**A203C001\_221202DP\_CANON\_proxy.mp3**

[00:00:00] **Speaker 1** Beer cans on the floor would not have been out of place because this sort of very.

[00:00:04] **Speaker 2** Empty pizza box.

[00:00:05] **Speaker 1** You like, why just don't let them in. You don't need it. Oh.

[00:00:11] **Speaker 3** No, don't do that.

[00:00:13] **Speaker 1** Is that noise?

[00:00:19] **Speaker 3** I see that it's right.

[00:00:21] **Speaker 2** Yeah.

[00:00:24] **Speaker 1** That noise like that. Like.

[00:00:25] **Speaker 3** Yes. Once this constant, I can grab that frequency ringtone and then I can take it out and boast magic it.

[00:00:32] **Speaker 1** Yeah.

[00:00:33] **Speaker 3** Exactly. I am rolling and whenever you're all right.

[00:00:40] **Speaker 2** Okay. All right. Well, Representative Neubauer, thanks for your time today.

[00:00:43] **Speaker 1** Absolutely. Thank you for having me.

[00:00:45] **Speaker 2** So what is your take away from the elections as you look forward to the next session?

[00:00:51] **Speaker 4** Yes. So as soon as we were handed these hyper gerrymandered maps on April 15th, we knew that it was going to be a challenge to prevent a Republican supermajority and protect Governor Evers veto power. These maps, again, are more gerrymandered than the maps that we've had for the last ten years and presented new challenges for us. So we immediately got to work recruiting candidates across the state and working closely with them throughout the election cycle to make sure that they were able to communicate with as many people as possible. And thankfully, we were successful in holding on to 35 seats and preventing the Republican supermajority. A couple of particular takeaways that I had from this election in my role as leader. You know, it was a real challenge to run for office. We are in incredibly polarized partizan times and it was hard to both recruit people to run, particularly women, because they knew that they and their family may face threats. And that, unfortunately, did bear out the cycle for candidates, for volunteers. And, you know, it's really difficult to have your kids come home from school and turn on the TV and see attack ads on you often that are not true. We will continue to do our best to recruit great candidates across the state, you know, that really represent their communities, that understand the challenges that they face and have their backs. But it's a really hard time to run for office. And all the people who are willing to step up and do that, just in my mind, really made an incredible sacrifice for our democracy and for the state of Wisconsin. We also saw how important it is for candidates, particularly at the assembly level, to really directly communicate with voters. I would like to point specifically to Don Doink, who is an incumbent member who is gerrymandered into a more Republican seat. He's in Milton, Wisconsin. He ran anyways and he truly got out, I think, just about every day between April and November to talk to voters. And that's what we can do at our level of government. It's hard for someone running statewide, right, to go out and knock on doors. They have to talk to so many people. But assembly candidates can do that and they can really break through the partizanship of this moment and significantly outperform past performance for Democrats in the district or other candidates who are on the ballot. And that's what we saw for Don growing. He was less than a percentage point away from holding that seat. But in these in this environment, with these gerrymandered maps, what our candidates have to do is outperform. And so they have to get out and have those one on one conversations about the values that they share with their voters. And finally, I'll say that for us, the infrastructure is critical. And having candidates who are out in every community talking to their neighbors and their friends, we know that that helps performance at the top of the ticket. And so for us, making sure that we were supporting all of those candidates around the state alongside the Democratic Party, to get out and talk about the Democratic message was critical. And we know that that's infrastructure that we're going to continue to build on in years to come.

[00:04:02] **Speaker 2** So this will be your first full session as the leader. What do you need to prioritize for your caucus?

[00:04:09] **Speaker 4** Absolutely. So we're really excited about our new incoming class of legislators. They are from all over the state. They come from backgrounds and teaching and social work and local government. And they really bring an incredible perspective to our team that I think is needed in this building. We are excited to continue fighting for the policies that Wisconsinites really need to see passed in Madison right now. We're in touch with the political moment and know that many families across Wisconsin are struggling to afford that new winter coat or energy costs or holiday gifts. So that really is our top priority going into the next session, is making sure that we are listening to our constituents and responding to the most immediate needs that they face. But we also know that there are long term challenges that have been ignored by GOP leadership here, including funding for our schools and our local governments. These are really essential services.

[00:05:09] **Speaker 1** Oh, no. Okay. Well, we'll excitement, you know, start the question over.

