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[00:00:01] **Unidentified** And then we're good to go.

[00:00:10] **Speaker 1** We don't have the slate with the title. We could have you sign the slate just like the Hollywood productions.

[00:00:17] **Speaker 2** Yes.

[00:00:21] **Speaker 1** Or your own.

[00:00:22] **Speaker 2** We are rolling.

[00:00:23] **Speaker 1** All right. Well, let's start with one of the issues that your opponent is trying to make a very big issue, and that is crime. What can a governor actually do to fight crime or handle crime in in Wisconsin or in certain cities?

[00:00:37] **Speaker 2** Yeah, well, it is an issue across the country to not just hockey or not. Not much or not just Wisconsin. That said, there are some things that a governor can do. In fact, during this last last several of the last year, year and a half, I've poured over $100 million into public safety issues, such as, you know, helping out with police departments are actually violence prevention programs. All those work, that money went out the door. And I feel strongly that it had some, in fact, impact. But in addition, you know, there are some things that we could do if the legislature cooperated, cooperate with us. I think the vast majority of people, Wisconsin, would be in favor of common sense gun laws that are around safety and really kind of have been have had several times measured across the state and Marquette University polls, real high numbers of red flag laws and universal background checks. Both of those are important. They're not. They're bipartisan, least from the polling that Marquette has done that could be done that that could be done at a state level. In addition, and this is probably the most egregious from my vantage point, is that for the last dozen years, shared revenue, the revenue that goes from the state to the municipalities and to their counties has been flat. And over that period of time, the volume, the amount of need has gone up dramatically and the amount of money has not been there. So shared revenue, I mean, municipalities, whether it's county or counties or municipalities, whether it's a township or city, those people do the hard work in government. And that hard work includes fire, EMT and police departments. And that money has been flat forever. I, I had a modest increase in the first two budgets that I did, and it was zeroed out by the Joint Finance Committee Chairman, you know. So I never got through until that that that changes there. It's going to be very difficult for cities and municipalities to take this on themselves. You know, we've been fortunate using this money through the pandemic, but at the end of the day, we need to invest from the state level that those moneys come in from businesses and people in Milwaukee and every place else in the state. We need to have an obligation to send some of that back. And that is, I'd say, the major barrier to kind of get things better in our municipalities and cities.

[00:03:29] **Speaker 1** When we spoke last January at the turn of the year, we talked a lot about election integrity and Republicans and whether they still believe and want to participate in democracy. They had a very heated primary over that. Their most fervent election deny or did lose. What do you see from them in terms of the tone and the language they're still using at this point?

[00:03:51] **Speaker 2** It's still a problem. I mean, we all know that elections are secure, fair, safe. Any other adjective you want to weigh on there in a positive way? It's been they've been challenged. The courts have said that that they've been fair and safe and secure. Also, it's time for people to get over that. They clearly haven't. My opponent in this race has said that if he's not sure what he would do if the if the legislature decided to decertify the last election, he should know. I mean, it was a secure, safe, fair. And for for people to continue harboring that that big lie. That's not good for democracy. It's not good for democracy at all. We need to move on from that. And in addition in addition to saying, I don't know what I'm going to do about it, well, I'll tell them the Joe Biden won that election to Michael's and just move on and make sure that you don't do too much damage by talking about it this way. So, yes, that's a problem. It's a problem when people continue to. Buy into rumors and innuendo that, quite frankly, isn't true and it's bad for our democracy and we just have to stop it. Me saying that isn't going to make people stop. But we need to move on.

[00:05:20] **Speaker 1** What does it mean when your opponent's campaigning with Mike Gable men, with Janelle Branch and with Ron DeSantis, with Donald Trump.

[00:05:28] **Speaker 2** Is a blaze and a big lie. That's what I think it's all about. Donald Trump got behind my opponent, right? Right from the get go. And he he always he knows he owes Trump. And I anticipate that he's going to continue talking about it. But the thing that actually drives me nuts about this whole thing is, you know, whether it's Cable Man, whether it's Michaels, whether it's Trump, any one of them is that it's a slap in the face to the local people. Those people that volunteer at the polls, those people that are county and city clerks and municipal clerks. They're the ones that do almost all the hard work. And they're our friends and neighbors and they're just disparaging them left and right. And it's going to do long term harm to us if we just keep keep on and keep an eye here, except that our system is strong, we're going to continue. But every time you talk about it, you're essentially insulting those people at the local level.

[00:06:32] **Speaker 1** Your opponent has ads that he constantly talks about woke policies. What does woke mean to you?

