

DATA DELAWARE: Monday, January 20, 2020

SUBJECT: Copeland RESPONDS to DE Dems

(Podcast transcript-Part II)

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- Dace Blaskovitz: Welcome back to Money and Politics in Delaware. Charlie Copeland with me. Charlie Copeland on the warpath in a good way. We're talking about the News Journal opinion piece that appeared Sunday, January 5th. This is a must read if you want a gag reflex, that is. It is by the House Alpha Democrats, and the title, if you're playing online, "Getting Work Done for All Delawareans During the New Session." Again, "Getting Work Done for All Delawareans During the New Session." Charlie's my guest but the bur in my saddle is that John Carney went on public television, and the first thing out of his mouth was that the number one priority for him and Delaware and the Delaware legislators is, the quote was, "Strengthening our economy."
- Dace Blaskovitz: According to Getting Work Done for All Delawareans During the New Session, gee whiz, of the seven bullets, jobs is number six. Giveaway, social programs are one, or everything else. Charlie Copeland, I get down from the soapbox. It's your turn. Continue.
- C. Copeland: Well, in the first section, the first segment, the reason I was touching on some of these things like opioid addiction, the horrific growth in opioid deaths in Delaware, and gun violence in Delaware is that when the Democrats say, "Oh, we're going to have all these social programs. And we're going to do this, and we're going to expand voting rights and all this kind of stuff ..." They're missing the point. You can't just fix those things, which, because if we could, we would have done it years ago. Those problems are not new. But what does fix those things is a strong economy and jobs.
- C. Copeland: So, they've got the whole pyramid turned upside down. What I'm trying to do, and again, these are good people, they're just narrow in their view and broad in their ideology. And so, instead of focusing on say voting rights, and here's a question for you, Dace, can you name for me a single person in Delaware who's come to you and said, "My voting rights last election or the election before in Delaware were restricted. I was unable to vote." I have never had anybody come to me and say that. Turnout among minority groups in Delaware oftentimes are higher than for the white population. We don't have a voting access problem in Delaware. Doesn't mean that things couldn't be improved but what we really want to do is make sure that maybe those people have jobs so they can take care of themselves.
- C. Copeland: So, I believe, I personally do that our criminal justice system is not fair and equitable and we can do better. But, so many people are caught in this unfair system because they can't get a job and their education stinks. If our young people had decent jobs and a decent education, the problem about criminal justice would almost solve itself. There'd still be problems but it would be much smaller because these people wouldn't have to go and commit crimes to put food on the table or take care of themselves. And you just simply can't wave a

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magic wand to fix these things with some legislative thought that somebody had somewhere.

C. Copeland: And these are the same Democrats who have been running this state for 25 years. The system they now claim they want to reform is the system that they built. They have failed. And that is why I think John Carney had come out and said, "Gee, jobs are so much more important. That's the number one job that I'm focused on." And yet, let's be honest, he is not. I've already said that Delaware's economy's been flat since 2011. Home ownership rates in Delaware are the lowest they've been in 20 years. Our unemployment rate has been rising for the last five months because too many people are entering the labor force, and there's no job available for them. And by the way, what happens when you have too many people looking for too few jobs? The prices of jobs goes down. When you have more supply and less demand, the price goes down. That's the supply and demand. It's basic simple economics.

C. Copeland: And if you think that if I just raise the minimum wage to just make that problem go away, that's why you have youth unemployment and youth violence in the city because these kids can't get jobs. You don't believe me, just go out to Seattle and see what happened when they raised their minimum wage to \$15 an hour, and the unemployment affects and the opioid affects and the violence affects, and everything else. Again, these Democrats, they're good people and they mean well and I apologize for perhaps coming off too passionately here, but I believe that if these folks really want to do what is best, they need to go check their ideology at the door. People want jobs. They want good jobs. And the way to make that happen is to make Delaware a place where good job creators want to come.

C. Copeland: We need high quality schools. We don't have them. That isn't an opinion. You can go to the state government's website and do, or just a web search on reportcard.doe, reportcard.doe and the facts are there. 72% of our 17 year olds in 11th grade are not proficient in math. Three out of four. So, if you're a parent of an 11th grader in Delaware's Public Schools, it is likely that despite what your kid's report card might say, that they are not able to do math. They are not proficient. And in today's economy, who is going to hire someone who can't do math? That's three out of four 17 year olds. That's from Delaware's Department of Labor. There our numbers.

C. Copeland: Delaware needs lower business regulation on silly things like land use, regulatory burdens, and DelDot's rules...I hear it where I work, I spent 18 months in court fighting DelDot because they wouldn't sign a letter, and they finally settled out of court in my favor because they knew they were going to lose. 18 months. If you're a business looking to open an office, why would you

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come to Delaware where you have to spend 18 months in court just to grow your operations and hire people? You won't.

Dace Blaskovitz: And you can go to Pennsylvania for a fraction of the time, tick tock on that clock because I've got to change subjects just a minute because we're going to run out of time. Another one of your passions, and you've been on the show multiple times was the inevitable probable, whatever the word choice is, court decision with the, I believe it's the NCAA and the alleged inequity of funding for Delaware's Public Schools, very much credited to the Delaware State News and the gentleman that wrote it. It's a gentleman, Matt Bittle, and I'm going to pull a paragraph to move this along.

Dace Blaskovitz: "Some have argued the expenditure, the governor's proposal to get more money to education, is not just a way of helping children but also counters a lawsuit alleging the state's system for funding education is unconstitutional." Somebody out there hearing it for the first time in radio land, what are we talking about?

C. Copeland: Yeah so, the ACLU sued the state saying that the funding equations and how they fund our schools is unconstitutional because it, the way it winds up is that in some ways, there is less funding that goes to communities that have lower incomes. So, if it's coming off of property taxes and things like that, and wealthier neighborhoods have higher property taxes, therefore, wealthier neighborhoods are going to have more money into their schools. And so this lawsuit is the way to sort of get the court to weigh-in and say that Delaware's funding formula's unconstitutional. My personal opinion is, I don't know if it's unconstitutional or not but I'm always afraid because we had this with busing in the 70s that when the court comes in and says, "Oh, I've got a solution for you." And they mandate a solution. They legislate from the bench. They create a solution that honestly in many ways ruined Delaware's Public Schools for, well, til today.

C. Copeland: Instead of improving the schools that need improving, they destroyed almost all of them, except for in some limited cases and that kind of thing. And so, I think the governor is trying to, and the legislature in looking at some of their legislative fixes, they're trying to front run the court to say, "Look, we solved this problem so you don't have to rule on it." And I suspect the court would rather not rule on it because then they may get themselves into a box and be subject to being accused of, once again, legislating from the bench. And, frankly, getting in the way of education, which they know nothing about because they're not educators, they're judges and attorneys and that kind of thing.

C. Copeland: My personal opinion is what they ought to do is say, "You know what? We should blow apart the district system and make every school a charter school."

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And just like the charter schools are doing as well if not better than most of our other schools for less money, by setting the schools free from the Dover, and the district bureaucracies...

C. Copeland: And actually meet the immediate needs of your students. And then you would have that similar funding formula. But anyway, that's my opinion.

Dace Blaskovitz: His name is Charlie Copeland. Fascinating guy, wonderful guest. Looking to next week. The American Legislative Exchange Counsel. The economist for that organization, Jonathan Williams is a guest. And China's hot. One of the alpha people in that space as far as academics is Dennis O'Brien, he's a guest too. We'll see you next week for more Money and Politics in Delaware.