[00:05:18] **Speaker 2** I think we could get a cut in.

[00:05:20] **Speaker 1** Okay.

[00:05:21] **Speaker 2** Still good.

[00:05:22] **Speaker 1** Okay.

[00:05:24] **Speaker 2** Well, often the role of the minority party is to be the vocal opposition. Mm hmm. And we know there's a lot of areas where Republicans and Democrats don't agree. But can you think of anything, especially in the upcoming budget, where the two sides will see eye to eye? And you can actually have a role in shaping what passes.

[00:05:42] **Speaker 4** Yeah, it's a great question. You know, I think all of our communities are facing some similar challenges. And I do feel hopeful that we will be able to move forward some good policy that really does concretely improve people's lives in Wisconsin. We know that a lot of people are frustrated with politics right now. And I think our responsibility is to pass policy in the capital that makes people's lives better and shows that government can and must be a force for good. So some of those things I think are local government funding. You know, we know that communities across the state, big and small, are strapped for resources and having a hard time funding those essential services. Talking about libraries and public health departments and first responders. That's something that I hope we can make some progress on this session. I mentioned we have a lot of new freshmen coming in, many with local government experience, and they're really bringing that need directly to the table. We, of course, hope to make more investments in public education. This is always a priority for our caucus. And as Governor Weaver says, what's best for our kids is best for our state. We need to make sure they have the resources that they need to provide great opportunities for every kid. You know, we're going to continue to see what our colleagues across the aisle are interested in working with us on. But ongoing priorities for us, of course, are making sure that people have access to quality, affordable health care. And we continue to clean up our environment and move towards a clean energy economy that reduces some longstanding equities and provides good jobs. There are a lot of opportunities, I think, on issues that Wisconsinites broadly agree on. Right? Gun safety, Medicaid expansion. These are priorities that we will continue to push because we know that it's the right thing for the people of our state.

[00:07:29] **Speaker 2** Though the first two budgets that Governor Evers introduced were more vision statements, they included a lot of priorities that everyone knew were not going to get passed by a Republican legislature this time around. He's talked about having an improved relationship with Republicans. So do you think he should introduce a budget that includes big things that he knows will not be passed just to introduce them? Or should he try and be more realistic in what he proposes?

[00:07:53] **Speaker 1** Yeah.

[00:07:54] **Speaker 4** I mean, I see our role as twofold. It is putting out that vision for what we think Wisconsinites deserve. We believe that there are significant policy priorities, again, that Republicans have ignored for a long time in the Capitol.

[00:08:13] **Speaker 1** Maybe it could be like a fun twist to the interview, you know, kind of like what's going on in the Capitol. Okay. I'll just start that again. Sure. Yeah.

[00:08:25] **Speaker 4** Our role.

[00:08:26] **Speaker 1** I.

[00:08:26] **Speaker 4** Do see is twofold. We need to put forward that vision for what we believe Wisconsin should look like. We need to make sure that we're continuing to say that working families deserve better. And here's the path that we would take to get them there. And we need to find every opportunity to work across the aisle. And that's what the budget process does. Right. We the governor puts forward his budget and then it goes to finance. I was I was on the Budget Committee last session. And then there's a lot of discussion and debate. But I do hope and I and I think it is possible for us to have a budget this session that does go a little farther in making sure that we are giving Wisconsinites really what they need in this moment to have economic security and opportunities across the state.

[00:09:12] **Speaker 2** If the special election in the Senate goes in favor of the Republicans, Phil, Alberta darling seat, they will maintain their two thirds majority in the assembly. They don't have it, but it's very slim. So how will you be approaching session days or veto overrides in terms of making sure you have all hands on deck?

[00:09:29] **Speaker 4** Absolutely. So our caucus understands that one of our top priorities for this session is being here in Madison to make sure that if Republicans are trying to override Governor Evers vetoes and move our state backwards, we're here to protect those vetoes. And our caucus is very united in understanding that that is a responsibility that we share. And we all look forward to being here on the floor and making sure that we are doing everything we can to protect our democracy and our rights.

[00:09:59] **Speaker 2** One of the areas that there won't be agreement is on abortion. Right now, the 1849 law is the law of the land. Republicans have talked about a bill that would add in exceptions for rape or incest. Could you imagine going forward and trying to find a compromise along those lines just because it's better than the current situation for people who do favor more abortion rights?