[00:06:39] **Speaker 2** You're going to have to ask him, because sometimes I don't know. Obviously, I'll use this as an example. Obviously, he believes that that there's this liberal cabal and every school district in the state that is woke, whatever that means. And basically, you know, out of work from the school and go hear what happens in school districts across the state on a regular basis is that parents and teachers and school board members make decisions and they make decisions about all sorts of things, and they do it in collaboration. The idea that somehow there is some cabal in this school district or city or or township, I mean, that that's just not Wisconsin. And I it bothers me because people can't define it. And then when people get angry with each other, it's just the way it dividing people. And and there is political sense and dividing people. If you divide people, then you're going to be and you divide them in such a way that that 51% of them believe you. You get elected. Well, what does that do to our institutions in the meantime? It destroys our man. So the it's politics at its worst. I wish I could control it. I can't. But we're going to. You know, the good thing about it, our system, our education system, our other systems are strong. Our state government is strong. Our people are resilient, as you've seen during the throughout the pandemic. And so these things will eventually dissipate. But at the end of the day, there's a lot of there's a lot of harm that's done by dividing people, dividing people and dividing people. That's how Trump does it. That's all. My opponent of.

[00:08:26] **Speaker 1** The Republicans in the last legislative session passed a number of education bills that you vetoed. If those bills came around again and your opponent was governor and signed them into law, what what would be the effect of that for students and teachers?

[00:08:39] **Speaker 2** Yeah, for students and teachers they'd have to have the state taken over their their minds. And what you know, I, I hear teachers all the time, they're just genuine, thoughtful, caring people. And they when they feel under attack, they can't do their job as well as they should, or they're spending their time being defensive against something they shouldn't have to have to defend. And so I think there's long term issues here when when people talk in irrational and, frankly, divisive ways, they do. And it just it doesn't make sense to me. And we just have to for those of us who feel that, yes, there are there improvements that need to be made across the state in different arenas? Absolutely. We can we can solve those problems. Actually, people might be surprised that I saying about 99% of the things that come to me there is bipartisan support for all sorts of things. But when you send me bills, that makes it easier for someone to carry weapons in the school grounds or making it more difficult for people with physical disabilities to vote or make it more difficult for people in nursing homes to vote. That's a problem. And by any time I see something divisive like that, I'm going to I'm going to veto it. If if by a. Own it as governor. All 128 bills that I did veto over the last three and a half years will become the law of the land impacting voting rights, impacting reproductive health, impacting our public schools, you name it. Wisconsin will be a different place.

[00:10:20] **Speaker 1** When we look at the differences financially. You've obviously introduced a big package for schools that you want to see. You'd like to see it pass now, but more likely in the next budget will be the debate. Your opponent talks mostly about universal school choice. Does he have a policy that you know of that would count for what he wants to see to go to public schools?

[00:10:39] **Speaker 2** No, he doesn't. Because if he hasn't thought through this, this will be like a half billion dollar property tax increase and the idea that somehow ultimate competition is going to change things. You know, I get the theory behind that. But destroying our public school system, we went from 15th in the state, in the nation to ninth in the nation. That's a good thing or and that's a good thing. We have a long way to go. All sorts of things as a result of the pandemic. But at the end of the day, our schools are doing the best they can. We need more resources for them. No question about that. But the idea that somehow we're failed and we're going to junk the school, I mean, the way my opponent said that increasing funding for schools, as is essentially the definition of insanity. If I was a public school teacher or school board member, or whenever a person that works in a school district, I'd be here, I'd be pretty excited about that happening because that would not be good for our schools.

[00:11:45] **Speaker 1** When you look at the rhetoric he uses surrounding Milwaukee, Milwaukee public schools and especially when he talks about he says if he uses the phrase inner city youth, but he's talking about young African-American kids and the quality of schools there. And he talks about woke and he talks about CRT. How much of that is just dog whistle politics?

[00:12:03] **Speaker 2** It's all dog whistle politics. I saw a picture of him on the. And I think these kids were wondering what the hell he was doing on that school ground. But he was over it. Go to my ear school in Milwaukee, one of the top schools in the country, and kind of wandering around on a basketball court. Well, you know, that's nothing. I mean, let teachers and parents and principals and school board members do their job appropriately, finance those systems. Obviously, we need to pay teachers more. Somebody asked me once, what what can we do to get more teachers, more people interested in teaching? I said, quit bashing the ones that exist and pay the ones that exist in our schools more. And then young people can sit back and say, this is a profession I want to embrace. No, just it's dog whistle time. But it's also there's this just general thinking that if we divide people, then we win. And I can't imagine how that is an accurate statement.

