

Charlottesville Forum Transcript

87 Mins

00:00:00 - 00:00:20 - Opening Intro and music

00:00:21 -

Bruce - We encourage you to use a couple hashtags one of them is hashtag common ground c-ville and the other is hashtag listen first c-ville now Common Ground committee is a Grassroots organization and we're focused on bringing white not heat to public discourse and one of the things we've learned is that if you want to bring light to a conversation it's a good idea to listen first. Now what is the role that our political leadership can play in that issue and that's what we're going to be focusing on today and I have to say I think we have an awesome panel to talk about that particular topic don't you think?

And so why don't I introduced you to them.

First or moderator is Wendi C Thomas she's the editor and publisher of mlk50 Justice through journalism the year-long non-profit reporting project about economic Justice she was a 2006 Harvard Nieman fellow and is currently a contributing writer to the Christian Science monitor Wendy welcome

00:01:30 -

Wendi - Thank you

00:01:36 -

Bruce - The next are distinguished panel first Michael Steele. Michael was a former lieutenant governor of Maryland and the former chair of the Republican National Committee and he made history both times by being the first African-American in those rolls and he is currently the co-host of Steele and Ungar on SiriusXM POTUS Channel my favorite Channel Michael welcome

00:01:59 -

Michael - Thank you very much, thank you, good to be here.

00:02:07

Bruce - And on my immediate left is Donna Brazile, Donna is the former chair of the Democratic National Committee. She has worked on every presidential election since 1976 and in 2000 she became the first African American woman to serve as the campaign manager for a presidential campaign of a major political party that was the campaign of Vice President Al Gore and most recently she's written a book A New York Times bestseller and it's called hacks the inside story of the break-ins and breakdowns that put Donald Trump in the White House Donna welcome

00: 02:47 -

Donna - Thank you, thank you

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Bruce - And thanks to all of you for being with us today and so with that Wendy's floor is yours

00:03:01 -

Wendi - Thank you Bruce thank you so throughout this entire form today we're going to go beyond agreeing with the problems is our and start seeking Solutions both with the government's role should be and then what the role of us as individuals should be...(audio break)

00:03:24

Wendi -

Alright, so we're going to start back what happened last year here in Charlottesville remember one hundreds white nationalist white supremacist descended upon the city and they were here to protest the city's decision to sell a statue of General Robert E Lee they marched with flaming tiki torches they were chanting nazi era slogans and then they finally clash with counter-protesters a self-proclaimed white nationalist Richard Spencer was there and among the things he shouted into a megaphone what brings us together is that we are white we are a people we will not be replaced 32 year old Heather heyer was killed when a cloud, a car plowed into a group of counter-protesters. So after that tragic Supreme Court reaffirmed that hate speech including racially offensive speech is protected under the First Amendment what's not lawful our country is when speeches used to incite violence of course. Yet according to a 2017 brooking survey 44% percent, 44% percent of college students believe hate speech is not covered under the First Amendment so Donna my question to you are we at a place in our nation where are hate speech laws need to be re-evaluated by congress or the courts

00:04:45

Donna - Well I think we're in a place now where all of those of values that we cherish whether they be constitutional amendments are part of the Bill of Rights are part of our what I call the platform of our Freedom they need to be reexamined retaught so that there's a common understanding of what we mean when we talk about freedom of the press hate speech right to assemble excetera I think we've come far where in our society we know that certain things that we say or certain actions we take can inflame the conversation can create what I call a backlash but simply we also know that it's plain wrong you know I grew up at a time Michael maybe a day or two older than you we haven't checked each other age But I grew up at a time when I witnessed people marching they were marching for civil rights for equal justice under the law they were marching so that those quote on quote signs will come down whites only, etc but we're at a Tipping Point Morrmen (Moment?) and I'll (are?) democracy where I think the lines have been blurred people don't know because of social media and other quote on quote useful tools that came about after my ex-boss inspired the invention of the internet people no longer know how to communicate their values, there ideas without you know roughling another feather so we have to get back to a place I think in society where we can foster civility in our

conversation we need new I think in the 21st century we need a new vocabulary to talk about race, we need a 21st century voting rights act, we need a 21st century way of looking at looking all of our laws as well as our speech. So I don't know what the legal answer to it, but I know from a political perspective, we need to teach Civics, we need to teach the common decency, and values that allowed our forebears to be able to come up with this great enterprise called We the people government a represent form of government...we lost it.

00:06:48 -
Michael -

I would agree with that but here's the rub who's going to teach it? am I going to teach you or is your mom and dad are going to teach it what we see right now and what we witnessed last year in Charlottesville was learned behavior young men and women in their in their you know khakis and izods and their loafers , they didn't have a hood, they weren't wearing a hood they didn't have a white cap on their head and a cross they had tiki torches alright they went to Walmart and bought out their supply of tiki torches so I agree 100% with Donna in terms of moving back into that space where we have a civil conversation but folks has got to start in the neighborhood it's got to start in a community it's got to start most especially in the home what are we teaching our kids? I related this story to you in the terms of learned behavior and why that we will look at that time span going back 5 years 5 minutes 10 years 20 minutes whatever you get into a moment will you see see it raw I'm a friend of mine who this was back in the early 1990s was playing, out with her kid in Dupont Circle DC and her kid was playing by himself so young white woman came up with her kid her son and as kids do after about 3 minutes of sensing each other's presence they started playing The mother then went over to her son and snatched her son up off the ground is that what did I tell you about playing with them so who's responsible for that what's the expectation of that child later on in life in his encounter with a young African-American male or young African-American woman or Hispanic or someone else who does not look like him so we got to have the conversation but we had to talk to a whole lot of parents who got to bring a whole lot of families into this conversation because while the the Civil Rights march continues and while there's been a lot of ground covered their whole lot of folks who got off that road or never got on that road who are still teaching that bad behavior to the Next Generation that bad way of thinking so I think for me I want to have that honest conversation starting with so how you raising your kid what are you teaching them Because that's what's going to get carried outside the home into playgrounds into Academia and The Business Downstream

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Wendi - So I feel I hear both saying there is a role for families and communities to kind of

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Michael - There is absolutely a role from my perspective

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Wendi - But when we get to the point of tiki torches torches and khakis, then what is the role of government have to play? Do you see a need to

00:10:08 -

Michael - So long as there is no violence associated with it they're protected with the tiki torches to go in protest and say whatever they want to say and I will defend their right to to gather and protest carry their little tiki torches and and say whatever they want to say but when you get in your car and drive it into a crowd of people that's a whole different conversation and that's a whole different level of Engagement by the government at that point which should rightly step in and do its duty but I don't see the government having a role in limiting your your ability to go out and make that protest just as you show up with your tiki torches and your inflammatory language I'll show up with my friends who will stand with the Constitution and say this is not America this is wrong and so I think that that space is got to be protected

