

Good in issues, posture & explanation. Pullman doesn't

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Thurman - WRGN Call-In Show - Inverness, Florida - October 26, 1994

JS Good afternoon. This is Jack Sewell and I want to welcome you to a very special show today. My guest is Mrs. Karen Thurman who is Democrat incumbent, Democrat, District Five House of Representatives. Karen, it's certainly a pleasure to have you here.

KT Well, I'm glad to be here again, Jack.

JS Well, we figured we'd bring you back for the second time. The first time, of course that you were here was as a very special guest, but it was before we started the whole campaign about voting, and you know informing the people out there. And also we thought we'd bring you back to that maybe this time you'll get it right.

KT I thought I got it right last time.

JS You did alright. But anyway Karen, welcome and let's get right into it by starting about a couple of very important issues. Let me tell you, Karen, in case you're not aware of this that of all listeners, probably 95% are age 50 and above. And according to the new figures that I have, one out of every two people that are adults of course, are over the age 50, and 75% of the nation's wealth is controlled by people over 50, and basically 40% of all discretionary income is controlled by those over 50. So we're talking to a great of deal of power, influence and thinking people out there.

KT Absolutely.

JS And let's get into it by talking about the things that are pertinent to those over 50, this audience specifically, let's get onto health care.

KT Certainly.

JS OK. Where do you stand? I know that you voted with the President.

KT Actually, there was never a vote, Jack. There was a piece of legislation that was due, that was the Clinton health care plan. But we never had an opportunity to vote on any plan in Washington. As you know, after the plan came out, there were several problems with the plan. So towards the end of the session, we started seeing the Gephardt plan, the Mitchell plan, and quite honestly, what happened out there was that the Senate was determined to go ahead and go first to debate the plan and see how far they could get. And of course we saw the

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kind of fillibuster that happened on every amendment and any amendment in the Senate side and to find that there was no consensus as to how we should take care of it.

JS For those of you out there wondering what that clicking is, it is not your radio. We have people here taking pictures. What are you doing? Taking pictures! OK. Alright. Well, stay on that side of the room. OK. So, let's get one thing straight with everyone because there are some real misconceptions as to what the President's plan involved. When you heard a universal health plan, am I correct in just this point--that it was geared towards those, except for two points that I want you to bring up, except for those two points, it was geared only for those under 65, meaning those not on Medicare?

KT Sure, because Medicare is, in fact, a program already available to those who are 65 and older. So you were really looking at those below Medicare recipients of this kind. And the second point certainly is to those who are on Medicaid, of which sometimes they can be in that 50-65 year age, if they are medically needy constituents. If for some reason they have no health care, below poverty, and have special needs that they can't get by, and the federal government

JS So basically, the universal health plan was geared toward those under 65 or let's leave it as not on Medicare. But there were two points that were very important to that plan. And I know that this is why you were going along with the whole plan because of these two points. And the first was pharmaceutical drugs.

KT Right. Coverage for pharmaceutical assistance. There was a co-payment involved with it as well as a cap, a yearly cap of what their out-of-pocket expenses would be and then after that it was you know, you go in and do your co-payment and that was it. I have to tell you that in this district, and we kinda talked a little bit about this earlier for the demographics of this district, that you have the second largest senior population in this state and the second poorest population, and what we have found over the years in many situations are folks that come in to us, who need assistance for pharmaceuticals because they're life-sustaining drugs and as we all know the cost of those, it's just tremendously high. And so one of the things that we were trying to do was to allow people not to have to choose between food and/or taking a life-sustaining drug. And what I found out out there, one of the things, we have lots of phone calls and letters that the people bring in to us, and I'm sorry, we've got a big following. Jack, I'll apologize for that, so what can I tell you. But they were actually telling us stories because they might have a prescription, in fact, my mother-in-law is one of these. I mean, she's not doing what some are doing, but they

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can be as high as \$250.00 a month or higher. And then if they have another sickness that's comes on, pneumonia or you know some other kind of disaster.

JS No question. I have some good friends who, you know, are insulin-dependent with IV's and I know what they're spending.

KT Exactly. So you know, it wasn't even just that they were having to choose, it was also the fact that they were ending up taking less than was being prescribed for them. So for example they had to take medication two times a day, they might only take it one time a day, and so that they could make that prescription last for a longer period of time so that they wouldn't have to bear that cost.

