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- Dace Blaskovitz: Welcome back to money and politics in Delaware. As always, put your seat belts on. We got Charlie Copeland! Welcome back.
- C. Copeland: Dace, it's a pleasure. Thank you for having me.
- Dace Blaskovitz: And, his timing is absolutely impeccable. For those that don't read the News Journal, last Sunday, the featured opinion piece was governor John Carney as a guest columnist. And, the title is, We're Making Progress on Issues Delaware Cares About.
- Dace Blaskovitz: Charlie Copeland today is going to give his/the Caesar Rodney Institute's response to that. And, let me also tease the segment.
- Dace Blaskovitz: I believe, I think we did a pre-interview with Charlie, as I do with every guest. There is at least a rumor out there of a possible credit rating agency downgrade. It's a rumor.
- Dace Blaskovitz: We'll see if Charlie talks about it or not. But with that said, I've introduced or at least welcomed Charlie. It's your turn Charlie Copeland. We get first-time listeners 30 seconds about you, 30 seconds about your business.
- C. Copeland: Yeah, so I'm now 56 years young and spent the vast majority of those years within three miles of the Caesar Rodney statue in Rodney Square. Delaware is my home and has been for a very, very long time.
- C. Copeland: And, I want to see my state be successful. So, I grew up there, went to school there. My kids were born there, and ran a business for 20 something years there, Associates International, that does print, direct mail marketing services, web stuff.
- C. Copeland: I mean, I have a management team that runs that. They do a great job. And, I now run the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, which was founded in 1953 by William F. Buckley. And, we educate students on college campuses and those things that make a society free and prosperous. Say, limited government, property rights, free speech, religious liberty, those kinds of things. And their historical basis. Very intellectual.
- Dace Blaskovitz: Some of our alumni, your listeners might have heard of. So, for instance, Neil Gorsuch and Sam Alito were ISI alumni. They took ISI programming when they were in college.

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- Dace Blaskovitz: How about Peter Thiel? The first outside investor in PayPal? He was an ISI student journalists at Stanford.
- Dace Blaskovitz: Larry Arnn, the President of Hillsdale College is an ISI leader fellow. And, Ed Feulner, who founded the Heritage Foundation, the most powerful think tank on the conservative side of the spectrum in Washington DC. And he was also an ISI leader fellow.
- Dace Blaskovitz: Those are the ones that I can talk about, but there are hundreds of others who are similarly placed in business, in the law and in the judiciary and nonprofit. So, we really have a great time developing future conservative and libertarian leaders.
- Dace Blaskovitz: Excellent. Wow. You ready to go?
- C. Copeland: I am ready to go.
- Dace Blaskovitz: All right. Again, if you're just tuning in, Charlie is going to give a rebuttal, a response to the opinion piece that appeared in the News Journal, courtesy, Governor John Carney. The title, if you're playing along at home, We're Making Progress on Issues Delaware Cares About, is the title of the piece.
- Dace Blaskovitz: Let me tease it a little bit further. Charlie's going to take it line by line, but the first couple are, ooh, wow. Painful. Here you go.
- Dace Blaskovitz: Strengthening our economy, improving schools for all Delaware children, preserving Delaware's unique natural heritage. That's a head-scratcher. Responsibly managing taxpayer dollars. That's how the piece starts. Your turn, Charlie Copeland. Your thoughts.
- C. Copeland: Yeah, so, from those opening four lines, one can tell that John or his writer didn't spend a lot of time learning the queen's English. You know, if I were to grade this as a paper, it would be at the D, D-minus perspective.
- C. Copeland: Now, it is made for twitter, right? Because all of those "sentences" are really just made for twitter moments. But, let me just take a quick pause and say, you've talked about Bob Byrd, who's a lobbyist in Dover. Democrat, good guy, been around a long, long time.