00:11:05 -

Donna -

I agree with Michael it has to be protected but we also have a role to play because I I also thinking of churches and in our community and in our public Halls of discourse we also have to reinforce a notion that bigotry and all of its form is wrong you know Michael 50 years ago this month when dr. King was assassinated that evening when my parents came home alone with my grandmother who is there to call all of us in her room and all of our burst sharal, Cindy, Donna, Tate, Lisa Dometri, Kevin Ziola I told you we were catholic I mean we sat down We started praying and she said we have to pray for dr. King and we did we have to pray for his family we did and then she said we also have to pray for those who committed this act of violence, she didn't say it that way We have to pray for the person who murdered him and I raise objections because I had the biggest mouth of the nine and I said why why do we have to pay for the person who shot Dr. King, you know back then I was a little militant and she's

00:12:08 -

Michael -

A little?

00:12:08 -

Donna -

A little, just a little as tiny as my feet were back then, but I want to know Why am I grandmother said because that's what Jesus would want us to do we have to pray for everybody and that taught me something, here was my grandmother, who was born 22 years After slavery ended my grandmother who has spent all of her adult life living in the segregated South in Jim Crow she was still filled with enough compassion and love to teach us that as children and that sticks with me to this day that we're not called to hate we're call to love and I'm telling you it's hard I found myself last Easter, every Easter I go to church and I pray for Someone and last Easter I was praying for Donald Trump oh no no no. Doctor king said do not let any person any man

bring you so low as to hate him and I was reminded of my grandmother again last year and I have been praying for our president ever since and the reason why I pray for somebody who were very very hard To ensure that he did not get in the White House you know he knows me

00:13:24

Michael -

Yes he did

00:13:25

Donna -

I pray for him because we only have one president at a time, I still believe that you know one day he may wake up and see the light But that that concept of love it comes out of the Bible it comes out of our duty as not I think is Christian those of us who are Christians and even those who are not Christians and non Believers love spread quicker than hate love is powerful and love erases fear and I think what drives racism the reason why we can't root it out is fear, fear of the unknown, fear of the other and you know we have long..Michael said it learned behavior, its learned behavior, my little godson who is twenty two months old, and I'll never forget, Tell you Michael he's white guy and I raised him for seven weeks it's one of the most important things in my life I took maternity leave from work and I never had a baby but I was Raising this child cuz its mother was sick, she was ill after birth, they needed someone. And here I'm with Kai and he calls my nana, Im his nana. He also everytime he spills something, he also say nana did that, that's ok he knows I'm a troublemaker, but one day Kai and I were sitting on the porch and he looked at my skin and then his skin and he looked and looked and looked and he finally did this (Shrugging motion) like he, like its almost invisible, he didn't see anything, he didn't see any difference. I am so honored now, 22 months later. This was from last night, I came home from California he couldn't, I heard him scream from next door, NANA, he loves me, He loves me I love him this is a boy but I'm going to spend the rest of my life with

00:15:05 -

Wendi -

So we want to talk I mean didn't you just mention fear and this hate coming out of fear and this kind of Segways into our next topic which is about the the justice system and the role that that plays in in creating or maintaining a racial divide and so some of the deep racial tensions we seen in American Life underly how Blacks and whites see police in their communities as well as their reactions to deadly encounters with law enforcement. According from Pew research 6 in 10 Americans Americans overall regardless of race say that the death of black people during recent police encounters signal a broader problem between African-Americans and police now at the same time 2017 Pew survey also shows the majority of police officers Say that you seem high-profile fatal encounters have made their jobs riskier aggravated tensions between police and African Americans and left many of them afraid to fully do their jobs as we all know earlier this month black man who arrested at a Philadelphia Starbucks after an employee there complain and called police and said they were loitering now this wasn't a fatal Encounter thank God but Michael question for you what's the government's role in establishing some trust between African-Americans and in the police

00:16:31 -

Michael -

Well to the Police you know that our govern and controlled by you know state and local governmental agencies and jurisdictions they need to be on the front line of not just assessing but then putting in place the kinds of reforms that are necessary to get us to a spot where we're actually doing real police community relations a big part of the The mistrust that exists come from the fact that police probably since 2001 since 9/11 have had a very different role in our communities some refer to it as more militaristic roll others could let you know refer to a bit more of a security role however you define it you can really see a clear differentiation in the You can really see a clear differentiation in the mindset in the thinking the move away from the level in the kind of community policing that would have been done in the past so as an example instead of and I know some jurisdictions of try to do this we we certainly were involved in it in Maryland I when I was lieutenant governor working with the county and local police officials taking a serious look at where you police live when I was growing up the cop who walked to being in my neighborhood knew me and knew the other fellas in the neighborhood he knew who the troublemakers were right so that if something happened he knew not to look at me So that wasn't a troublemaker because my mom had a belt with my name on it and that was enough didn't need to be in the trouble with the law because at home was worse than anything the police could do right but that's not necessarily the environment today a whole host of reasons but the one constant is still the presence of the police and the lack of community engagement where they actually know these young men and women who are growing up in this neighborhood but you can't do that when you don't live there you can't do that when you live in the suburbs and your policing the city and and that's that's a big part of it when you don't know where the trouble is and who the trouble makers are you begin to look at everyone and every Community as part of that problem and so when you walk into it I'm and we seen too many examples of it where for example you look at a Tamir rice 12 year old kid who you know is in a Walmart or some store you know with a BB gun and he's seen as a immediate threat Because what called in about him makes it sound like he's a threat and instead of stepping back in assessing the environment and that cop looking and looking and that's Tamir, Tamir he's not a problem he goes into it thinking that all he sees is an African-American individual doesn't matter child adult does matter African-American individual with a gun and then we know the rest of that story and again just play it out this past couple of weeks in Philadelphia You know now sitting while black is a problem if you're in a Starbucks because if you don't order something you immediately considered lordoring in that I don't know how many I'll go to Starbucks but I've been in a number Starbucks why I have not immediately ordered something with my friends and others and not getting not been thrown out or not had the police called on me so what's changing what is part of this this culture where the fear is bubbling up about African American young men boys and even women now finding themselves in this particular crosshairs so for me it's about the community in the police as law enforcement come together and the center that is going to be our city Councils are Mayors are Governors are state legislators who are assisting them and putting in place too kind and putting the money behind to be honest the kind of programs that focus on rec centers community centers that can be gathering Point constructive

Gathering point for police and kids can come interact putting a police officer Donna in a classroom or the school to me just creates a further barrier and this idea Now we're going to arm teachers on top of all of this is just downright stupid

Donna

Your getting a little ahead of yourself.