And then the second issue. Let me go back to the pharmaceutical because there's another issue that you have to get in there a little bit. And that is the cost of pharmaceuticals as well. And you know there have been some pieces of legislation, in fact, to try to look at the cost of pharmaceuticals as it compares to other countries throughout this world. And what we were finding quite frankly is that ours were 10% sometimes 20% higher, you know, or times higher than someplace like Mexico for exactly the same drug. You know, so we were trying to do a couple of things in there. One was to look at the cost and to provide you know prescription drugs for those on Medicare.

Second big issue that we worked on was the long-term care. And I, you know, Jack, you and I have talked about this a little bit before and I actually, and every time I talk about this I find there's another area out there that you're not as familiar with. But there were like four or five areas in long-term care. And, you know, you said earlier that there was conversation out there, that that was being dropped out of the President's plan. That's not true. In fact, that's where one of the big savings was to actually pay for the cost of the health care plan. Because what happens is that if a person goes into the hospital, a general stay being four or five days, and they go home. You know, sometimes what happens is they get an opportunity to have like a visiting nurse come in. You know, they might have to give them an antibiotic, they might have to change a bandage, who might have to do, you know, some visiting nursing. That is a tremendous savings than sitting in a hospital.

JS Or in a nursing home?

KT Or in a nursing home. One of the things that was a cost saving mechanism within this was, in fact, to let them come home to that situation as a quality of life issue, to be frank with you, too. I mean it's an issue that people like being

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home. We've found significant progress with people when they're home.

JS Harvard Medical School did a survey that you're aware of. People do recover 72% quicker by being in their home surroundings than by being in a strange place like a nursing home.

KT Exactly.

JS So, you're totally right there. People do get better quicker therefore saving money.

KT And saving money. I mean it seems like a win/win situation all the way around. So one of the things was to really push for that home health care situation. Then I thought of a couple of other areas. The second part of that is the ones where we go in and do recuperation, where you can't have a visiting nurse there, I mean you're not having 24 hour service, or they might need some physical therapy or you know, all those kinds of things, but can basically get around. And again, that is a lesser cost than staying in a hospital, to be able to go to a center of that nature, after surgery, you know you're not whatever the rate is these days for a hospital room.

JS Oh, incredible. You know you're talking \$600, \$700, \$800 a day. There's no question.

KT So if you can go to recuperate someplace else and get the care that is necessary, but not have the 24 hour service and you know, those kinds of things and I guess you do have that. But it's still at a lesser cost. So that was another area that I saw that was needed and this whole reform.

When I looked at another issue and more specifically as I've seen it in Florida. We've talked about the demographics, we've talked about, you know, age groups within this area. There are folks out here who, one may have lost a spouse. Who, when their spouse was alive, they all could work together and get up, and somebody could cook the meals, or you know gel, every day kind of living together. They lose that ability when they lose a spouse. But they don't need 24 hour coverage. They don't need, you know, "a nursing home." But they need what we call a congregate living facility.

JS Right. Companionship basically.

KT Yeah. And sometimes they need somebody to cook their meals, or you know, whatever. But it still, once again, is less costly than you know the final or the fourth stage which would be into the nursing home situation, where you need 24 hour

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coverage. I mean it seems to me that there are ways that we could have expanded some of those coverages because of the lesser cost. Because what happens to people is they have only once choice. They either stay at home and can't take care of themselves or they go into a nursing home with no in-between.

JS Right. Now as we know, that whole bill is dead until next year. But, the question is, are these two areas-- pharmaceutical drugs and long-term care--are they able to be separated from the main bill?

KT Well I think so. In fact, you will have seen a couple of bills. In fact, Bob Graham worked on a long-term component as well as Dick Peterson who is in the northern half of this state. He had a separate bill from the health care bill.

JS And that would have just affected these two areas?

KT It would have affected the long-term care issues as we know them.

JS And what happened or what's happening?

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KT Well, we saw nothing with health care this year. I mean it just fillibustered and there just, you know, we left in October and we ran out of time. And it was an awful climate up there.

JS Well, if this is so good for the country, you know universal plan and for the people who are on Medicare, paying for the drugs and now we have long-term care, defined as home health care or nursing home. What is making this bog down? What is the problem? Politics.