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- C. Copeland: Wrote a book recently. I bought the book, you should buy the book. If you haven't bought the book, you call Birdie's office, you can get a copy. And, in one of the early chapters, he talks about Sherman Tribbitt because that's when he first was elected to the State House, Bob Byrd, was when Tribbitt was governor.
- C. Copeland: And, he makes his comment, he says, Tribbitt was okay smart. He surrounded himself with friends, but he wasn't going to be innovative, and there were a lot of challenges facing the state. And, then he goes on all those challenges.
- C. Copeland: And when I read that, that Sherman Tribbitt was okay smart... And, John Carney is a nice guy, but he's just okay smart. And he's not an innovator. He's not going to create new ideas that are going to move the state forward. And that's why we're stuck where we are.
- C. Copeland: So let's just look at those four lines again. Strengthen our economy, improve our schools, preserving Delaware's heritage, responsibly manage taxpayer dollars. Those four phrases remind me of the Groucho Marx Line, "Who are you going to believe? Me or your lying eyes?"
- C. Copeland: He just goes in. And so, let's just think about this for a second. Let's start with the next set of sentences where he actually reverses things and goes into high school first and talks about graduation rates and this kind of stuff.
- C. Copeland: So, Delaware's public school enrollment has grown 19% since the year 2000. So, we have more students today than we did back in 2000. And, of course you're going to have more graduates today than you did then because you have more students today. That's called Algebra, and that you might learn in some Delaware public schools.
- C. Copeland: But, if you look at things like the NAEP, the National Assessment of Education Progress, which is the nation's report card on how schools are doing, it's nationwide, just calling balls and strikes, not partisan. And, Delaware public schools are achieving basically the exact same level of performance today as they were at 25 years ago when John Carney first stepped into Tom Carpenter's gubernatorial administration.
- C. Copeland: And so, if you then go and look at... It is true that our graduation rate is also up, but let's go and look at what does that mean on college readiness. And, the SAT is a test that determines college readiness. And so, how does Delaware perform on the SAT?

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- C. Copeland: Well, 50% of SAT students that take the SAT in Delaware, only 50% are at grade level and therefore college ready. Only half of Delaware graduates in English. If I look at math, it's only 28%. One in four Delaware graduates is college ready according to the SAT.
- C. Copeland: That, to me, is a much more appropriate number. Now, interestingly enough, do you know the subgroup that is most proficient in the state of Delaware, with 80% college ready in English and almost 70% college ready in math?
- Dace Blaskovitz: Charter?
- C. Copeland: Asians.
- Dace Blaskovitz: Oh, as a demographic. Asians/Asian Americans.
- C. Copeland: Asians. Asian-Americans in Delaware far outperform everybody else. So when we hear about all this other stuff about white privilege and everything else, you want to be an Asian. I mean, they are just knocking it out of the park and that's a great thing. It's a great thing for America and it's a great thing for Delaware because nobody else is.
- C. Copeland: So, perhaps Delaware... maybe John in all these meetings that he talks about having, he should go meet some Asian American families and find out what they're doing about education and then go and talk to other demographic subgroups on that intersectionality left and promote what they're doing and really get education improvement.
- C. Copeland: So, let's move on to jobs in the state of Delaware. So, he mentions his very first bullet point is that he's strengthening.
- Dace Blaskovitz: Go back just a minute because tick tock on the clock, we've got about a minute and a half in this segment.
- Dace Blaskovitz: The three numbers I'm stuck on the schools, and you studied the numbers and Ron Russo and Stapleford are regulars to the program. But, the three numbers and all in, it's 1.3 or 1.5 billion, the cost of public education in the state of Delaware.
- Dace Blaskovitz: And then, you have 80% of the minority kids, I believe it's technically eighth graders, that cannot read and/or write at grade level, minority kids. And then, you look at that 1.3 or 1.5 billion all in, and you go, 80% of that money does not make it to the classroom.

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Dace Blaskovitz: How can those three numbers exist?

C. Copeland: Because we have a governor that says, oh, we're making great strides. He is lying to the citizens of Delaware because the unions, teacher's union in particular, gives him a lot of money and a lot of votes and a lot of coverage.

C. Copeland: But, he is lying to the citizens of Delaware. Plain and simple. I mean, you can't have... at the SAT...you're saying, oh, our graduation rate is so high. And yet, the SAT, which is a measure of college readiness, says that only one in four Delawareans who take the SAT, one in four, are college ready.

Dace Blaskovitz: I got to jump in. His name is Charlie Copeland, as he mentioned. He does another segment with us. We're going to take a short break. We're going to look at the economy. We will be right back.