Micheal

I'm getting ahead of myself? Ok, ok, i'll stay on track.

Wendi

So it sounds like what your saying is State But State local local involvement Donna would you agree?

Donna

A hundred percent I mean after all we pay their salaries and there's a federal role Because they are federal police there's a state local role and we have to train our offices but we were taught as children to respect law enforcement How to respect anyone really in a uniform I'll never forget when the mailman walk up hello sir goodbye sir you know I was afraid because the milkman.. I apparently Grew up in a household were my uncle Nat was a policeman you know my cousin Ethel Mae was married to a sheriff and God knows we wouldn't mess with him not in the Parish I grew up in and and so there was a healthy amount of what you said the police lived in the neighborhood we knew them and God knows if you are out at night and they saw you, oh know they were going to talk.. We are disconnected, And the fear is just over the top and so it's a society that we have to really understand what's happening and why we need to root out racism and we also have to train but there's a role for government in this and I don't want to go too far over my time limit cuz I know I'm watching the timekeeper

00:22:58

Wendi

So I hear both of you very passionate about what it's like to be the pursued just the color of your skin saying and and nothing else so in that in that context let's think about profiling That's a that's a useful policing strategy Should government be allowed to do that?

00:23:25

Michael

I'm a little bit conflicted about the The profile because I've been a victim of it but I also get the necessity of it I understand how it can be used constructively to put together the kind of identifiable information to recognize criminal Behavior activity and criminals themselves there are profiles that these individuals fit They just do I mean it's it's like some of the brightest Minds in the FBI and those very special divisions what was sexual victims Etc have an ability to go out

and profile the type of perpetrator so that they know how to go about catching these folks it So there's a very fine line there and this is where I think Government Can can be very helpful and in helping to draw that very fine line very clearly and assisting to make sure we don't cross that line and and in that whether it's law enforcement at the federal level or law enforcement at your local community understand very clearly where those lines are and that you do not you're not allowed to just randomly go out and start profiling people in the neighborhood or Community or begin to project your own biases through that profiling on those individuals and there are safe Safeguards in which you can check that to make sure I mean it's no different than when you go to you take you know a request for a warrant to a judge it is based on a whole lot of information that's been gathered right and you got to present to that judge and a very clear way not just how you gather this information but whether or not this information actually warrants the warrant

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Wendi

So Donna would, so Donna would you Agree useful policing tactic at times

Donna

I can understand Michael's reasoning behind his arguments that use properly profiling can help with it is a is a strategic law enforcement to however and reality the profile and sometime is overblown and without proper training and you know again Again we're in a situation where people can be stopped simply because of the way they look and it is we all know beyond policing and profile and has other what I call outdated usefulness I mean I hate the fact that I shouldn't say hate, I dislike the fact that I still have a hard time getting a cab in Washington DC Uber and Lyft has really given me other options other than walking and trying to find the bus stop but we profile and has has has been used to the point where I think it is it is not has to be perfect it has to be better because so many not just unconscious bias but implicit bias of course And of course so many unintended consequences it happened as a result of racial profiling we still have gender stereotypes that we need to eliminate in our culture and racial stereotypes that persist despite you know hundreds of years Not just academic studies but others that you know to be so called a black person doesn't necessarily mean that you know We are somehow another less than or greater than any other human being so I don't racial profiling again without the proper training I'm not

00:27:09

Michael -

So can I jump on that, so there's the government side of it I know a lot of what we're looking at and talking about it the role of government it whether it's a progressive roll or limited role however you want to look at it but I would also submit that while we're looking at government we also have to look at our society as a whole And I'll give my own personal example so I'm a 60-year lawyer in one of the largest international law firms in the world at the time I'm closing I closed on average in any given month anywhere from 30 to 120 billion dollars worth of

Securities alright as the lead Finance attorney so I do my closings every 30 days in New York a lot of the work that's done is done by phone alright then you go to New York for the closing so we had this closing something like a 60 billion dollar transaction I'm representing the fiancée of the financiers the underwriters so I go up to do the closing that we've spent the last 28 days talking to each other on the phone I've got a very English name Michael Steele and so I go up I've got my box of papers coming at like coming to the conference room set the box down and this Lawyer comes up to me and goes may I help you and I go I'm here for the closing and he's like oh ok well you can set over there thank you

I said ok and I set my box down and I sat down at the conference table 2 minutes late comes back is like may I help you I said no cuz I knew exactly what was going on I was not supposed to be in that room because there was no black person on this deal but it was a black man who is running the deal from the first of the month so that very moment and the fact that they didn't know my skin color you know set a lot but what said more is when they found out when I said They found out when I said all I Michael Steele I represent the underwriter and I had to take this young lawyer side and go now I can tell the underwriter that we just don't need to do this deal because you seem to have a problem with me closing it, and he's like oh no no no no no I just thought I just thought I said I know what you thought brother I know what you thought alright so folks this was 1997-1998 alright so the profiling had it goes on it takes a lot of forms to Donna's point and so these things converging forces around the role that government can play with official bodies and institutions law enforcement and government agencies that even in private sector agencies that take federal and state funds that you can regulate as well but then also what goes on in our own private behavior and how we profile each other is another part of that problem

00:30:24

Wendi -

So lets move onto the next topic So we've got a lot of research and put in 2016 Pew study that shows that they black white gaps in social economic indicators have not budged in many cases since the 1960s a Black lag behind whites and home ownership, wealth, median income the research is really clear that there's this Gap so the question is I'll post to you Donna first and acknowledging our time constraints thank you sir, ladies

Michael - Will be good

Wendi -

What is the the best thing the government could do or should do with anything to address economic inequality particularly between races.