KT Politics at its best. Election year.

JS OK. So people--alright.

KT You know that story.

JS I know the story, but I want to hear it from you. Basically, someone is not being paid off enough.

KT I don't want to say paid off.

JS Well paid off, and I don't mean necessarily money.

KT I don't think they wanted victory. I mean, why would you want victory to come home and run on.

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JS Why do we want victories to come home to run on?

KT I mean that was the scenario. Let's go home and talk about what we've defeated. What didn't get done on the national agenda.

JS Oh I see. Yes.

KT You know, on the opposition. I mean if you look even in the fillibuster and honestly this is not just about what's happening today, this is something that's gone on for a hundred years. You know, I think what you saw this year was, I mean, you saw the same. It was a fillibuster. You couldn't move a thing out of the Senate this year. I mean it's not only health care, but lots of reforms. How about campaign finance reform? I'll give you a great issue for the folks today in your listening area, how about the sales tax. I mean this is something that I worked on in the State Senate so that we couldn't take people's home This is an issue that it makes no sense to me why we even allowed this to happen, but we've tried to correct it, we passed it out of the House. taxes stipulation where you could have worked for a in another state, ok. California, California has voted Nevada has it. You know what happens? You work for this corporation, their headquarters are in California, whether you work in California, or just worked for this corporation that was headquartered there, they want California wants to come back and do an income tax, what they call the source tax on your income and take it to California.

JS That's great, that's a good deal for somebody.

KT It's great for California. I mean it pays their taxes, pays their infrastructure, pays for their streets, pays for their schools. You know, I mean, and we actually passed it out of the House. And it never saw the on the Senate side. I mean, you know, there's like don't give us anything good to talk about. I mean, you know, and I have to tell you I think that the Republicans and Democrats both were frustrated over this. But that was the agenda, just to not be able to go home and talk about what we had done. And yet I think we had in other areas a very successful two years.

JS By the way, I am remiss at saying that, of course, you are here to answer questions and anyone who does want to phone in, please do so at 726-7221 and my special guest today is Karen Thurman. 726-7221 and for Marion County, 732-7200. And anyone who wants to talk to the photographer, he's here too. What's your name? So he's here to answer questions as well.

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KT I heard this, Jack, that involves this new interest, or not new interest, but the interest with the senior program and it's just your fame that's coming across these days.

JS It's my new hair!

KT If it's your new hair, then why don't we get a picture (laughter). Well, it looks great for those who can't see you, it looks great.

JS That's good. I've always liked you, anyway. OK. I do want to get into something interesting. Let's end this by saying what. Is the Clinton plan going to be brought up again next year?

KT I don't think it will.

JS So you don't really see anything in the near horizon.

KT I wouldn't say that you're not going to see something brought up in health care. My guess is that if what we've seen most recently is that the federal government is now giving waivers to different states to do some of their own programs, and my guess is that you're going to start seeing states pick up the ball because quite honestly, you know we talk about health care because of the needs and the concerns of our constituency. There's another need and concern out there as well and that's the dollars being spent on health care whether you're a state government or whether you're the federal government. And so when you look at what's happened even with the state budget in Florida, there's without a doubt, and what they're doing is they're having major competition between things like education and health care. And it's got to give somewhere, you know, and I think that's part of it.

JS Bill?

B. Yes sir.

JS How are you?

B. Fine. How are you? You've got a good show. I listen to you every Tuesday.

JS Thank you. Bill, let me put on Karen. Is that who you're calling for or do you want the photographer?

KT Hi Bill.

B. Hi Karen Thurman. Advertisement does pay off. When I heard about that you were trying to conserve the water here in this area, central Florida, from going down south, I says I'm going

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to vote for you. And I told my wife we're both going to vote for you, and I'd like to know what are doing about it and what are going to do to help save the water so they won't rob us of it?