[00:13:07] **Speaker 1** Dr. Underly gave her state of education speech and then afterwards Republicans were attacking her for having stood up for LGBTQ kids and pronoun usage. How is that a real issue that actually needs to have the state pay attention to it? Or is that just more of a culture war?

[00:13:23] **Speaker 2** It it is. Well, first of all, I, I, I support all kids that are in our public schools. And I'm sure, as Superintendent Underlay does, too, whether it's LGBTQ, kids of color, you name it, different needs, different kids. We have to respect and support all of them. So is it all right to talk about that? Yes. But we also have to understand, it's important that we view it globally, that all kids need assistance. And when you start picking people out, whether it's black kids, brown kids, LGBTQ kids, walk ins, all of a sudden you divided everybody. And now people can get excited and upset and angry. That does nothing for a conversation. And it sounds like somebody that has never walked through a public school in their life.

[00:14:17] **Speaker 1** Ron DeSantis came to campaign with your opponent. Obviously, he's passed a number of these bills in Florida. Have you had a chance to look at some of the bills and what would happen if some of those were transplanted and passed here in Wisconsin?

[00:14:28] **Speaker 2** We don't need Ron DeSantis to come to Wisconsin and tell us how to do things. I read that he said, if if my opponent's elected, we can be like Florida. Well, what do you do? Exactly. Who thinks that's a good idea? Yes, he has. He's picked on LGBTQ kids and in schools and in general. Is that the is that the goal for us in the state of Wisconsin is to be divisive around all these kids or any other group of kids or any other group of adults. We are. If we're headed down that road, democracy is in a bad place.

[00:15:09] **Speaker 1** Switching topics to a Dobbs ruling and the post roll landscape, how much of an impact do you think that will be this fall?

[00:15:18] **Speaker 2** What's going to be huge overnight? Half the population in Wisconsin became second class citizens. So, yes, that's an issue. And I hear it all the time. When you have an 1849 law that was created a year after our we became a state and throws physicians in jail prohibits prohibits abortions. No exceptions for rape or incest. That's pretty draconian, folks. And that that is you know. Any polling on this anything that I hear, too, and I hear a lot is that people were fine with Roe v Wade and in support of abortions. So, yes, when you take away a right, people should you know, they get angry. They they want to they want to push back. People are pushing back on this issue. Do I think it's an important issue in the race? Yes. Look at where my my opponent is on this and on that issue. So I do I think it's going to be a factor. Yes, absolutely.

[00:16:31] **Speaker 1** We've seen Republican candidates around the country claw back some of the statements they've made in the past or try and moderate their position on this issue. Including your opponent most recently in a radio interview. Should voters trust anything that's being said in the last two months of an election when it comes to these kind of positions, which is absolutely not.

[00:16:49] **Speaker 2** My opponent has he has made it very clear from the last election he ran, he failed that to the present, etc., for, you know, last week when somebody must have told him, you got to change. But the there's no way I believe it and no way people in Wisconsin believe you're going to have this hard core something that's part of your your your insides position that rape or incest is not something that you should exclude from this law. Never. This is important for me because of my convictions. And then all of a sudden, the next day, you say, well, I guess I don't have any convictions, or I guess I don't have any hard core beliefs. I don't believe. I don't believe his head has changed on this any more than I think anybody else in the state of Wisconsin waves that.

[00:17:42] **Speaker 1** He's been attacking you over the parole and probation situation and your pardons. How much of that will actually land me? Because it's a very complicated topic and some people don't even know the difference between a pardon and parole.

[00:17:55] **Speaker 2** Yeah. Yeah. Well, it's a it's an issue. There's no question about it. The parole system, as people should know by now, is an independent group of people. And the commission head is the one that makes final decisions on certain ones. What people really do need to know is that a whole bunch of folks are mandatorily released from prison, that the parole commission has no, no right to change, that they they reach a date and they're let go. Now, do I think there should be some changes over time? Absolutely. I think we should look at that. But at the end of the day, we have to make sure that people understand the process. And the process is that.

[00:18:38] **Speaker 1** Do you think there's any lasting damage to people that have been released on parole who are trying to reintegrate, that are now being labeled as potential threats to the community or have been vilified again through a political class?