00:31:07 -

Donna -

We have to to foster The culture of economic Prosperity economic growth we have to train we have to retrain our Workforce we have to you know create more what I called economic Mobility we need financial literacy there's a holster thing there's a reason why my generation is doing better than my parents generation and part of it is that we've been able to get a college

education a college degree that has been helpful The government has a role in fostering Economic Development economic growth and ensuring that we have what I call a circle of opportunity so that people who are left behind you know in our society we have left so many people behind, both black and white included people whose and some of them through no fault of their own they have not been able to climb that next step of the ladder and to create wealth we know you have to allow only have opportunity but you have to have in some cases training and in job at the ability to to grow to grow your wealth I mean I told someone recently Michael and I had a nice laugh I come from a family my mother was a maid my father Janitor even managed to put eight out of nine of us through high school getting us through high school I mean two and four-year College throughout their lives and the reason why is they worked hard I mean I saw my mother and my dad they work hard to make ends meet and to provide that that opportunity for my siblings and I and I have tried to do the same with my nieces and nephews and I just recently somebody came to my house I ordered some some Greek food cuz I'm Louisiana and I like to eat food from every region and every culture and the guy said boy you got a big house I said really think this house is big He said yeah so what you should have seen the house we all grew up and we have four bedrooms and so he said really? And he was looking at my house and I was my dad built you know the house that we were You know the house that we were we grew up and he added an ad in the more kids we had and I look at this guy and I said wait a minute let me tell you how it happened I came out of college with with a little debt I paid it off and every month I saved the hundred \$100 dollars for 10 years and I bought my first house with a down payment of \$10,000 this is my second house and clearly My first house blah blah blah after the recession black wealth plummeted this is the direct result of the the lack of homeownership that the fact that so much black wealth was tied tied into the subprime and if you don't have home ownership, some assets It's going to be harder to Create and get more wealth so government has a role to play I think and in terms of neighborhood revitalization when we allow people to come in and buy a big pieces of land and build high rise Condominiums we need to also use some of the subsidies of the government money to provide affordable housing so that people can come in and to the circle of opportunity, there are many ways government can help but government is not the only solution we also have to have public-private partnership and we also have to make sure that education is something that we we constantly teach our children education was my passport out of poverty and I think that is the best way to improve economic growth and opportunities for the future

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Michael -

I come at this Come at this particular question a little bit differently and and I agree with the core what Donna said but I want to look at it from two perspectives first starting with government government is a limited-purpose entity in my view it has a limited-purpose at the end of the day because we are the government folks all right it's not the buildings in your state capital is not the buildings in Washington DC the last time I checked our founding document starts with we the people in order to form a more perfect union right we are the government the fact that we cede our control and power over our lives to these institutions and to the individuals that we Elevate to represent us is Holy within our control so to the extent that we have some of the systemic issue that Donna referenced whether education Economic Development we have to hold

accountable those institutions to make sure that they are caring first and foremost for the least of these least of these that's out of our mutual Catholic upbringing you know we have a Theology of philosophy that centers around the poor alright and so in my Public Service as lieutenant governor that was the perspective in which I looked at the role and responsibilities I had as an elected official so when I looking at minority business Enterprise in the state of Maryland I'm looking at it from the perspective of how do I manage to make this big institution work for the benefit of the least of these those who are not having access to the kind of economic opportunities that others may have for a whole host of reasons we can get into banking, education for sure Or we can get into a lot of these other industries that the government has some control over that we the people have control over in a macro sense so that to me is a very very important understanding is recognizing government's limited wrote path and roll roll to create Pathways to access the on ramps to opportunity

00:37:11 -

Wendi - But do we think..

Michael - There is one more

Wendi - Ok

00:37:14

Michael - Second pieces getting back to us Jack Kemp who was a mentor of mine and I admired greatly always talked about a rising tide lifts all boats and that has been a core economic Philosophy for a lot of conservative economic thinking and and principles for well over 30 years but my life experience having grown up in a lower-middle-income Family household in Petworth in Washington DC my mama was a laundress my daddy was a truck driver cab driver chauffeur and he cleaned Office Buildings on the weekend alright so that but what I saw there was not oh my God we're poor oh my god when trouble what I saw there was opportunity making it work finding the pathway alright I and what I always was bothered by was when something would come in it interfere with that access to that pathway where there was a government official or some rule or regulation, or policy So for me it's always cleaning that pathway clearing it as much as possible for that individual to recognize their fullest potential if I want 5 jobs I'll have 5 jobs sometimes it may be out of necessity sometimes maybe cuz I'm a workaholic and it keeps me busy and happy alright but that's my choice in my freedom But in addition to have this idea of a rising tide lifting all boats you got to recognize you got to have a boat first if you don't have a boat when that tide of Prosperity comes in you'll drown you will not rise and that's what Donna's talking about what happened to Black wealth in this recession a lot of us drowned because we did not now this is getting a little bit inside the family we didn't take time to take care of our own we create a hell of a lot of wealth for a whole lot of other people but not for ourselves alright we we invest a lot of time and energy and making sure that this works over there but not here at home we have control ultimately of how our kids learn in our classrooms in our Communities how businesses grow and survive in our community and so

what I say to Black audiences all the time as I can blame the white man for a lot of things but at the end of the day I got to stop and go so how did I contribute to this because this black business was here but in the riots we burned it down or no one shopped in that particular store we went across town to the white store or that store but we didn't shop at the store in their own neighborhood so this is a two-way street when you're getting into this economic discussion and the role that government can play the incentives and make sure that black owned business has fair and equal access to to financing to credit to all the things that they need so that they can stay and sustain in that Community within the community has to support that as well

Wendi - So...

00:40:21

Donna - Government has a role look at day if I can find a benefit and building a huge baseball or football stadium then they can find a role and making sure they it went back to public housing Freddie Gray's neighborhood in Baltimore is losing its public housing We all know in every major city we are displacing thousands and thousands of Resident we're dealing with a crisis of affordable housing we're dealing with a situation where it is not trickling down the recent tax cuts are not trickling down the billion-dollar that Pete that bank in others are able to save now they're going to the shareholders and

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Michael - No this was a shareholders tax bill, not a middle income tax bill

00:41:08 -

Donna - I want my tax dollars to go toward helping to rebuild these Community these communities are the lifeblood of our our our country and yet they're they're suffering because of the lack of attention and resources and yes we need to make sure that people understand the tools that are available when government is and involved and that can be private public partnership involved so I was telling Michael in the backroom, you know I was an entrepreneur When I was a little girl I mean growing up poor and Michael is ripe we didn't know we were poor until we became much older we safe oh my God okay I mean, hell I didn't know there were other brands of cereal other than Corn Flakes and you know commodity meat and commodity cheese, I didn't know there was a cheese called gouda, I thought all cheese were called commodity cheese And by the way that was the best cheese for mac and cheese

Michael -

Okay that was good, it was good, thick

00:42:04

Donna -

Government and cheese with good cheese Because it came with his own butter, but I could talk about poverty all day long but you know I tried, I was an entrepreneur , so I mean we were told Mr Jimmy. I had a I got a lawn mower so I open up a landscaping business my brother's cut the

grass I got the money my mother said I cheated them so what, thats what happens when you are a girl.

