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[00:00:00] **Speaker 1** I am rolling, Nick. Whenever. You ready? Can you tell us your name and where you go to school?

[00:00:04] **Speaker 2** My name is Ashley Butkus and I go to Lakeland Junior High School.

[00:00:09] **Speaker 1** What issues are important to you?

[00:00:11] **Speaker 2** Some issues that are important to me are climate change, our changing environment and the world around us. I believe abortion should be a right and be protected for every woman, regardless of the situation. I believe guns should be more controlled. I believe gun control is a big issue facing the United States right now. Hospital turnover and like nurses turnover with vaccine and mask mandates in hospitals right now. Both my parents are nurses, and the hospitals in our area at least are facing a lot of losses due to the mandates going on because nurses don't want to comply to that, so they just leave their job on. Rising prices around us. The economy is an issue, I believe, with inflation on the rise. And it seems that minimum wage is not on the rise, even though the prices of consumer goods are going up. Yeah. All right.

[00:01:12] **Speaker 1** Well.

[00:01:15] **Speaker 2** Okay.

[00:01:16] **Speaker 1** What do you think? Elected officials. You care about climate change?

[00:01:20] **Speaker 2** Create action. Put it at the forefront of policy. I believe the older generation are more so of the politicians in our world, and I don't think they're considering that. That issue specifically affects the younger generations, more so than them. I think they need to think of the future and what's going to happen to the world around us and climate change happening. I believe in I believe in the Green New Deal. I think that should be passed. I think it's very important. The Paris Climate Accord. I think just CO2 emissions need to be limited. They need to put a cap on big businesses and what's going on, because it's really it's not the little guys that like you and me that are affecting the climate and the CO2 emissions and all that. It's the major corporations that are doing most of the damage and I think they should be held accountable and politicians should hold them accountable and limit them for what they're doing.

[00:02:16] **Speaker 1** What do you think, elected officials.

[00:02:19] **Speaker 2** Protect it. Do as much as they can to make it a right woman with the Supreme Court ruling. I think that. Everything is situational in regards to abortion and in regards to policy and the people. But I think they need to consider the major impacts that will happen that will affect the women and what's going to happen if it's not available. What options are women going to go to in order to not have that baby that they don't want? I think it'll cause a lot more negative side effects down the road than what people think.

[00:03:00] **Speaker 1** What do you think elected officials should do about gun control?

[00:03:04] **Speaker 2** Make policy. Actually face the facts of what's happening in the world around them and not ignore it. A big phrase being thrown around the thoughts and prayers. Thoughts and prayers are not going to stop guns. Policy is going to stop guns.

[00:03:23] **Speaker 1** We should be talking about.

[00:03:31] **Speaker 2** That one. I honestly, I'm not sure it's if you're working in health care, why don't you want a vaccine? Why don't you want to wear a mask? And why don't you want to help and protect the people that you're supposed to help and protect in the hospital? That is your job. And why aren't you willing to do it? I guess I don't know if politicians or policy can really do something to change that, because personally, I believe in a hospital you should be vaccinated because how are you going to help a sick person if you are one of the reasons they can potentially get sick? Um, I think masks to a hospital are especially I think they should be mandated maybe not out at the grocery store and stuff like that, but at a hospital, I think you should wear a mask.

[00:04:27] **Speaker 1** How important is the right to vote?

[00:04:29] **Speaker 2** Very important. I think as an American, you're not using your full freedom, your full rights. If you don't vote, you have a say in what's going on in the big picture, what's going on in government. And I think you should use that say and use your voice, because it truly does matter. People who don't vote and complain about what's going on and what's happening, I don't think they have a right to complain because they chose not to use their voice. They chose not to take action where they could have taken action. It's a huge thing for me and I'm very excited to vote in the future.

[00:05:05] **Speaker 1** It's something that's very much on people's minds right now is school safety, which the students.

[00:05:11] **Speaker 2** Personally where I live, I don't think about it that often unless it's in the media. School safety here at Lakeland, I think we're doing a great job. Sometimes I think we're doing a little too much of a great job. Such as? Like at one point the school board was considering taking away backpacks. I don't think that's going to make our school any more safe. Personally, I think I know where I live. I don't think about it. I feel pretty safe where I live. Maybe if I lived somewhere else, I'd feel less safe. But if it's not going on in the media, I don't really think about it that often.

[00:05:58] **Speaker 1** What's it like to be on the verge of adulthood? In the current economic worrying.

[00:06:05] **Speaker 2** I plan to go to college for either 4 to 6 years, probably. I'm potentially thinking about going out of state. That's a big cost. And then in the future, I have to think about with what the job I want to do. Will I make enough money to pay back that cost? Is it really worth it to go where I've always dreamed of going? Should I just go to some small school and state that I can afford? It's worrying definitely to think about when I get out of college. How am I going to pay off the debt? How am I going to make a living afford the basic needs that I need to survive with? It's definitely worrying with everything seemingly on the rise.

[00:06:46] **Unidentified** More about how the rising.

[00:06:48] **Speaker 1** Costs will affect you.

[00:06:52] **Speaker 2** So I know my dream school is going to cost if I get like over $100,000 a year. So I have to consider, like, is that really worth it down the line when I get my job and be making $100,000 a year to pay off that debt and then the cost of gas, groceries, housing, rent. It seems like people can't afford what they need to afford nowadays.

[00:07:25] **Speaker 1** How does the job market seem?

[00:07:28] **Speaker 2** How I mean, where I live. The job market is in need of workers. There's worker shortages everywhere. Businesses are closing down because they can't get enough workers. We live in a very tourist area and one of our main tourist attractions that pulls people in. Closed down because it couldn't afford to keep the staff over the summer and have enough workers to staff the place. So it's kind of worrying to see all that happening going around us, to see businesses closing down while new businesses move in and try to open up. And they can't afford that because there's not enough workers to supply them.

[00:08:10] **Speaker 1** What did she. Was that your father or that you're not talking about?

[00:08:15] **Speaker 2** Definitely climate change and the environment. We live in a very beautiful area and we live with lakes, forests, but all of that is going to go away with what's going on in the world. And I don't think they seem to realize that. We live near Lake Superior. Lake Superior is facing a major erosion issue and it seems like nobody's talking about it. You have to search for information. Our lakes in the area, they're having algae blooms and erosion and all that. And it seems like nobody's talking about it. But if you step outside, you can see the damage that's occurring and that's happening due to people. But it seems like almost nobody cares.

[00:08:56] **Speaker 1** I think the other issues you want to bring.

[00:09:01] **Speaker 2** Not that I can think of or to talk about. Oh.

[00:09:05] **Speaker 1** Well, that's all I know.

[00:09:06] **Speaker 2** All right. Thank you.

[00:09:08] **Speaker 1** That's really good.