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6416 – Wisconsin Presidential Platform

Guest: Gov. George C. Wallace (D-AL)

Morphew: Introduction...you're extremely busy with your duties in Alabama and the campaigning you're doing in Indiana and Maryland...in the Wisconsin primary you received nearly 300,000 votes the pundits had predicted that you would get from 5,000 to 100,000 votes, so you did three times as well as anyone expected...how do you regard the results?

Wallace: Of course I'm very pleased. In fact, I would have been pleased had I received just a hundred thousand votes as predicted by some of the politicians in that state, and I feel that this vote was indication that there are millions of people throughout this country who are very disturbed at some the trends that are now taking place in Washington. They are very disturbed about the pending so-called civil rights bill, and when they are informed as to what this bill contains and the attack that is being made upon the property ownership system in the country and the free enterprise system and individual liberty and freedom that they respond in the way that the average man throughout the country responds. And I feel that this vote is indicative of the fact that people are getting tired and frustrated and going to, in my judgment, change some faces in the political counsels and governmental counsels throughout the country unless there is some attention paid to this great grassroots movement against the government trying to solve every problem that we have by further stringent governmental regulation of our lives.

Morphew: Since you assumed the governorship, you have spoken throughout the nation and been invited to appear before audiences coast to coast...what is your feeling about the American people, are there vast regional differences among people or are they pretty much the same wherever you go?

Wallace: I find that people all the way from New Hampshire where I spoke all the way to the state of Washington are basically the same. They are American citizens who believe in the constitution of the United States. They believe in the rights of the states and of local government and they believe in individual free enterprise and the property ownership system in the country which, of course, is under attack at this moment. And I find that this issue involving the so-called civil rights bill, for instance, is not a sectional issue, it's not a regional issue, it's an issue that interests the people throughout the country and they, the people in New Hampshire and in Washington feel basically the same as the people in Alabama and of Tennessee and of Florida and the other states of the South. And of course, this was a very interesting experience and a very rewarding experience for me to find in my trip throughout the length and breadth of this country. People are the same. It just so happens that in other parts of the country we have in many instances a lot of more vociferous, liberal, minority groups who have captured many of the people in government and who try to conform to every request and dictate that they make, but my going to Wisconsin, for instance, gave a great silent mass of people an opportunity to speak and they did.

Morphew: Did you find that the attitude of the people you addressed in Wisconsin was by and large hostile and unfriendly to you or did it simply reflect a lack of understanding of your views and the conditions that prevail in the South today?

Wallace: Well, of course, the people wherever I spoke were friendly and courteous in Wisconsin. We had, of course, professional pickets. We did, in some instances, find a few unruly pickets but that did not indicate the attitude and the feeling of the people of Wisconsin. I'm sure we would find unruly pickets in any state of the Union. But I found that people, many people did understand about this matter but there were those who did not and had not been informed by their politicians and leaders as to what this bill did and I found that every place that I could speak I received a sympathetic audience and when I concluded my speaking and talking about some of the thing involved in the so-called civil rights bill the audience was very receptive. It was only regrettable, of course, that we did not get to talk to all of the people of Wisconsin. I believe had we done so, we would have been able to have gotten even more votes than we did.

Morphew: In your campaign it's a rather unusual campaign for a presidential primary...Americans have seen previous candidates promising what they will do if elected president...you are devoting most of your speaking time to a discussion of a vital pending issue, the civil rights bill...why are you doing this?

Wallace: Well, because this bill if enacted into law will destroy the last vestige of the rights of states and of local governments. And if it passes there will be no need to have city halls or county governing bodies nor state capitols because they'll be purely administrative branches and maybe honorary positions for people to occupy because all the power and authority will have been lodged in Washington in the hands of bureaucrats where people cannot even know who to write about a matter because, as you know, local government's close to the people. And that's of course such a vital domestic issue that I feel that since I have the opportunity to go and speak, being known as a governor of this

state and being invited, that I should go and talk about this matter. Of course, those who oppose us in this matter try to make it appear that we are racists in Alabama and of course I am one who believes that racism is wrong and evil itself. Racism, of course, is a philosophy espoused by people who dislike another man because of his color. We in Alabama do not despise people because of their color. In fact, segregation is not synonymous with dislike. A segregationist is one who honestly believes in his heart that it is in the best interest of best races to have segregation in the social and educational order. However, in my campaign in Wisconsin and in Indiana and in Maryland I do not recommend to the people of that state that they have segregation in their school system. I recommend only that they themselves decide the policy of their schools themselves. If they want to have segregation, they should have it. If they want to have an integrated school system, that's their business. I am only advocating that Washington itself not take over and set the rules and run the school system from thousands and odd miles away because I believe that the people of Maryland and of Indiana and of Wisconsin and of Alabama are better informed and have more intelligence about running their school system than do social engineers in some ivory tower a thousand and odd miles away. The principle is basically states rights, local government and the protection of the free enterprise system and the property ownership system in this country because all of these are under attack in the so-called civil rights bill. And if the civil rights bill passes as is now pending, actually there's no need for states and counties and cities to exist because they will, in affect, have been abolished.

Morphew: In your discussions of this bill, did you run into many people who were of the opinion prior to your appearance that this matter only affects the South?

Wallace: Well, that's correct. There are many people throughout these states that we're talking about and other states have been led to believe by the misleading propaganda in the national news media and radio and television media that why worry? This bill only affects the bad folks down in Alabama and Mississippi. But then when you unmask it and inform them that this affects every one of their homes and farms and businesses and labor unions, then they become upset. This bill of course would destroy neighborhood schools in the country. It's a bill that would tell a man who he can sell his house to, who he can rent a room to, who a man could employ, who could be on an apprenticeship list. It will destroy seniority rights of labor union members in this country if it's enacted into law. It's a bill that will destroy every neighborhood school in this country because in every big city especially they are going to transport students of one race across town to one school and pupils from another race across town to another school. I have no objection to all of this if the people of that state want it, but if they want it let them decide it themselves and do it themselves. Do not let the social engineers in Washington destroy the neighborhood school system in Indianapolis and Gary and Hammond and Baltimore and the other cities and towns in the United States. But that's exactly what this bill does. Let me say also that it affects the farmers. This bill, in effect, will tell a farmer that he must have a balanced work force as to race and religion. If a farmer has too many Methodists working for him in a place where there's some Baptists, why, they can come in and say, we've got to have some Baptists here because you're discriminating because of religion. This bill would, in effect, bring about a police state and it would take that to enforce it.

Morphew: How are you financing this expensive campaign?

Wallace: We went to Wisconsin, of course, in the beginning, in the first campaign, with \$800. Contributions that came to us through the mail voluntarily, in this state especially, paid for our campaign, although I received many contributions from people, say, in the state of Wisconsin and Maryland and Indiana. We had, for instance, 2,000 steelworkers signed a petition here in Alabama and sent \$2,000 for my campaign.

Morphew: So your contributions have come from the little people sending in a dollar or five dollars apiece

Wallace: Yes, the other day the Republic Steel folks in Gadsden, Alabama, several hundred of them sent me one, two, and five dollars apiece for this campaign. And I can assure you that we received more contributions, for instance, one county in Alabama brought in seventeen hundred dollars for our campaign and they had fifteen hundred names. Most of them were dollar apiece contributions. This is a grassroots movement, and I tell you what, it's growing. When it grows, as I know it's going to be, it's going to shock the eye teeth of all these liberals who are trying to take over and destroy every bit of the privacy and individual liberty and freedom that people have in this country.