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Dace Blaskovitz: Welcome back to Money and Politics in Delaware. Welcome back, Charlie Copeland.

C. Copeland: Dace, thanks for having me.

Dace Blaskovitz: Charlie Copeland is a regular to the program. It's no secret I'm a mega-fan of the guy on a personal level, and we get first time listeners, Charlie Copeland. For those folks, 30 seconds about you and 30 seconds about what you do for a living.

C. Copeland: Yeah, I'm largely a Delaware guy, lived the vast majority of my life here, and matter of fact within three miles of the statue at Rodney Square, so I view Wilmington as my city, and Delaware as my home. Raised my family here, and started or ran a family business for 25 year, served for six years in the Delaware State Senate from 2002 to 2008, and ran the state Republican party through the last presidential cycle. We had two successful Republican elections during that period of time where we picked up seats in the Senate, we lost no seats in the State house, and we actually won our first open-seat statewide race in over 20 years during that period of time. And then a couple years ago took over running the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, an organization here in the state that works nationwide, has a presence on 40% of our college campuses, educating students on those foundational principles of what makes a society free and prosperous and how individuals prosper in those communities by touching on limited government, property rights, free speech, subsidiarity, free markets, that kind of thing.

Dace Blaskovitz: You've been with me 10 years. You usually get an A. Today you get an A+.

C. Copeland: All right.

Dace Blaskovitz: Merry Christmas, there, right?

C. Copeland: Great inflation.

Dace Blaskovitz: On your side, bear with me. I got to turn to the audience. This is going to be a somewhat unique interview. I'm basically giving Charlie the platform. Charlie Copeland is going to do a 2019 year in review. Put your seatbelt on. Charlie Copeland, the stage is yours.

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- C. Copeland: Yeah, so you and I have spoken almost every month this year. Matter of fact, it has been every month this year, and I just wanted to go back through some of those stories and topics because I think it's important to sort of summarize and say, "How is the state doing, and has the government and the education system and the others responded in any way shape or form that would suggest that Delaware might get better in year 2020?" At the beginning of the year in January of 2019, we were responding to Governor Carney's State of the State address, in which he said when he ran for office in 2016, he promised that his number one priority would be to strengthen Delaware's economy to create good jobs for Delawareans. That was John Carney's number one priority.
- C. Copeland: We talked about that at the time, so I looked just recently at the most recent Delaware Department of Labor job report, and "the survey using twelve-month averages showed that the share of job losers in the state of Delaware had increased to 75% of the unemployed from just over 40% from a year ago." What that means is that folks that are hitting unemployment in Delaware are hitting unemployment because they lost their jobs, not because they were looking for another job or they were retiring or what have you. That increase almost doubled from a year ago to 75% of folks that are leaving their employment in Delaware. They're leaving because they lost their job, not because they're switching jobs or retiring, and that doubled in the last year...
- Dace Blaskovitz: Stay there just a minute, and that's in a good slash wonderful economy.
- C. Copeland: Oh, that's right. That's absolutely right. In 2009, well, let me just go. Furthermore, as we looked through the year, again Delaware's own Department of Labor, this all comes from Delaware's Department of Labor. They pointed out that 25% of Delaware's employees, Delaware workers, were making less than \$25,000 a year. 25%. So those people who are working aren't making very much money, and those people who are losing their jobs are losing their jobs because they're being fired or laid off, not because they're switching or upgrading.

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- C. Copeland: So then in February, we talked a little bit about the collective bargaining bill, which is a bill to allow the government unions, these are the folks that work for government, that get their pay from the taxpayer, who have a number of state legislators, who are former state employees or former teachers and so are members of those government unions. This bill allows these government unions to set their wages first before the budget system is set. It's changing a budgetary creation methodology, a process that was put in place by Pete DuPont back in 1980 and has worked pretty successfully for 30, almost 40 years. It was just changed in a very fundamental way this year to allow state unions to set their own wages, which will then be approved in the budget, rather than the budget driving what state employees can be paid. This is going to knock the monetary controls out of the park as well as hurt Delaware's economy, so there you go.
- C. Copeland: In March, we talked about that, gee, Delaware has to spend more per person because we don't have as robust county governments as they do in other states, and that's why Delaware spend so much per person. This is sort of a pushback on some comments that I had made where I said, "Look, we spend so much. We spend in the top 10 in the nation, and we're not getting our dollar's worth for that." The pushback was, "Oh, well, we have to do that because we're not a big state. We don't have counties that are doing all this stuff."
- C. Copeland: You and I actually ran through those numbers, and then we came back and touched about it also in April...is that Delaware spends in the top 10% in the nation, top 10 in the nation per person, especially adjusted for things like counties and other expenses. The truth of the matter is Delaware is a high-spend state under every scenario you look at, whether you take out county expenditures, whether you add county expenditures, no matter what you do, Delaware is a top 10 spending state just like New York and California. The difference is we're really, really small and have a non-robust economy, and we're in a lot of trouble.
- C. Copeland: Then in May, we talked a little bit about the ACLU lawsuit about property taxes. The ACLU wants the state government to have more money to spend on schools by taxing everybody's property at the...
- Dace Blaskovitz: Stop just a minute. Stop just a minute. You got three minutes, so pick it up some.
- C. Copeland: Okay. My rejoinder to that was that the judge who's looking at this ought to implement a different solution than the ACLU solution, and what he ought to do is say, "Let's do block grants to the school districts and let the schools make a decision as to where we should spend the money, not the state." Most parents want that there.

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- C. Copeland: Then in July, John Carney issued an op-ed again talking about how important jobs were to him, and we went through that whole thing, and I just went through that already that went out at the end of the year, and job growth in Delaware is lagging. As a matter of fact, we've had four months in a row of increasing unemployment rate in Delaware, so our unemployment keeps going up rather than the rest of the nation.
- C. Copeland: In August, we talked about DEFAC and the fact that the budget in Delaware this year, they passed two budget bills so they could lie to Delawareans saying, "Oh, we helped spending down," and then immediately after passing the budget, they passed a supplementary budget bill so they could spend more money without calling it the budget.
- C. Copeland: We continued then in September. We talked about the NEA and that the NEA voted against their national confab. They voted against rededicating to student learning. They voted against teacher education, but they voted for white fragility. They voted for complaining to the Trump administration about human rights violation. They voted for protesting voter suppression, none of which have anything to do with education.
- C. Copeland: In November, we were going to be talking about Lazy Laura Sturgeon, who makes \$57,000 a year as a legislator and \$93,000 a year as a teacher, and she couldn't possibly figure out how to be a teacher and a legislator at the same time, despite the fact that for the last 80 years, there have been dozens of people who have done just that. I just refer to her as Lazy Laura Sturgeon, who would rather earn a pension, a government pension and her \$57,000 a year to be paid well over \$100,000 a year to basically go onto boondoggles with the state government to places.
- C. Copeland: It has not been a good year for Delawareans in government accountability, government effectiveness, the state budget process, job creation, or educational improvement. A matter of fact, every one of those metrics has gone down in 2019.
- Dace Blaskovitz: Another positive thought on that. His name is Charlie Copeland. He's wonderful. Your review for 2019. We'll see you back here next week for more Money and Politics in Delaware.