[00:10:20] **Speaker 4** Well, as one of the roughly 50% of people in the state of Wisconsin who lost a concrete right in the last year, our caucus will pick this.

[00:10:33] **Speaker 1** Actually, I don't remember this happening previously. Maybe it's just all that, like.

[00:10:38] **Speaker 4** Draws.

[00:10:38] **Speaker 1** What I mean on.

[00:10:39] **Speaker 4** Sort of the central power system. Okay. So I'll start that over. Sure. So personally, as one of the roughly 50% of people in Wisconsin who lost a concrete right in the last year, I know how important it is and have heard from people across the state about how important it is that we keep fighting for comprehensive access to reproductive health care. Exceptions are not comprehensive, and we know that. And we know that what Wisconsinites want is for us to restore those rights for people who become pregnant, to decide what they want to do in their future. And so that is going to be our top priority. As Democrats, we are always open to conversations about policies that will move our state forward. But I haven't seen any concrete proposals come forward yet, and we will maintain that our goal is to really restore those rights in full.

[00:11:33] **Speaker 2** Given that, it appears likely that ultimately the 1849 law will go to the Supreme Court, is it most likely that that decision will shape whether there is room or need for negotiations afterwards?

[00:11:47] **Speaker 4** It's a little hard to say.

[00:11:49] **Speaker 1** With the twists and.

[00:11:49] **Speaker 4** Turns of, you know, how this lawsuit is going to move forward and what's going to happen over the next couple of months. But we'll continue to monitor and have discussions where as needed.

[00:12:00] **Speaker 2** Speaking of the Supreme Court, obviously that's a huge election. That's coming up. What role do you see your caucus taking in that?

[00:12:07] **Speaker 4** So we are going to be actively engaged in making sure that we elect a justice who is willing to put the people of Wisconsin over their party. We have seen the Supreme Court take up critically important cases in the last couple of years. I'll just sort of start that sentence again. We've seen the Supreme Court take up critically important cases over the last couple of years, everything from attempts to overturn the 2020 election for their voter suppression. We know that it's really important that we have someone on that court who is going to provide a check on extremism put forward by the GOP. So we intend to work with our candidates who ran last cycle and our members to make sure that we are talking to as many folks as we can about the importance of this spring election.

[00:12:57] **Speaker 2** What is the path back to the majority for Democrats in the Assembly? Does it run through the suburbs and new territory, or can you regain some of those rural seats?

[00:13:06] **Speaker 4** Yeah, it's a great question and of course, we continue to analyze.

[00:13:11] **Speaker 1** The election.

[00:13:11] **Speaker 4** Results and we'll be able to get into more details in the coming weeks. But what we saw in Wisconsin this cycle is every candidate at the statewide level who ran as a Democrat got close to 50% of the vote, some a little over, some a little under. And yet those same results yielded 35% of seats for Democrats in the Assembly. We know that this is not real democracy and that there is a path for us to have the majority if we have fair maps. It absolutely includes the suburbs. It absolutely includes continuing to work closely with.

[00:13:51] **Speaker 3** People just to stay off. And I think we'll.

[00:13:52] **Speaker 1** Just.

[00:13:53] **Speaker 4** Proceed with this. Okay. So we absolutely will continue to need to win. Voters in the suburbs in rural.

[00:14:01] **Speaker 1** Wisconsin.

[00:14:02] **Speaker 4** Turn out voters in our cities. We have to do the work everywhere. That's what's required of Democrats to continue to gain and move back towards a majority.

[00:14:11] **Speaker 2** We've seen a shift among rural voters over the last decade, plus that has been pretty constant and doesn't seem to have the potential of wavering in the same way that some suburban women who voted Republican but have been trending Democratic since the Trump era seem to still be up for grabs. Can you regain rural voters? Are they amenable to Democratic policies, or is the party too focused on cities and suburbs to appeal to them?

[00:14:38] **Speaker 4** Yeah, it's a good question and I think we always have more work to do to try to reach folks across the state. You know, in really tangible terms, a challenge that we have is when we don't have a representative in an area in Assembly member or Senate member. It's hard for us to reach those people, right. And for them to hear our message and hear what we are working on throughout the year here in the legislature. And so a major priority for us is getting out and just talking to Wisconsinites about how the policies that we're proposing in Madison would really make their lives better. And we believe that we have those policies, you know, to support expansion of broadband and small family farms and making sure that those small communities are still being provided with essential services like EMS and Fire. You know, those are real challenges those communities face and bills that Democrats have put forward do address them.

