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[00:00:13] **Speaker 1** As we mentioned, the U.S. House passed a budget resolution that seeks major tax and spending cuts. The spending cuts are already underway at the hands of Elon Musk and his Department of Government Efficiency. We ask First Congressional District Republican U.S. Representative Brian Style for his take. And thanks very much for being here.

[00:00:33] **Speaker 2** Thanks for having me on.

[00:00:34] **Speaker 1** So you voted in favor of the House budget resolution, extending tax cuts and raising the debt limit by $4 trillion, paired with potential cuts to Medicaid. Does this resolution envision cutting Medicaid by more than $800 billion.

[00:00:53] **Speaker 2** Following four years of reckless spending in the Biden administration? This is our opportunity to get spending under control in Washington. Frustratingly, there's a lot of misinformation out there. The budget resolution that passed last night actually has the word Medicaid in it zero times. But this is really an opportunity to do is get broader spending under control and make sure that we're being good stewards of taxpayer dollars. In addition, we have an opportunity to make sure that we're extending the tax cuts that really grew the economy in particular as we came into the Covid pandemic. So this is about right sizing Washington, D.C., controlling spending and making sure that we're protecting those tax reforms that are really generating the economic growth we saw during the Trump administration's first term.

[00:01:38] **Speaker 1** And so, are you suggesting that the Democrats, who are decrying cuts to Medicaid to the tune of more than $800 billion, are just about talking points on this?

[00:01:49] **Speaker 2** Well, there's a lot of fear mongering that shouldn't be lost on anyone. Usually the fear mongering points by some of my colleagues on the left focusing on on veterans or Social Security, Both false. We've actually last Congress protected veterans and Social Security. I think what we have an opportunity to do is make sure that we are rightsizing spending writ large in Washington, D.C., the focus as it relates to Medicaid, an important program that provides health care to many of the least amongst us in our country, which is separate from Medicare, which provides care to our seniors. But in Medicaid. But we have a real opportunity to do is to help people and lift them out of the need for the program. What do I mean by that? Instead of measuring simply by the inputs, how much money are we spending on some of our welfare programs? What we need to be focused in on is how do we help individuals get good or better paying jobs such that they're able to be self-sustainable? If we're successful in doing that, what we'll do is two things will help the individual who's currently finding themselves on government support, but also be in a position to reduce the burden on the federal government. And so I think the fear mongering is disappointing. It's dangerous, and we have a real opportunity in front of us to rightsize the federal government.

[00:03:01] **Speaker 1** Are you saying that you would oppose significant cuts to Medicaid?

[00:03:07] **Speaker 2** I think there's true savings. So let's let's let's dissect that a little bit. So if we look at the state of California, for example, in Medicaid, 37% of the population of the state of California is on Medicaid. But the state of California has made a policy choice to provide Medicaid to, for example, illegal aliens or they they in the past have waived an asset test, meaning kind of a crazy scenario where somebody could win the lottery but still be eligible for Medicaid. And so there are opportunities to make sure that the programs are there for the least amongst those people that fall on hard times for children in our country that oppose cuts in those areas. But I do think there's reasonable reforms that we can make sure individuals and particular individuals who are childless, able bodied adults both have skin in the game. We help lift them up such that they're self-sustainable and not dependent on government programs.

[00:04:00] **Speaker 1** So you spoke to a California example. What about in Wisconsin?

[00:04:06] **Speaker 2** Well, we could look back to the resolution that passed in their state, Wisconsin, overwhelmingly, where voters in the state of Wisconsin said if an individual wants to receive federal government benefits and they are a childless, able bodied adult, that they should have skin in the game, they should be looking for a job where they should be working. And I think that the American people understand that, yes, we do need to have social safety net programs for individuals that find themselves on hard time, or for children who might not be in a position to help themselves. But at the same time, we expect people to be able to step up and be self-sustainable when they can. And so this is about preventing the fear mongering. But really looking at these programs in determining ways that we can help people lift themselves up, become self-sustainable, and not simply measure our welfare and safety net programs by the inputs, how much money we spent, but instead measure them by how well they're operating. And are they truly designed and effective at lifting people out of poverty sustainably?

[00:05:05] **Speaker 1** As to this budget blueprint. Former Wisconsin Congressman Reid Ribble, Republican, said this. He said math is hard. He said to get to a balanced budget, as Trump promised in his campaign, would require tax revenue to be equal to spending. You cannot extend 4.5 trillion in tax cuts while only cutting about 1.5 trillion in spending. How do you reconcile that gap that he speaks to.