KT

OK, I'd be glad to. Gee, a new issue, I love it. Bill, we actually, you know, when we were on the City Council and worked with the water authority in trying to develop the well field out here in Citrus County specifically so that we have control over the water in our area. Now that was the first thing that we did, and that's been gosh, I even hate to say this, 16 years ago. And then while we were in the State Senate, we did a couple of amendments up there, specifically to look at, and which is what's getting a lot of the attention now and we're hearing about the inventory that the Water Management Districts are having to do on these You may not know this but, in fact, I'm the one that put that, I mean I was so excited getting this through with the amendment into this major water deal that we were doing. Which has given us an advantage point and which is what I intended it to do was so that we could find out just what those people to the south of us were doing and where they thought they needed their, you know, what kinds of needs they were going to have and where their sources of water were going to come from. So we did that and that's given us an interest to look at those issues. And we did things like, you know, putting permanency for Pasco County specifically because that's right now where the water is being transferred from to Hillsborough and County. So we find that they also have some representation, and we extended the board from 11 to 13 to make sure that that happened as well as somebody from County because of the Green Swamp over there and being a high recharge area for us. And then in between all of that, we've worked with several different organizations, I mean, has been in and we've, you know, we've worked on some of their projects, to Bradshaw where we brought the Corps of Engineers and those folks in here to look at some of the things that they didn't even know about and we're raising the interest level on that. And also putting the concern group together to try give some knowledge to the Water Management District as well. But in Congress, what we did is during the spring/summer, I don't know if you remember the there were all these articles that were being written, particularly in the Tampa Tribune and the St. Pete Times about the wells drying up, you know low water, I think we were getting some salt water intrusion, some things of that nature which are very, very serious issues as it deals with drinking water supply. So, it seems to me while yeah you know all of us people that are in politics would like to go out and be able to cut ribbons and say wonderful things that we've done in our district, that's not the issue. You know, we have water, as long as we don't have people coming and taking it

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from us. So what we did is we brought in about five different projects specifically, one of which is at Hooker's Point in Hillsborough County which will make them take their waste water and change it into drinking water. We did some things with and the Peace River where in fact they're going to capture more rain and storm water. So what we're trying to do is to find the renewal resources in those areas so they're not having to come to our area to pipe the water out.

B. Here, here! Keep up the good work!

KT Thanks and I appreciate your votes.

B. Thank you.

JS OK. John?

J. Yes.

JS Hey, thanks for holding on.

J. No problem. First off, I think that Representative Thurman has rolled up her sleeves and made a lot of tough decisions that were previously swept under the carpet to this past 12 years, and I appreciate that.

KT Thank you.

J. Secondly, I think that the true insider may well be your opponent who doesn't even live in the district. And think he may be the insider chosen by the good ole boys up in Washington. Would you like to address that please?

KT Gosh, I think I like these phone calls today. I think what he might be referring to is called "The Contract with America." We call it "The Contract on America" to be honest.

JS Is that about Jesse Brown?

KT Yeah. And all of it. I got to tell you that it wasn't just the Secretary of Veteran's Affairs that sees the gloom and doom in this. It's across the board. Even people like Coalition which is the deficit the bipartisan group adds a trillion dollars to the deficit. And yet they're saying it's going to cut the deficit. There have been several, the national taxpayers union, which a lot of people in this district follow, say that it's a deficit, it doesn't give you a deficit cutting. Just so you'll know, we actually got the numbers because I know veterans that there's 104,000 veterans in this district. One of the things that they talk about in order to make up this \$800 billion dollar

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short fall in the contract that they're talking about someone is going to have to pay. And they always talk about they're not going to have to pay, but quite honestly if you're going to meet the goals that they set out, somewhere along you've got to cut and what they did and they're now 20% across the board cut to all the veterans. They gave VA medical work force would have to be reduced by 44,000 doctors. 250,000 fewer patients would be treated at VA hospitals. My guess is that you get phone calls from these very people concerned about what's happening in our VA system anyway.

JS We do, sure.

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KT And, you know, they're concerned about not being able to get medical attention. This would not give us the ability to work on the Persian Gulf veterans with PTSD. They actually even got more graphic in saying that a veteran drawing \$431/month for an amputation below the knee would get only \$345/month under this plan. And that's over I guess a loss of over \$1,000 a year for this person. That's big. And then for those that are quadriplegic who receive about \$2,700/month, and remembering them as a quadriplegic who gave his life up, would be cut by \$554. And getting about \$6,648 less per year if this contract will go in. And this is directly from the Secretary of Veteran's Affairs and he actually did this in a press conference right after the contract. We heard from Social Security, we've heard from Medicaid, we've heard from Medicare to reach that. And it's not just reaching that \$800 billion dollars, it's also what's happened in trying to get additional tax break to the rich. And, you know, and undoing what has been done.

