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- Dace Blaskovitz: Welcome back to Money and Politics in Delaware. Fascinating guy. Nice man. Greg Lavelle, former legislator. And Greg Lavelle, I had to interrupt because we had to take a hard close, but you were talking about policy change given this session and higher... and the Higher Education Fund. Continue please.
- Greg Lavelle: Yes, so if you don't want to vote on a policy change because it raises serious questions about anything, what is often done is you put it into the Bond Bill. It's called Epilogue Language in the Bond Bill, and so that way it's very difficult to vote against because also, within that are school funding and all these other things I talked about before.
- Greg Lavelle: So this policy change, which is significant, was buried into the Bond Bill. It's section 29. The Higher Education Fund and it permits these other higher education institutions that are private, that have never gotten any money or certainly any significant money from the state of Delaware are now on the dole. And it's really done to facilitate Wesley College, which apparently, according to news reports that I've read is having a very difficult financial times as are other liberal arts, smaller liberal arts colleges across the continental United States.
- Greg Lavelle: So big, big... it may not sound big, folks who are listening at home, but anytime you open up more money, more money they're not going to go away, so this is a bad idea in my opinion. And the other thing that this allows, or that was buried in the Bond Bill as Wesley College got \$1.3 million dollars essentially a year ago and they were going to use that money to renovate the old post office in Dover. Well now, compliments of the state of Delaware and Epilogue Language and not having anyone see this, they're allowed to use that \$1.3 million dollars for anything they want in terms of their operations.
- Greg Lavelle: They still have to come back and do the library with the same amount of money, but that begs the question, if they can't do it now, they're not going to come up with the money later, so big, big change.
- Greg Lavelle: Again, speaking of Epilogue Language and things that are done and the handful of people who actually read this stuff makes them scratch their head. There's another one called, it's Section 58 of the Bond Bill and it talks about the, Delaware's strategic fund days, which I know familiar with and what this does is names, without naming a location, a company or whatever, any project is worth at least \$75 million dollars. It creates 500 jobs, is eligible to have 3% of their infrastructure investments reimbursed through the Strategic Fund.
- Dace Blaskovitz: So is that a conceptional thing or does State have something that's about to be announced?

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Greg Lavelle: Well clearly they must have something that's about to be announced because they have the \$75 million dollar threshold. I mean, it's narrowly tailored, so Dace Blaskovitz Enterprises can't come up and say, "Hey, I'll do that and then you can get the money." So it's a strange thing. Again, Epilogue Language in the Bond Bill, who are we committing this money to?

Greg Lavelle: I'd listen to your discussion, your podcast with Charlie Copeland about the Wesley College thing and people not knowing what the money was going to be spent for and no one really being able to answer that question. Well this is an interesting one. If you went to many legislators and say, "What is this project for?" How many of them would know?

Greg Lavelle: So we'll find out, I guess eventually.

Dace Blaskovitz: I think we both know that answer, right?

Greg Lavelle: Yes.

Dace Blaskovitz: All right. Three's the charm. What's this adversity study?

Greg Lavelle: Well I went back and looked at it again this morning and it's actually, I had the wording wrong. It's a disparity study. Section 35 of the Bond Bill talks about a disparity study and it doesn't speak about what disparity you're talking about, but I would assume, but it doesn't say this that minority contractors, women contractors, those types of things, but it's going after DeIDOT, Health and Social Services and some others.

Greg Lavelle: I think this issue's been studied multiple times and fine if they want to study it again, I don't know if that's fine or not, but a lot of these studies have outcomes that are going to be seen, but again, if it's so important, and diversity's fine. Having State dollars go out and all that as long as you're getting value for your dollar, the different contractors is fine. I think we over weight the unions in this state, but that's for another day.

Greg Lavelle: Why not have the debate out in public? Why is it buried in the Bond Bill? They do nothing. I've been there. They/we spend all sorts of time in the spring really doing very little. All the stuff passes at the last minute. The Bond Bill was printed. No one saw it. I guarantee they didn't read it. What's the disparity study all about? If it's that important why not talk about it?