00:42:30-

Michael -

But you thought up your own business, you took a risk

Donna -

I took the risk

Donna -

I kept the lawnmower functioning And I bought the gas my sisters were boring so what I did is that I came up with a bait and tackle shop and everybody went fishing down in Louisiana cuz we have four seasons shrimp crab crawfish in oysters and I will bring home all of this money from that and some fish I also had a recycle cuz everybody drink they said it was hot I think was other reasons Oh and I'm in my last business I was at age Ace cash checking service before that became popular I mean By the time I got the school college I have four jobs, I was an entrepreneur, i tell my young nieces and nephews who are playing on game boy, all these tool, why don't you create some apps? There's an app for everything And I said okay I'm not going to tell you all of the church when I was telling Michael in the back but should be an app for people who are not on the marijuana the legal marijuana business On a business we got people in jail because it had one or two joints and it has created havoc on our community and now with the opiate crisis everybody And now I'm with the opioid crisis everybody's got to treat them we got to treat them but we didn't treat people with one or two joint we put them in jail for life but years that come off ten years, but they can't get a job And now's theres an app, did you know there is an app for reefer, i am shocked i mean theres an app micheal for weed i was just out in california and the app will track what you buy and bring it to your house, and I'm like what! And people are in jail all over this country that's why we should restore people's voting rights that's why we should give him a path back to the workplace, and we should find housing, if we can make runing our neighborhoods like Stadium for baseball park in luck I love sports we can make room they get tax credits when it come in and then make us build a stadium but why can't we get them for building affordable housing, for poor people so that they have a place to stay

00:44:44

Michael

The truth is that there is no money in what you just described

00:44:49

Donna

Of course there is never money when the poor people need it There's never money money when the middle class needs it is all of a sudden money now we have a deficit now we have a problems because were giving so many million to the military and the fighting is not going to be on the ground its going to be cyber we have money we need the means and the will to solve these problems we cannot let these problems go unaddressed.

Michael

The what you need to do is talk to shareholders that because this is a shareholder economy and and that's that's the reality that we live in that the bottom line whether you're a Google or Facebook or anybody else out there if you've got shareholders you you're maximizing their investment

Donna

Well were stakeholders because we own these google and apples and tweeters we are stakeholders too and our voices should be in the arena

Michael

Pointed out in the Facebook discussion over the last few weeks when the Sandberg was asked about the idea of of you know charging for the that service Facebook service you know she her response was Well that's that's what that's A Separate Piece that's a different piece we provide this for free and and of course you know we sell ads and we sell all these other They monetize your information So that gives you a sense of where the economy is so watching and how the government respond to the Facebook on narrative is going to be important it's going to be important all of you you're invested in this economy through your retirement through your income however you earn it and it it's it's going to be an important I think new feature particular when you get into the space that you had to deal with in the last 2 or 3 years Cyberspace what we see others trying to do to change not just the political dynamic in this country but the economic dynamic as well

Donna

Well I'm being involved and being engaged in our political system is so very important because who sets the rules we do it's we the people not we the politicians are we the corporations as we the people and because less and less people are involved We now have a what I call elected officials who are beholden to the special interest and not beholden to us the taxpayers we can solve these problems Michael you and I both know it but we have to come together around that Common Table and and decide what kind of society we going to be in the 21st century

Michael -

Yes and what the priorities are going to be

00:47:27

Wendi

So thats a perfect Next section about political structure and the importance of participating. Let's let's go to something has been in the in the news lately Supreme Court are considering cases and what Wisconsin and Maryland about gerrymandering Donna let me send it to you first what is the right way to draw electoral districts

Donna

Michael what is the best way to draw electoral districts

00:48:08

Michael

Im pretty damn good at it so ya ya i'm pretty good at that and and and i'll tell you it's interesting Don't know but when I was State party chairman in Maryland I sued the state of Maryland because of how the lines were drawn because they took they were not about the full representation of the people in our state in a in a legislative district you have three legislators right so when you go to vote your vote is diluted because you're voting for three different people one state senator and 3 delegates and what I argued was one man woman one man or woman one vote so you get that one-on-one representation and I won and the court does the state supreme court said that I didn't get all my pie but I got a good 3/4 of it and a number of lines are redrawn in the state and here's why I sued because in my home county at that time 800 + 1,000 African Americans with eight state senators 5 of them were white that I don't I may not be good at math but I know just by the numbers that's not how that works out County of 800,000 people you know some 80% of some African-American your state Ledges State State Legislative representation is going to look a lot like that count as a whole that was not the case Court agree with me 2010 comes along while everybody was Just focused on Congress I was focused on state legislators because that's that's the truth that's the reality that's the bench that's the future that's a whole lot of things fill in the blank and And the gerrymandering issue it's funny I remember a lot of people moaning and groaning about it I said wait a minute no one seem to be complaining about gerrymandering when Democrats control the US House of Representatives for 40 years no one complained about Gerrymandering as soon as Republicans got control everybody start complaining oh my God gerrymandering so bad how did this happen right that's the politics of that but here's the truth of it that should be regulated that should be controlled by citizens not by elected officials you should not get to draw your own seats you should not get to draw your own line independent Commission of former judges citizens should be the one to make particularly in this very polarized political environment we're in because trust me folks when the script flip and it will flip it will flip Democrats will get back those legislative you know seats that they lost in 2010 they're already starting to do it all right and so it becomes the sorta back and forth so let's do like some of the states in the west of already started to do what is California Colorado few others that are beginning to pull that curtain back and expose it for what it is I'm not afraid of we the people I'm not afraid of citizens been getting in a room and drawing the lines for their representation I think in fact that should be a big part of your civic duty It engages you that makes you pay attention to what's going on around you and who you're electing and who's representing you and we've seen that it Bear itself out

00:52:03

Donna

I'll be quick partisan gerrymandering partisan gerrymandering is poisoning our political system it is undermining our democracy and it is creating an environment where compromise is impossible so we have to fix it we have to be big boys and girls and be able to tell the American people the truth our political system today is poisonous is Poison by the money the lack of Reform and the fact of the Majority of voters are Independent they don't like either one of our political brand and Millennials don't even like our democracy 70% we have a problem ladies and

gentlemen, we need to start fixing it, Its going to be uncomfortable in the short terms but its Going to help enable this form of democracy to last then we need to go ahead now and drink the Castor oil or whatever you call it be used to drink castor oil prevent Remember those days they would chase you with the peppermint, chase you with the peppermint, yah thats how our Parents made make sure we can didn't get a cold flu we need to go ahead and take the tough medicine now while we can and and hopefully that this will help us in the 21st century

00:53:21

Wendi

So what does that tough medicine look like Really practical terms

00:53:25

Donna

Can you imagine taking away Power from people who I mean look both political parties Oh boy here I go we have had a monopoly on power, but we are no longer the majority of voters, not Democrat, not Republican are brand might be five points higher than Republican brand but you know what we're both under water so let's just say that this is an opportunity for some of us who are I'm not a retired politician that are retired strategist but I'm still involved in the game but I don't want to play the whole game the old game and my judgement now have bad consequences for the future and therefore it's time that we look at how we can make these changes

Wendi -

Is that a third party?