[00:15:28] **Speaker 2** When you look at the upticks of leadership in the legislature, the Democrats have two women running their caucuses and then the Republicans have two white men. Does that matter? In the grander scheme when people look at who is representing them.

[00:15:43] **Speaker 1** Hmm. Quick question.

[00:15:47] **Speaker 4** I'm really proud that our caucus really does reflect the diversity of our state. We're a caucus in the assembly that the Democratic caucus is over 50%. Women, more people of color than ever. We have immigrants. We have a strong LGBT caucus. It's really exciting to see that diversity reflected in our caucus. And I do think it's really important when the people of Wisconsin look at the floor of the assembly that they see themselves there, not only because that helps them believe that we're understand the issues that they're experiencing, but also for those young people who are looking at our caucus, they see that there's a path for them to to join the work of government.

[00:16:27] **Speaker 2** When it comes to the next election. Are you already thinking of recruitment of who the next people may be or is it wait for the see if there are new maps, if the Supreme Court does take up this issue, if the makeup of it changes.

[00:16:40] **Speaker 4** We're going to continue to work year round to talk to folks in communities around the state who are interested in running. We think it's really important that if someone is thinking about running in a couple of years, that they start having those conversations now and talking to their neighbors and understanding the challenges that different facets of their community faces. So we will be working next year. We're taking a breather for a.

[00:17:03] **Speaker 1** Moment after this.

[00:17:05] **Speaker 4** Election, but are excited to dig into that work as we look towards 2023.

[00:17:10] **Speaker 2** One of the things that Budget Watchers look for is whether any Democrats support the Republican budget that comes out of joint finance and hits the floor. As to whether that gives Governor Evers an incentive or a disincentive to veto the entire budget. And obviously, in the last two budgets, that's been speculated upon. What is your message to your members when it will come to June, when it does come to the floor about whether their vote yes or no on the larger budget would impact the governor?

[00:17:39] **Speaker 4** Well, we work really closely with the governor on the budget right now. We're all working with their offices to present ideas from our constituents, from our districts about things that we think should be included in this year's budget. And so we'll just continue to work with them very closely and look at all of those budget provisions. Our districts are different, and there are good reasons for members in different parts of the state to take different votes sometimes on these bills. And so we'll just continue to learn everything we can about the impacts of the budget that ultimately will come out of joint finance on our districts and make the best decisions for our communities.

[00:18:17] **Speaker 2** All right. Anything else you want to add?

[00:18:23] **Speaker 1** No, I think we're good. All right.

[00:18:24] **Speaker 2** Representative Neubauer, thanks for your time.

[00:18:25] **Speaker 1** Thank you so much for having me.

[00:18:27] **Speaker 2** All right. Did we hit everything there?

[00:18:28] **Speaker 1** I think so, yeah. You've got some good questions, and so it was great.

[00:18:34] **Speaker 2** Well, thank you for being able to focus through the columns and the gear since I was.

[00:18:39] **Speaker 1** Adams heard this, but.

[00:18:42] **Speaker 4** I was doing my Wisconsin eye interview in Racine and I had an opponent this cycle.

[00:18:47] **Speaker 1** And we're sitting there and we're doing the interview and he comes in and basically I thought it was just very focused. But I am not saying it's good, it's.

[00:18:57] **Speaker 4** Stress.

[00:18:57] **Speaker 1** Testing, you know what I mean? If like, what's the next distraction? The lights go out, the alarms go on, your opponent comes in during the interview. So anyway, it's fun and.

[00:19:07] **Speaker 4** I just appreciate you all doing this work. It's very important.

[00:19:09] **Speaker 2** So, all right, before you run off, we want to capture some room tone just so we can account for that in the editing. So the key is to ask us to sit silently.

[00:19:20] **Speaker 3** For about 30 seconds, starting now. And then Zach, before I could. I mean, clap for you.

[00:19:56] **Speaker 2** All right. Ready? Now give me one more. Slow clap.

[00:20:01] **Speaker 1** What is that for?

[00:20:03] **Speaker 2** That syncs the video and the audio between the two cameras. So when we're crosscutting, that's how you avoid the.

[00:20:09] **Speaker 1** Okay, okay. Okay. Totally. Yeah.

[00:20:12] **Speaker 4** I. I never knew.