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- Dace Blaskovitz: Welcome back to Money and Politics in Delaware. Charlie, before you go into the weeds, I need a minute or two just to make sure everybody at home can kind of play along. I'm going to stumble and bumble, I'm going to make mine brief. You're the guest, you've got to run with it. But there was a court case and the court case, at least in theory ... some say and Dover is going to demand a statewide property tax because the money will have to go to a reorganized school system in Delaware. I'm muddling and muddying the story, but what's going on from a lay person's standpoint? Before you go off, what's happening right now on the street?
- C. Copeland: So, the ACLU ... we have underperforming schools in the state of Delaware across the board, but some of the worst performing schools tend to be in some of the lower income areas of the state. That obviously makes some logical sense, right? The people who have lower earnings might not have the educational background to have higher earnings and there's less money in the schools, so on and so forth.
- C. Copeland: So the ACLU, the left-leaning ACLU, filed a lawsuit and said, this is unfair. This is unfair, that there are wealthier areas of state that are putting more money into their schools and they're not going into these lower performing schools and that this is bias and it violates the constitution that the students are being biased based on their background, their diversity, their income, whatever it is.
- C. Copeland: They filed in the court, the left leaning ACLU, filed a lawsuit to try to force a statewide property tax reassessment, and then to create a statewide property tax. In other words to ... for the purposes of "fixing Delaware's public schools", right? We're going to take everything we're doing at the local level and we're going to create a statewide program. We're going to tax everybody at the statewide level and then we're going to funnel that money to the schools to "fix Delaware's public schools". Because according to the left leaning ACLU, the reason our schools are underperforming is the money issue and not a standards issue.
- Dace Blaskovitz: How did the court decide that \$1.5 billion in a teeny state all in is what we're, I'm told by Ron Russo we've spend annually in for our public education. How did the court start with the premise that \$1.5 is not sufficient, and since only 80%, according to Ron Russo of the money actually makes it to the school that that's acceptable. How did you start with the platform that it wasn't broken?
- C. Copeland: Yeah. Well that's my point is that the ACLU, basically through the structure of their lawsuit is asking the court to implement their left leaning solution. In other words, "we need to do this because of this and you should find in your court decision that our solution is the correct one" and I think that that's absolutely the wrong way the courts should look at it.

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- C. Copeland: Delaware is already a high tax state on the individual level. Delaware already funnels a ton of money into our schools. As you pointed out, Ron Russo's pointed out, that only a small percentage of every dollar that goes in the education system actually makes it to the classroom. It's less than 50 cents on the dollar, makes it into the classroom. This is not a money issue, it's a school structure issue, and the left-leaning ACLU wants a socialist solution.
- C. Copeland: For those of you out there who think socialism is a good thing, let me rephrase socialism to *government run schools*. Whenever government runs things, the people at the top get to decide where the money is spent and who gets that money. Those are powerful people, and they usually extract their money out of it, as opposed to why don't we let families and the local communities decide how their schools should run and where the money should go in the classroom.
- C. Copeland: The left leaning ALCU wants a socialist system, a government run system. What I argue is that instead of doing any of that, the court has an opportunity. The court has an opportunity to say, you know what? We should blow this system apart and allow for more standalone independent schools like in the BOLD Plan that the Caesar Rodney Institute proposes where you would have local family controlled schools with local autonomy to meet students' needs with a lower regulatory burden so that more money gets into the classroom and those schools, those local schools are going to compete against each other because now they have to. Because it's not being mandated by some far off entity.
- C. Copeland: Because I will wager a bet right now to anyone who's listening that should the court implement the left leaning ACLU's solution of higher taxes statewide and more centralization of school control to Dover that 10 years after that decision is handed down, Delaware's government run schools will be worse off, and they might have a lot of nice stuff in the building because they've got plenty of money. But we'll have uneducated students.
- C. Copeland: I will make that wager today, and that the real solution that the court could implement would be, we need to blow apart this entire system, which is failing generation after generation of students in the state of Delaware. That's not an opinion. You can go look at the federal National Assessment of Educational Progress and see how Delaware is underperforming and how, I forget Ron's number, what is it 60% or 70% of our eighth grade students are technically and functionally illiterate?
- Dace Blaskovitz: It's an 80% number with minorities.
- C. Copeland: Yeah, and we could fix that by putting parents in charge of the school's, not some bureaucrat who's 60 miles away in Dover who knows nothing about what's going on inside of that school.

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- C. Copeland: The court has a real opportunity.
- Dace Blaskovitz: Now here's my problem is you want to offer a solution, that's wonderful. That's why you're a guest. But my problem is inherently why was the court demanding that we double down on failure? I can't get past that.
- C. Copeland: I think it's because that's what they were asked. That was the solution that they were given. The court, they're not experts in education. They don't go out there and do the research. They should because the most important thing we do as a society is educate our young people. The most important thing we do because those are the folks that are going to be innovators, creators and make sure that America is the greatest country in the world as it's been for the last 250 years, and we are failing in that job. Left leaning solutions like those from the ACLU, as well meaning as they may be, have led us to this point, as we've increasingly centralized and centralized that bureaucratic control, and therefore we no longer had the flexibility, the innovativeness, creativity to meet the local needs and the court hasn't taken a look at this and comes at it as a government entity.
- C. Copeland: I mean the court is a centralized government entity, and that's how they look at the world. I remember Antonin Scalia once saying, "If you expect the Supreme Court to bring back federalism, we're a creature of the federal government. Why would we do that?" Federalism being more state controlled distribution of power, and that's Antonin Scalia, who was a much ... a small government guy. The court has a chance to actually do the right thing for kids or they could just fall in line. Again, I will make the wager that 10 years from now when that decision comes out, 10 years after that decision the schools will be worse off. They might have some pretty buildings and some nice stuff, but it will have uneducated students and that is crime.
- Dace Blaskovitz: We got 90 seconds. Really less than that. You wanted to talk about plastic bags?
- C. Copeland: I went to the grocery store the other day and I have a small car, and I don't drive around with a bunch of spare bags in it. I went in and I bought a shopping cart worth of stuff, and I carried it out to the car in plastic bags that I've had draped over ... I had like eight bags over each arm. It was amazingly efficient. It was amazingly easy to use. By the way, it had a very low impact on cost, on the environment and everything else. Then I take those bags home and I have three dogs and I take my dogs for a walk and I need to clean up after those dogs and I use those bags. So they're double use bags.
- C. Copeland: But because our left leaning socialists think the world is ending Democrats and Progressives in Dover don't like plastic bags, because it's a signal to the world at how much ... how morally superior they are about the future of the planet,

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they're going to make people like me or elderly people, who are walking to the grocery store have to carry around additional stuff, wash reusable bags, spend money, all for this signaling. It's absurd.

Dace Blaskovitz: His name is Charlie Copeland, on that positive note, with a big smile, he says. Charlie Copeland is a once a month visitor to Money and Politics. Always has something to say. Stay tuned on that statewide property tax. We'll see you next week for more Money and Politics in Delaware.