Greg Lavelle: It's like Harris McDowell's annual energy bill that he puts in with two days to go. If it's so darn important why is this done year after year with the effort to have nobody know what's actually going on.

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- Greg Lavelle: So that's the three things that I picked out because you're supposed to stick to three things to talk about, right?
- Dace Blaskovitz: Well, yes and no. To your credit, you are a regular to the program. Let's do a post-mortem on, I'm guessing. I'm looking. Senate Bill 8. You came on the air with us two, three times. Did a couple Data Delawares. Warned of Senate Bill 8. That was the... Well to quote the national right to work committee. "By making compensation a subject of collective bargaining, this legislation strips individual state employees of the... strips state employees of the fundamental right to negotiate for themselves."
- Dace Blaskovitz: SBA coerces workers into paying union dues. This bill is an assault, just not on state workers, but on the taxpayers of Delaware as well. To your credit, I bow and kiss the ring. You were clairvoyant. What do you say now?
- Greg Lavelle: Well, it passed and clearly the governor saw and what, amongst other things the bills are very hard to read unless you're a labor lawyer and you know all the sections they refer to, but the bottom line of this, one of the bottom lines of this bill is that it would mandate that collective bargaining take place. Now whether or not... For wages, for wages. So we have collective bargaining and it's work conditions and all those types of things, so this would be the camel's nose under the tent on mandating collective bargaining for wages and the trick was, "Well, you know, if it's not funded by the general assembly then you don't really get the money anyway."
- Greg Lavelle: Well, how long do you think they're going to sit around and do collective bargaining for wages without mandating that those wages actually be... But I'm sure Carney looked at that and said, "No, no, no, no, no." So they actually did a substitute bill that said that they may... When you say, you shall until you may do for wages and softened it, but it's a road and the road is straight and there's a line in the middle of it and that's where they're going.
- Greg Lavelle: They will have, like other states and municipalities, mandated for collective bargaining for wages, and then it'll become a door opener like everything else where we have to pay because we did these increases and those types of things, so the bill did pass. It got softened a little bit, but that does not change the direction of the road.
- Dace Blaskovitz: And the other one I have from our notes yesterday, you went out of your way to say more money went into education, more new spending. Something that the numbers, which strongly suggest is very broken, gets even more money, share that with the audience.

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Greg Lavelle: Yeah, so the governor proposed a number a initiatives for school populations that are challenged socially and economically and others. There's a court case and who knows, maybe they're trying to carry off a judge making these decisions, but so there's more money put into some of these programs, but there's no real structural change. It's more money going into the same issue and I just don't see it doing anything differently.

Greg Lavelle: So in terms of policy for this particular year I know the governor talks about that. We'll see. Talked about the Bond Bill and all that kind of money. There's a lot of construction again. If you're a construction firm in Delaware, good for you. And if you're a construction firm outside of Delaware has union contracts connections, even better for you.

Greg Lavelle: There was a lot of criminal justice reform, which is fine. We'll see what happens, hopefully it'll come back into fashion, but not create public safety issues. Things like plastic bags were banned and actually one thing that didn't pass and I would have voted for it in a second was banning tobacco use until you're 21 years of age or older. I think that's just a great idea. Something I'd supported previously and some committees I was on and there's no redeeming qualities of tobacco use. It will kill you.

Greg Lavelle: So that was some of the policy stuff that passed.

Dace Blaskovitz: And on your side with money..

Greg Lavelle: And also one more if I may..

Dace Blaskovitz: Yeah, yeah, quick, quick.

Greg Lavelle: If I may, in terms of some of the dynamic real quickly, is guns, going into the elections, guns, guns, guns. The governor was asking for this that and the other thing. Three bad bills, in my opinion did not move forward and the primary reason they didn't move forward is because the union stepped in and said, "We don't want them. Our members are lawful owners and users of guns."

Greg Lavelle: They support the second amendment and they really put the pressure and it was just ironic to watch these strong voices, Carney and others melt away when the unions weighed in and said, "Our members embrace the second amendment, use guns responsibly and don't want their rights taken away."

Greg Lavelle: So that was interesting.

Dace Blaskovitz: We'll see you next week for more Money and Politics in Delaware.