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6441 – Special Session of Alabama Legislature

Guest: Governor George C. Wallace

Morphew: Introduction...you recently called a special session of the Alabama legislature and I believe it set several records in terms of the brevity of its duration, it was a one day session, wasn't it?

Wallace: That's right, Dick. It lasted just a few hours, just time enough for me to address the legislature, for them to pass the resolution that I requested them to pass, and then to have the matter in roll and engrossed, and then of course they adjourned sine die, in about 5 hours.

Morphew: What the purpose of this session?

Wallace: Under Article V of the United States Constitution, it provides that the states of this nation may initiate a call for a constitutional convention in order that this convention might submit back to the states certain amendments to the constitution. The states must get over their inferiority complex if they have one and sometimes I feel that some of our leaders in the various states have had an inferiority complex because the nation's founders provided a system by which the states could themselves change things in so far as government is concerned in our country. Under this article V of the constitution, if  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the state or  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the states initiate a call for a constitutional convention upon a subject then the Congress shall call a constitutional convention for this purpose. Then they must submit to the respective states that amendment for which the convention was called and if  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the states ratify this amendment then it becomes a part of the constitution. The amendment that we passed added a proviso to Article X of the constitution, amendment ten, which is in the Bill of Rights and which is called the so-called states right amendment and this proviso provided that all the rights reserved to the states, among them shall be the right to the sole and exclusive jurisdiction of the public school systems

in the separate states. In fact, this amendment is for the purpose of beginning a fight to take over from the federal government the right to control the school systems of the respective states. This amendment just says that the people of Wyoming, of New York, of Alabama, of Mississippi, of California, are capable of running their school systems and are more qualified to do so than the federal government.

Morphew: Isn't this an unusual way of proposing a constitutional amendment?

Wallace: This is an unusual way because the other way provided in the constitution is that the Congress can submit to the states an amendment to the constitution such as the recent abolition of the poll tax insofar as federal elections are concerned in which it was ratified by  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the states. This is the one system, but the Congress does not have to submit any amendment to the state legislatures unless they desire to do so. Under this section of the constitution, if enough states pass the resolution that I'm talking about, then they must submit, that is, they must call a constitutional convention for the purpose of submitting to the states. It may be that if we could get enough states to pass this resolution that the Congress in advance might go ahead and submit to the respective states an amendment that if ratified by  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the states would give the states the sole and exclusive jurisdiction over their public school systems.

Morphew: But there are 2 methods of amending the federal constitution

Wallace: That's correct. One is discretionary on the part of the Congress. the other one, section under which we're traveling is mandatory.

Morphew: This kind of move would require support from more than just southern states...do you have any reason to believe that you can get this kind of support?

Wallace: In every state that I have traveled in in the last year and a half and I have traveled in probably 40 of the states all the way from New Hampshire to Washington I find a growing concern among the people about their public school systems. I find a growing concern in the area of federal control and I received the greatest reception in speeches when I made statements that the people of this state can best determine what is best for their children insofar as public schools are concerned than can social engineers a thousand miles away in Washington. They recently had boycotts in New York. They're concerned in Wisconsin. They're concerned in California. So, this is not a sectional amendment, it's not a racial amendment, it's not pertaining to civil rights or anything of that sort, nor taking away anybody's equal rights. It only provides that each state may determine the policy of their own school system. And we would not recommend that the state of Nevada or state of New York have any particular type of school system only that the people in that state determine the policies themselves. Therefore, this amendment should and will get support in other parts of the country. Already many organizations throughout the United States and many legislators outside of the South have agreed to support this amendment. And we feel that by, in the next year or year and a half we're going to have most conservative organizations in this country pushing for this amendment.

Morphew: The most obvious example of federal control over the schools is the forced integration of schools in the South but how is federal control over the schools being exercised in other parts of the country today or in other matters?

Wallace: Well, of course, we had to have decisions of the federal courts that say now that a federal court can determine the curricula in a school and determine who shall teach in a school, shall determine now that a state cannot fire a schoolteacher if they belong to the communist party, for instance, and this is interference with the affairs of public education in the respective states. There have been court decisions that they can determine not only the course of study but who shall teach in the school. As you know, the decision, the Virginia case, the Prince Edward case I believe it was, has said that they can even force the legislature or county governing body to levy a tax insofar as schools are concerned. Well, when the federal government can go into Virginia and say that they can make the legislature of a state pass a tax upon the people then they can go into the state of Nevada or the state of New York. And so generally speaking, the federal government has interfered with public education in every state in the Union. There are 43 agencies of the federal government who distribute federal funds to the schools systems of the country. When I say federal funds I'm really talking about taxpayers' funds but they've been commonly called by the press federal funds but they are really funds from the taxpayers of the country, but these 43 agencies now, under the civil rights bill, are called upon to remove discrimination in the public schools. They don't define the word 'discrimination' but discrimination has been declared to be imbalance by the civil rights commission. Well, if imbalance is a discrimination then in my judgment you're going to see that under the civil rights bill they are going to enforce the transfer of students in different parts of the country under the civil rights bill. The civil rights bill says that every agency that distributes federal funds must remove discrimination. Well, if 43 agencies distribute federal funds to the public schools of this country then there are 43 agencies at this moment that are charged with removing discrimination. Now discrimination in the minds of some public official in Washington or some bureaucrat may be a lot different that what discrimination happens to be in the mind of someone in Mississippi or Alabama or California. But the bureaucrat, of course, will prevail, and in my judgment, this will be a complete interference and takeover of the public schools of the nation under the civil rights bill.

Morphew: Do you believe that the people of the nation are sufficiently aware of this growing problem?

Wallace: Well, people are beginning to awaken to these dangers and I think that was evident by the fact that when I went into other parts of the country recently and received a tremendous vote, that is, a philosophy and attitude that we espouse here received a tremendous vote, I think this was the beginning at least of an awakening of the American people to the dangers that are rampant in the trends today. And I do feel that people are beginning to realize that centralized federal governmental control over every phase and aspect of their lives will soon destroy all individual liberty and freedom.

Morphew: Do you believe this kind of amendment will be necessary regardless of the outcome of the November presidential election?

Wallace: I think that regardless of the outcome of the presidential election that we need this sort of an amendment. Even if you had an executive in Washington who is against centralization of control over the public school system you've still got the federal judiciary and we don't know what they will continue to do. In fact, they...

Morphew: And they serve for life

Wallace: They serve for life. And so this is absolutely necessary regardless of who is elected president this November. But let me also say this, that to those who say that well, these efforts might be futile, I would like to point out that I think it was in 1932 that the modern version of the so-called civil rights bill was first introduced. They were introduced in the Reconstruction era but I believe in modern days it was in 1932. Well, 32 years later in 1964 this bill passed that has changed the American concept of government. Well, it took those who oppose our system 32 years to get enacted into law that which they wanted, that which the communist party has endorsed and every liberal organization in the United States and every liberal politician. So, I don't believe it will take us 32 years to awaken the American people to the dangers of what has happened or is happening to us at the moment. I feel that in 3 or 4 years there is a chance to get a sufficient number of legislatures to pass this amendment, that we can really wrest control of our schools away from the federal government.

Morphew: We'll continue this discussion on next week's program...