Michael

Well there's a third party and there are number of groups that are beginning to form around the country that are seriously looking at that here is the caveat I put on that alright, I tell them I get asked to advise instead of give them some idea having run the county state and National party that don't start here the problem is The problem is that we started to get that want to run for president we want to run your present now sit your behind down we don't need you running for president I need you to run for city council I need you to run for mayor I need you to run for Sheriff School Board because that's where you begin to germinate the idea to vote for something other than a Democrat or Republican we say this is both former National chairman and women that this process needs to have itself opened up a more than it is there's no doubt about it because it's become lazy and it becomes sanctimonious it is become Brazen and it doesn't give a rat's you-know-what about anyone in this room because the only thing I'm either one or two things is I'm going to scare you to go vote for the who I want you to vote for or I'm going to I'm going to fleece you to go vote for who I want you to go vote for that's that's the truth of it so how do you how do you now break this Monopoly goes to exactly what Donna was saying what I was saying about redistricting but it also let me just give you a good example of where the change can come Parkland, those young kids have done something unimaginable

unimaginable and it wasn't it was nothing more than the idea that we are not taking it anymore we just not doing anymore so I had the question to you if you're sick of the gerrymandering then do something about it you are not impotent in this regard you're not helpless in this regard you can make the demand that your governor in your state legislature put in place a commission an independent body you can if you have the ability to to get a ballot initiative going for the ballot initiative on your state roles for The Ballot Box this fall or next year and if your state doesn't State doesn't change that rule to empower you to bring those types of initiatives we sit back too much and wait for other wait for somebody else to solve that problem The really not working those levers so they're not interested in solving that problem, they really are not. And I know that as someone from the inside working those levers, there really not interested.

00:56:46

Wendi

Clearly I think we want more American citizen involvement in in elections right so would you encourage would you believe that the government should encourage same-day registration

Donna-

Yes

Wendi-

A pause, Yes?

00:57:03

Michael

No I don't have a problem I don't have a problem with anything they get someone to go to a Ballot Box and vote I don't have a problem the only thing only thing I want to make sure we're all in agreement on is that we protect that franchise because it is the most precious gift that we have as Citizens in this country it is what separates us from a whole lot of government that are coming for us and it will separate us from a whole lot of government out there and in the future

Wendi-

Is that voter fraud?

00:57:38

Donna

We could do alot to protect the integrity of our elections we can start with paper ballots and get rid of these antiquated machines, we can make sure our E-poll books are up to date, all registration rules accommodate and clean and that automatic registration is the way to to go I mean when people go to get a car registration you got to supply more than just you know a face you got to supply all this other information That should automatically least voter registration and

yes I do believe that we need some form of civic education most young people don't even know the value of their vote let alone about the struggle and sacrifices it took I believe that we should lower the age of Okay I'm with the Parkland students in the imma look my money I'm just 29 years for the second time I think there's more that we can do to increase border participation we have too many American sitting behind not voting every two years every four years and we need to change that

Q&A

00:58:43

Wendi

So want to give our audience a chance to ask questions.

00:58:47

Audience Member 1

A lot of this talk him is done talking about institutions that are fundamentally racist and perpetuate systemic Injustice is along racial lines a lot of them also correlated with class disparity but a great many of them did not how do we communicate problems of anti blackness in American society to white people who have suffered from class disparities and aren't ready to recognize that in fact it is more than that it's an intersectional disparity along the lines of class gender race and so on and so forth

00:59:18

Michael

If you touch or something and I'm glad you were actually raise the question because I wanted to go to this point going to the very beginning of how you opened up the conversation you you talked about the folks who gathered in Charlottesville and a year ago and the fear that that draw drives and drove a lot of those those individuals that to me is one of the fundamental aspects of an underlying conditions of the race issue in this country is fear is the fear black folks have a white folks and is the fear white folks still have a black folks America still hasn't figured out what to do with black people and black people haven't figured out what the hell What the hell we doing here in America and so that to me is a is a quintessential part of getting at all the other issues around race whether you're talking about the systemic institutionalized racism that exists or the you know the way it plays itself out in your neighborhood because of how kids are being raised in that Community we just need to have that honest conversation I mean you all remember after we were like we elected Barack Obama, we are in a post racial America, oh no were not, there is nothing post racial about any of this and here we are eight years later having a Charlottesville having a Philadelphia having the you know that the type of response to young black men in the community so I think it starts from my perspective if you want to have a real conversation on Race please call me I will show up anywhere anytime I'm ready to have it cuz I

want to help white folks deal with their fear and I want them to help me deal with mine because that's how that's how the only way we're going to get through this

Donna

You know in 1619 there were 22 I believe it's 22 African Americans that made their way to Jamestown and it's amazing were coming up on that 400th birthday next year and I would agree and I think Michael would too that we made a lot of progress but we are still dealing with that underline issue of racist is something that I'll for fathers are forbears didn't take seriously when they created a constitution and principles that said we the people and then left out a large chunk of us and now we live in a society that every time someone gets ahead we believe that they got ahead because of their color, they didn't get ahead because of the hard work and ends in an often the fact that we have to work twice as hard 3 times 4 times and one mistake sets us back 200- 300 years When one mistake from a white Community can set them back only for a minute there's a lot of anger around race, there's a lot of resentment that we have to deal with and you know one of the things I applauded South Africa after the end their apartides is that they were willing to deal with reconciliation And I know we don't want to do a Reconciliation we don't deal with reparations don't deal with anything but we need to start having real good conversations because 400 years after those first 22 Africans made landfall here as slaves we need to start having this conversation and it Michael is right I'm tired of people looking at me thinking I'm going to jump on them or if I talk too loud I'm I'm intimidating them when I can't still be human I'm 58 when am I going to be human my dad lost his his career full grown Stars the man was perfect on the battlefield and every way but yet when he went back to home to Louisiana they saw a big tall black man, they didn't see his Metals didn't see his accomplishments and he spent the rest of his life trying to tell us that he was somebody, of course he was somebody he was our dad he was my father he was all provider but he was a man, And here it is after 50 years after Dr. King they wore these t-shirts that say I am a man, can you imagine what that must have felt like to just have to wear shirt to say I am a man I am a human being, I feel for white people and especially Poor whites and other whites but especially for poor White because they are angry at me because I might ride a better car, hell I worked 3-4 jobs with good car used to own to know a Wootie but they see me in my car I think I got that because somebody gave it to me, no I worked hard So we have to deal with these on the line issues and the rich and Powerful white people who are privileged need to start talking to their brothers and sisters to because they're not helping and thank you