[00:05:33] **Speaker 2** The budget situation in Washington, D.C. for decades, he's been wildly out of control. Washington has spent way beyond its means for a long time. The spending process in Washington, D.C. is completely broken and needs to be absolutely rewritten. That said, we need to take steps forward and so know the budget resolution that move forward doesn't solve the problem in one day. It is not a silver bullet. And unfortunately, the problem in Washington, D.C. is so significant no single action will probably solve it unilaterally. That doesn't mean we shouldn't take a step in the right direction. And so the step that this is taking is making sure that we're growing the economy so individuals can get good and better paying jobs, and at the same time begin the process of truly reining in reckless government spending. That really brought forward the inflation that we saw during the Biden administration.

[00:06:25] **Speaker 1** Why raise the debt limit with so many concerns around the debt?

[00:06:31] **Speaker 2** So the debt limit is a really important issue. And what happens to the impact? What happens to the borrowing rate for the federal government? If the debt ceiling was actually triggered, if the debt limit was actually triggered, would be a higher borrowing costs in the long run. What that will do is actually cost the federal government more. So instead of going out and getting loans at 3.5%, the federal government might find themselves at double that rate. We're already paying roughly $1 trillion a year for interest payments on the debt alone. To double that would be draconian. And so, unfortunately, the federal government is in the situation it's in due to decades of reckless spending in Washington, but it would be economically a disaster and a disaster for a lot of workers if we were in a position where the federal government actually tripped over the debt ceiling.

[00:07:20] **Speaker 1** As to additional savings, spending cuts. Elon Musk wielded a chainsaw at a Republican political conference. What's your response to what he's been doing?

[00:07:33] **Speaker 2** We always should be looking at rooting out waste, fraud and abuse not only in the federal government, but at government entities across the country. I think some of the examination has shown some of the real abuse and reckless spending that we saw during the Biden administration or areas that were highlighted, for example, where an inappropriate comic book was written with funds from USAID. This is all a broader statement that we need to go in and examine how the federal government is spending taxpayer dollars, and to make sure that it's a prudent use of those tax dollars, because we're in a spot where we don't have extra money to spend, and the extra money that has been spent has had the negative impact of increasing costs. The cost of living for Wisconsinites and folks across the country.

[00:08:16] **Speaker 1** Would there be another way to go about it then, how Elon Musk and his Doge operation have done so?

[00:08:25] **Speaker 2** There's lots of ways to go about anything, but I think at its core, the focus here is making sure that we are rooting out waste, fraud and abuse. We're thinking creatively about how we're spending taxpayer dollars, meaning we are actually reducing the waste, fraud and abuse in the broader government spending that we've seen for far too long in Washington.

[00:08:43] **Speaker 1** What kind of responses have you gotten from your constituents about Doge or the budget resolution?

[00:08:51] **Speaker 2** I a wide array. I think there is a broad consensus and an understanding that Washington has spent way too much money for far too long, and people are looking to rein in that reckless spending. I hear that time and again. I also think there's an opportunity for increased communication. I held for town halls across my district at the beginning of this year in in those conversations. I think there is a real hunger for good information about what is going on in Washington, D.C. and going on in the federal government. It's one of the roles and responsibilities that I take seriously to try to communicate with folks in the state of Wisconsin about the true challenges we face, what policies we need to put in place to get us back on track. And I think that's one of the biggest challenges we face as a society right now is how do people get good, thoughtful, true information about their federal government?

[00:09:44] **Speaker 1** How do you see the moves on the part of the Trump administration and congressional Republicans helping Wisconsinites?

[00:09:52] **Speaker 2** I think we have a real opportunity to bring down costs. I think the president has made great moves early on as it relates to securing the US-Mexico border. We've seen the number of illegal crossings dropped dramatically, the broken border. The Biden administration significantly negatively impacted Wisconsin. Whether or not it was human trafficking or the drug flow, this fentanyl alone was killing hundreds of Wisconsinites per year. So the president has done a great job as it relates to that. We're beginning the process of controlling reckless spending. And we also need to continue the work of leading negotiations of peace through strength across the world, where the United States is understood to be backing peace across the globe.

[00:10:33] **Speaker 1** Congressman Brian style, we leave it there. Thanks very much.

[00:10:37] **Speaker 2** Thank you.

[00:10:43] **Speaker 1** I didn't I got no word. Congressman. You froze again there. I but I wasn't told to stop or anything so.

[00:10:54] **Speaker 2** Sorry. I gotta unfreeze this. We could.

[00:11:06] **Speaker 1** Pick it up.