[00:18:51] **Speaker 2** I mean, when you have somebody saying, you know, that you should still be in prison when you've been legitimately left out. Of course they're going to feel that way. But I also I have you know, if I had to choose anything to change the honor system and throw in victims or victims rights to somehow we need to find a better way of interacting with them. That's the reason, frankly, I, I suggested that the parole commissioner or the person in head of the head of it made some mistakes. And as a result of that, I asked him to resign. And it was mainly over making sure the victims of that crime were kept adequately informed and had input in the process.

[00:19:32] **Speaker 1** When you look at this last stretch run, how important is the whole Democratic ticket? Obviously, Mandela? Barnes And you have a relationship going on. You were elected together. I mean, does the whole ticket win and losers one, do you think?

[00:19:44] **Speaker 2** I, I want of course I want that. But we're all run in separate races. But, yes, I think the Democratic ticket is strong. Mandela is is certainly a viable, strong candidate against somebody that has said just some unbelievable things during the pandemic that frankly, I don't think were very helpful. All through solving that pandemic. And of course, Josh Kaul has been strong on the issue, is now taking away the change in law and now on abortion rights to court doing a great job there. So, of course, I support them. I believe that all of us will win each of us over with.

[00:20:23] **Speaker 1** How much different is this election from the conditions two years ago when COVID was still going? I mean, the ability for us to be here without masks, the ability for you to travel and talk to people.

[00:20:33] **Speaker 2** Yeah, it's huge. And, you know, I give all thanks to a whole bunch of people here. You know, clearly we had to be careful. And that's why I did what decisions I made following the science. And after a period of time where it was clear that the Supreme Court were going, you know, as taking away some of my authority of I came to the local public health officers of the counties and the cities across the state. Everybody did a good job. I know it became a political nightmare, but at the end of the day, the vast majority of people in Wisconsin tried their best to stay safe. And as a result of that, we really were able and also, frankly, investing our investments in small businesses, farmers and our tourism industry leave us with almost the lowest unemployment rate ever. In addition, we have the most people working in the state of Wisconsin ever. And we have a $5 billion surplus in our in our in our coffers at the state level. So we were able, as a state, a resilient people, to move beyond the politics. It may not seem that way to some people, but for the most part we did and did the right thing for the most part, and we're in a good place going forward. Of course, people still need to be safe. COVID 19 is going to be with us maybe the rest of our lives. I don't know.

[00:21:57] **Speaker 1** And finally, talk to me about the importance of having the ARPA and the federal funds. I mean, Republicans have accused you of, you know, your slush money to be able to hand out for political favors. But what's the value for you to being able to go out and deliver some of that money to business?

[00:22:11] **Speaker 2** Well, the businesses, especially our our Bounce Back Main Street Bounce Back program has been a huge success of empty storefronts. Over 6500 or about 6500 people now have taken us up on this this program and fill vacant storefronts across the state of Wisconsin. So who can argue with that? I mean, we when you buy local and you and you hire local like local people, though, you can immediately bring a neighborhood together. But think about all the other programs that we've been able to help. And I just use Park. Park Falls as an example. The hospital there serves counties all around northern Wisconsin. We provided the resources for them to expand, to modernize their their buildings. And that that could not have happened. That could not have happened without the federal money. It just wasn't going to happen. And several other start, you know, from small things to very large things like those those hospitals. We've made some extraordinary investments across the state of Wisconsin with the help of people to make sure that that future is bright. And I feel positive about the future and all the negative. Politics aside, I feel positive we did some great investments there. We're going to have a great future.

[00:23:31] **Speaker 1** The money was passed by Democrats. It's being distributed by a Democratic governor and it's going to a lot of red parts of the state. Do you think you've changed some minds or reach some people that may not have looked at the power of government or Democrats in general?

[00:23:46] **Speaker 2** That's a great question. I remember going to a small town that actually had 16 new storefronts started and which was almost all of them, you know, it was pretty good downtown. And and they reminded me that it was there wasn't a huge democratic force in that city. And but that's just the point. I never did that for politics. I did that because we had some needs that we saw. And whether that's that little city or village votes for me or not because of that, I doubt it, frankly. But the most important thing is those 16 storefronts are now doing business in that city. Lifting the entire neighborhoods up couldn't be better.

[00:24:33] **Speaker 1** Anything else you'd like to add?

[00:24:34] **Speaker 2** That's fine. All right.

[00:24:35] **Speaker 1** Thank you, Governor. Appreciate your.

[00:24:36] **Speaker 2** Time. Thanks, Jack.

[00:24:37] **Speaker 1** All right. We are good here. Great to get you out the door.

[00:24:41] **Speaker 2** All right. Thank you, sir.