01:04:22

Audience Member 2

Hi I'm Mike Allen Jr. I'm a big fan of actually both of you this question is directed to Michael I'm a republican 25 years old I have an African-American girlfriend and I don't feel like I fit in anymore I go to my local meetings I live in Greene County, I'm originally from New York I go to my local meetings in Greene County Virginia and I got booed because I have a problem with confederate statues and I have a problem with the people that invaded this town and how do we rebuild I I saw you a clip of you on MSNBC arguing because the one of the current figures in our party said that you only got the job cuz you were black but I feel like it's cowardly to jump ship and I'm sure you would love to have me how do we stay on the ship without letting it sink

Michael

So, so That is a very good and a very important question cuz I get asked a lot when are you leaving the party my friend Joe Scarborough has many other former leaders of the party I have taken that route I've been a republican for 41 years I join the party before there was a pro-life Plank and our platform I join the party before Donald Trump decided he was a republican I join the party at a time when the Republican party as a whole was Under Fire for Watergate was Under Fire for how the Vietnam War would because Nixon was president at that time and a whole lot of other social issues and ills certainly having dealt with a lot of that and I decided And I decided a long time ago I ask myself one question how do you want to engage in this fight the easy thing to do is to quit the fight and I've said this to Jeff Flake and others that look stay in and and plant the flag yeah you may lose your primary so what you're still you're making a principal argument because those principal still mean something I call myself a Lincoln Republican for the very specific reason that it goes back to what Donna was talking about those 26 Africans who came to this country were part of a narrative that I think still matters Frederick Douglass helped found the Republican Party alright so this been the political home for black folks since that time So the idea to ask me to leave my home because some idiots have decided to move in or try to break in through the windows tells me I got to Stand My Ground in fight for my home for my political home and it is worth it to me it's easy to go outside quit to go outside and throw stones back at the house and say look at all you idiots and stupid people, all you racist, all you this, the hard things is to stay inside and say I'm going to kick every last one of you out of here one by one if I have to but these values these principles that Drew me in as a 17 year old still matter to me I'm not giving up on that and I think that's still worth the fight even at this that in this day and age we have majorities it means nothing if you don't have principal and for me that's that's what this is more about than anything else so I would say to you ask yourself is it worth the fight to stay inside is it worth it to stay inside Go back and think about what Drew you into the party in the first place then maybe it could have been something as banal as all a lot of my friends we got together and we decide to become Republicans okay that's that's not a real good anchor

Audience Member 2

In my household it was Regan John Wayne and Jesus

Micheal

And I get that in my household it was Jesus king and you know...

Donna

Jesus Kennedy King Obama in my household

Micheal

In the household that I was a republican in the household for the reasons that my mama told me to go out and and learn and understand don't be a Democrat because I'm a Democrat go out and find free stuff and I did it so I found that political home the question for you is where is your

political home and it may not be this party at this time so if that's the case do you want to stay and fight for that home or do you want to just walk away

Audience Member 2

I plan to go into run some day, but i want to know people won't kick me out.

Micheal

There you go cuz I think I think when I look at the party it's not me alright it's you and how you and your your community come together around defining what this party looks like into the rest of this century is going to matter more than anything I have to say or do

Donna

As a Democrat we can't win everywhere but when we do we want those like you to sit across from us and help us find this common ground

01:10:11

Audience Member 3

So there's one narrative about politics in this country that says that the two major parties are very divided there is another narrative that says that the two major are exactly the same and we have heard a conversation about the government's role in addressing racial disparities in this country without having heard the word reparations without having heard dr. King's a plan for guaranteed national income Angela Davis was here recently talking about abolishing the prison system can the major parties propose bold solutions to systemic problems

01:10:59

Donna

I think so I think we both can come up with ideas that can now only further progress that we've made but also I think address some of the major challenges I mean after all politics and political participation is about bringing your ideas to the marketplace so that you can create a sense of of movement through the electoral process that is one big way that we can change society and fundamentally address many of these issues for years almost for the past 50 years John Conyers who is no longer in congress put forward a reparation bill It went nowhere I don't believe he garnered more than 50 or 60 signatures are co-sponsors over those years but reparations come in many forms not just as a direct payment as result of one servitude and I don't know if anybody can ever pay my family back hell we've been here for almost 200 years things to skip Gates my family we were able to trace out history and I only bad to the jamestowne society but I learn after my discovery of my DNA that I'm Irish and nobody sees my Irish in me

Michael

I am too

Donna

You Irish? Your black irish

Michael

Yup

Donna

Shamrocks baby Shamrocks Me and Johnny were sweethearts long before cuz I'm out I'll tell you later Later but there's no question that we can address these issues and we have tackled them in the past we tackle civil rights we tackled voting rights about and I think we can tackle incarceration a week mass incarceration we can tackle income inequality in disparity these issue should be part of our discussions but unfortunately we need leadership we need leadership in both political party and that's where the rubber meets the road, I tried Years ago to go up to Capitol Hill and not just meet with Democrats who I know very well but also Republicans have gone up to talk to Paul Ryan about Criminal Justice Reform Tim Scott about income inequality and what do we do to preserve historical black colleges and universities I try to find ways to bridge that what I call political divided going out and looking for the ideas regardless of where they come from

(Audio Break)

01:13:27

Audience Member 4

Hi John Steiner here and also here with you guys are in bridging divides I'm struck by about three things one is how much fun you guys have together, and a friend of ours once said A way to change the culture throw a party A better party and thanks for throwing a good party today I'm also struck by two things one is each of your saying this duopoly may not be working and there's something wrong with how the parties are functioning together now and how much you agree on so my question is in terms of stepping outside of the box are we ready for something not a third party but a new constituency a new something in which you guys are both part of the same thing and we know it and other people join it cuz it doesn't it seems to me that unless we can bring all sides together with a kind of political force we don't I have now a we can't push either party in a good direction depending on who's in charge and B we can't create the new kind of leaders you guys are both talking for