[00:11:08] **Speaker 2** Tonight. I do, yeah. Sorry. On the tech. On on our. And I'm not sure we use this all the time. I'm not sure what's going on. Yeah, the show usually works. I don't know if it's, like the battery on the camera. We'll figure this out before we do it again.

[00:11:27] **Speaker 1** That's what it is.

[00:11:28] **Speaker 2** That's what. It's all right. I mean.

[00:11:30] **Speaker 1** That's what that image says. It's like big red mark.

[00:11:35] **Speaker 2** Exactly.

[00:11:41] **Speaker 1** Where I was, I think word froze was just as I asked you whether or not there might be another way to go about what Doge is doing. Something pretty.

[00:12:00] **Speaker 2** Sure you want to ask me a question and I'll dive right in. Sure.

[00:12:04] **Speaker 1** And we're good to go. Wouldn't. Wouldn't there be another way to do what Doge is doing?

[00:12:12] **Speaker 2** I think there's a lot of ways that things can be done, but I think everybody is supportive of rooting out waste, fraud and abuse in the federal government. I think as we look back over the four years, the Biden administration is spending dramatically increased in Washington. I think we all recognize there's a real opportunity to make sure that we're preventing a misuse of taxpayer dollars.

[00:12:32] **Speaker 1** What kind of response have you gotten from your constituents about either what Elon Musk is is doing or the Republican budget resolution?

[00:12:42] **Speaker 2** I've held listening sessions across southeast Wisconsin, crisscrossing the district, talking with folks, and I hear two things. One. I think there's a real understanding by the American people and people in southeast Wisconsin in particular, that recognize that the reckless spending of the Biden administration brought forward inflation, and they're ready to turn that around. I think people, when they fully understand what this budget process is going to look like, what the final product will hold will be a real opportunity for us to bring down that reckless spending and lower the costs so families can afford the things that they need. The biggest challenge that I hear from people across the district is people find it very difficult to get true, factual information about what's going on in Washington, DC without bias and hyperbole. And so one of the things that I do through my listening sessions and other means is go and speak to folks about what is actually taking place in Washington and have an adult conversation about the challenges we face, about the the gap between the massive amount of spending that we have and how we bring down the debt and deficit and have that adult conversation. I think there's a broad frustration, society wide, about how people obtain good factual information. In many ways, that's why your program and programs like it are so important.

[00:13:55] **Speaker 1** How do you see the moves on the part of the Trump administration and congressional Republicans helping Wisconsinites?

[00:14:03] **Speaker 2** I think we've seen a lot of progress very quickly with the Trump administration. I think the number one thing that I would commend the president on doing is securing the US-Mexico border right out of the gates. We reinstated stay in Mexico, restarted border wall construction, ended abuse of the parole system and stopped the catch and release. The impact of that has been a dramatic decrease on illegal immigration into the United States. That's a big impact in the state of Wisconsin, in particular as it relates to either human trafficking, but in particular the flow of illegal drugs, and in particular fentanyl. Fentanyl, just in, for example, in Kenosha County alone killed over 50 people last year and statewide has killed hundreds. And so the president's action to secure the border has been very positive. And the work now to get spending under control in Washington. While we've made some incremental progress, we have a lot of work to get done to ultimately, at the end of the day, have the goal of reducing the cost of living so Americans can afford what they need.

[00:15:00] **Speaker 1** We leave it there. Congressman Brian Stiles, thanks very much.

[00:15:04] **Speaker 2** Thank you.

[00:15:12] **Speaker 1** It was here. And then it would have diverted us, and that is around us. Immigrant labor on Wisconsin farms. I mean, people talk a lot about that and the worry and concern that some of these farms just could not operate without immigrant labor. And then, I mean, the issue of worker visas, you know, year round worker visas. What about that?

[00:15:42] **Speaker 2** I think there's some false notions as to whether or not how, how and how. I think there's some false notions about how farms operate in the state of Wisconsin. Many of our farmers operate legally using legal work, and when I talk to those farmers, they're frustrated that their neighbors may be undercutting them, utilizing illegal immigrant labor, that they're paying below market rates. And so as we secure the borders, we address the broken illegal immigration system. We have a huge opportunity to address our broken legal immigration system. And as we do that, I think we have a real opportunity in the, in the, in the country to make sure that we're tying out immigrants that come legally, that are vetted with the true workforce needs of the United States, rather than the random lottery system that the United States currently has.

[00:16:30] **Speaker 1** Okay, great. Thank you. Thanks for taking a moment to answer that one.

[00:16:35] **Speaker 2** Yeah, thanks for having me on. Look forward to doing it again.

[00:16:37] **Speaker 1** Okay. Thank you.