economy in terms of fiscal and monetary policy that's helped drive up inflation. You've seen geopolitical issues get in, have an impact here. You see Wall Street speculation that's helped to impact gas prices. So you're seeing a lot of forces here, not to mention the supply chain issues that are impacted significantly from the COVID pandemic. One of the most important things that a senator can do is to help address these bottlenecks from a supply chain perspective. That sort of issue has bipartisan support, and I will bring Democrats and Republicans together to accomplish that.

[00:03:46] **Speaker 1** Okay. Shifting now to gun violence, there have been a number of major mass shootings, an uptick in gun deaths as well. President Joe Biden recently signed new gun control measures into law. How would you address gun violence as a US senator.

[00:04:01] **Speaker 2** Now as we look ahead to what more we can do in the US Senate? First of all, the framing we need to have on this issue is not about left versus right. We're talking about children who want to go to school without the fear of being shot. But the higher ground, I believe, on gun violence is a rebirth of responsibility and respect. And in practice, what that looks like is putting in place gun licensing across the board. And in the states where this type of law has been active, it's helped to reduce gun violence by 30% or more. And so this is something that we were and will continue to get bipartisan support on. And I'm the kind of leader who can actually make that happen in the US Senate.

[00:04:46] **Speaker 1** The Supreme Court has overruled Roe versus Wade, which now returns the decision on allowing abortions to the individual states. What should U.S. senators do on the matter of abortion?

[00:04:56] **Speaker 2** As a US senator, what I would be focused on is changing the politics of this issue. First of all, recognizing that over 60% of Americans want to protect a woman's choice to be able to make this tough decision and want to help build on that support. And in my conversations with even my Republican friends, they agree that we need to have a more humane approach here. And the. Wisconsin law that we're going to be reverting back to is way too extreme and way too restrictive. And even most Republicans wouldn't support that. So I want to change the politics on it and ultimately ensure that we are preserving freedom and dignity and basic human rights for women in our country.

[00:05:39] **Speaker 1** On elections, how would you reassure Wisconsin residents to have confidence in the election system?

[00:05:45] **Speaker 2** Our campaign is attracting Democrats, Republicans and independents, many of whom are part of what I call the exhausted majority. So when I'm talking about election results and the security and the credibility behind the process, I'm going to be doing so from a place where people actually trust me. There is a root structural issue here of why people are so disillusioned and frustrated, and that allows divisive politicians to profit on that fear. I'm gonna take this issue head on. As the only candidate with an electoral reform agenda in this race.

[00:06:19] **Speaker 1** Ron Johnson beat Russ Feingold twice. Why are you the candidate who can beat Senator Johnson in the general election in November?

[00:06:25] **Speaker 2** I have a more independent minded approach because we are inclusive. We are explicitly reaching out to people across the spectrum. And because I've been consistent on the issues over the years and there is no substitute for authenticity in politics.

[00:06:41] **Speaker 1** Stephen Otakara, thank you again for joining us.

[00:06:43] **Speaker 2** Yeah, thank you so much for having me.