01:14:26

Michael

I'll just say real quick yeah I think I think that's exactly the space that occupy if you allow me to say that way that that where is a Synergy of agreement there's also energy to do something but more important where there's a Synergy of disagreement there should be an even greater energy to resolve that and there has been in the past look, Donna and I can tell you stories about the days of Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich and and and Ronald Reagan and Tip O'Neill in which those them while those gentlemen they had serious philosophical disagreements found Found greater energy to get some big things done Bill Clinton with the work of Republicans balance the nation's budget and set course for the country which was a prosperous course I'm not going to take that away from Bill Clinton because he had to be a part of that discussion it

happened on his watch and he needs to get credit for it lot of folks in my party when they hear Clinton they damn near pass out and then and they start railing, that's not my space. I'm not going to speak for but I think Donna brazile would recognize that you know working with Tip O'Neill and Democrat Reagan as president was able to get some big things done and move the country out of the recession of the 70s and onto a course of prosperity as well so making making those types of decisions in which, I'm don't us the word compromise, because in my town its a dirty word, I'm all about consensus let's build a consensus around the idea that we have to do something about poverty we have to strengthen the social safety net all right we've got to do something about this free market economy that doesn't leave people behind and helps them create and built themselves their own boat so that when that tied that would like to talk about comes in they benefit as well so those types of things are important consensus points that even as a Conservative Republican speaking with a liberal or Progressive Democrat we can agree that we the people matter more than our own any illogical corner and and the fights that we in our been engaged in the past

Donna

You know When President Obama went down to New Orleans to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the catastrophic hurricanes Katrina and Rita I was on Air Force One and the president asked me to go into the Press gallery on on the plane to talk to the media about the commemoration and what have been done over the last 10 years And I started talking about Presidents Bush role and what he had accomplished that President Obama also worked on so President Bush started the rebuilding of the levees at a category 2 3 Obama strengthen the infrastructure around the levy so that when the power went off, quote on quote 4 -5, And i said President Bush Provided some resources for the road home program which was about making sure that people could get back in their home or President Obama was able to rebuild a fordable housing in public housing The point I was making was I was telling a story about Two presidents not one and afterwards I received a note from President Bush who heard that I had celebrated what he had accomplished and I told the president I said I want to remind you one other thing, I used to go over to the White house, I got criticized by my party for going over to talk to George W bush and the aftermath of Katrina Harshly criticize if you thought I was a troublemaker after writing hacks oh my God that was little and comparison with the trouble I got in because I refuse to wait 3 years until we put a democrat in the white house I saw people out of their homes out of the city that they call their birth and I wanted to sit down with George Bush and I'll never forget when I went to the president the last time on January 9th 2008 I said I know mr. present I've been here for 3 years begging you and yeah I got one more thing to beg you for it he said what is it now by this time we're friend and at this point I didn't even know that George Bush the paint cuz he used to always do this canvas, I was just talking like I always do, and he was like housing, Roads, and I was like what is that, books, and he was painting the picture and I'm sitting there like and then I finally went to him and I said Mr president I have to do this one he said what is it now Donna. I said you know I was born a Charity Hospital my mother was born at charity we need another level 1 Trauma Center for poor people and I said mr. president one other thing and I know you're tired of me the VA hospital we also have to bring that back to the City of New Orleans ladies and gentlemen everytime I go home I see the level 1 trauma center and the VA hospital that's why you can't get Stuck in this little pattern this little hole this

little box because you never know when that day come that you have to go sit in the white house with someone from a different party someone from a different background and say mr. President we need help and this is what we must do together because we're Americans

01:20:01

(Audio Break)

Audience Member 5

We tend to wait on President's to do what we're talkin about you guys have been leaders at your party you represent We the People what did the two of you do together now for a new kind of leadership for a new kind of entity that we've never had before

Donna

Well you know Michael and I will always remain in touch when this young man you know face criticism because they said he got his position because he was black I said oh hell no, I never got anything free because I was black Not even free Fried Chicken at Popeye's. I this is good man is a decent honorable person he fight hard for his values and it's believed at the end of the day what I see when I see Michael Steele is a man who cares deeply about his country and I'm glad to call in my friend and anything that he needs involved and what I will always be at your side. And that's why I am here today.

Michael

Donna and I think that the answer to the question is the fact that we're here in this community at this time is how we begin to turn this thing and move it in the direction in which you know that their Champions out there who see what you see and I'm willing to talk about it openly fairly publicly and that's important you know I love I love my party I love being a republican for the reasons I stated it's nothing to do with the current leadership I have real issues with that but I know this too shall pass, just like Donna knows that in the The fights that she's been in inside her party and I can talk to you about it my perspective the disrespect that they've shown her you don't ask someone her like they're just coming every time I fix my problem you put her in charge so you don't have the problem to begin with that's what you do so we've had each other's back in that respect for many years And now forms like this affords at the opportunity to sit down with someone who represents the voice of a community who represents the ideas in the hopes of a community in each one of you and say we're down with that we want to be a part of that National conversation and what comes after that, will take advantage of that, but we want you to take advantage of it to.

01:22:20

Wendi

As we leave here, offer some quick words of Hope and inspiration particular thinking about what each of us can do when we leave here what can we do to reach more common ground

Micahel

Ok I'll go first, I want to pick up where the last questioner left off because I think that that is the Cornerstone in the key to everything that we talked about today is Civic engagement it's Civic engagement we elect people to represent us okay represent us that doesn't mean that we stop being us and that we have known for the value and that are ideas no longer matter because of ceded it to the person who has a title in front of their name please don't do that please don't do that we are we are too smart and too far along in this wonderful experiment called America to continue to take step with steps backwards on Race economy education Healthcare infrastructure environment, yah there is a lot of Knock-down drag-out fights out there folks and you all have your own own inherent bias and animosities and hopes and fears that that cobble together in your head and come out in some form or fashion through protest through support through whatever means but it's engagement and saw my lasting words is take the conversation for what it is is a conversation between two people who want to share a little bit of insight and thought from this perspective what you hear on the ground and you have the greatest ability in this state to make it what you wanted to be to be a legacy that's consistent not just with this past but it hopeful for its future but that's what the millennial ' generation for a long time have been have been espousing so So take up that mantle in that caused and remember your Civic engagement in whatever form it takes because that's how you make the biggest difference and don't give it to any politician please don't

Donna

And so that night before the Assassin bullet took him away from us Dr. King was able to tell us that he had been to the Mountaintop and what he saw was the Promised Land and I believe that night he bore witness to what the future will hold and that we could get to the promised land he said we we as a people and he wasn't just referring to black people I think he was referring to all of us, so here we are at that Mountain Top moment and we can get to that promised land we can get there whatever we call ourselves black white rich poor gay-straight Christian Muslim Jews it doesn't matter, Dr King believe we could get there so I think the first step today is to figure out how we get there how you get there how you encourage your family your friends your co-workers how you do something different tomorrow or even today that will show your willingness to get to that Promise Land you've already made it to the Mountaintop, your here let's get there together thank you thank you for welcoming us to this community and thank you for listening to us

Bruce

Ladies and gentlemen I think what we saw today was the perfect example of bringing light not heat to public discourse would you agree with that...

Audio ends at 1:27:04