JS Right. OK, with that folks, we do have to take a break. I know we have Gill and Mike on the line, and I would ask you Gill and Mike, please, just hold on, we'll be right back after these messages.

JS Gill?

G. Yes.

JS Thank you very, very much for holding on.

G. OK.

JS You're on the air, go ahead.

G. Karen,

KT Yes.

G. I think the last time you spoke to us people in Ocala was at THURMAN - WRGN TALK SHOW - INVERNESS, FLORIDA (10/26/94) (TAPE)-10

the homeowner's meeting at the Friendship Fire Department.

KT Oh, could have been.

G. Yes. Now, I missed part of your comments on the source tax. I moved here from California in 1989 and I still pay taxes in California on my retirement.

KT Yeap. And that's the source tax, isn't it?

G. Yes madam.

KT Well, we tried this year. You know, when I was in the state legislature the issue came to me and we made sure that there was the homestead was, you know, exempted out of any source tax from another state. Now what's happened, actually it passed out of the House in the Congress and the Senate never took it up. So we're back to meet another fight next year over it. But it's really an important issue and I'll tell you, I think that if we don't get it done quickly, that we're going to be in a situation that we're going to have interestingly in Washington because you have 100 senators, you know, if you hit that half-way mark of the states that are doing it, it's make it very difficult to take something away. So in this situation, we need to do it very quickly before the other half catch on, or before we hit that half-way mark.

JS OK, Gill?

G. California was taking taking the tax out of us from, you know, when I was overseas.

KT Exactly.

G.

KT Exactly. But I want you to know that I'm up there fighting for you.

G. OK. The other one is are they going to on the impact fee, are they going to go back in and look at the 1990 when the people moved in here from out of state into Florida?

KT Gill, I'm not sure because that was probably, is that a county commission issue right now or a state issue?

G. Yes. They're going to give the \$295 back.

KT Oh, you're talking about the, on the cost.

G. Yes.

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KT Yeah. I'm not sure what the date is that the Supreme Court set, but yes, they're going to have to go back retroactively to give you back those funds.

G. Well, they claim that they're only going to go back to 1991 and this is what the policy was by the lawyers and what not. They did not go back to 1990.

KT When it was passed?

G. Yes, madam.

KT I've not read that decision, but, and it may be that that's what they came up with because of the large impact. Gil, I don't know that I can answer that question for you. I wish I could.

JS That's something that you could look into, though?

KT Oh, certainly.

JS OK Gill, thanks for calling.

JS Hi Mike.

M. Hi.

JS Hey, you're on this phone so long, I think it's half your show.

M. Right. Hope so.

JS Well, thanks for holding on, really.

M. I'd like to ask Mr. Garlits a question.

KT He's not here.

M. Oh, he's not there. I'm sorry. I wanted ... Well maybe Karen Thurman could comment about what, I know Mr. Garlits had said something on CNN recently about cost-cutting social security. And I wanted to maybe ask him about that, but since he's not there, maybe Congresswoman Thurman could comment on that.

KT I'll tell you, Mike, I'm not sure how you'd do that. I mean because the social security comes out of our wages and then the one thing that we have done on social security this year is made it an independent agency. And I think that that was a really good move and I think the second big move that we need to do is to take it off budget so that we can't continue to do what we've done to those funds and end the borrowing. And I mean that's an important issue. But how you privatize,

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I mean there has been issues that you have no social security anymore, that you take it in and you know, maybe you do it through IRA's or some other, but I don't know how you privatize.

M. That was what I was wondering what Mr. Garlits would say about that because I just think somethings government do well, and somethings they don't. But when it comes to social security, I think that a lot of seniors would be jeopardized for all the money that they've put in all their lives, to the government ... So I wanted to hear how he would do that.

KT And I think you look I mean, all you have to do is look around this country to where we have seen companies who have gone in and you know established retirement funds and pension funds and you know that's going to be a big issue in this next congress is the pension fund issue because of the loss of funds for people within companies. I mean it is a fact. So I think you're probably right. I agree. The government doesn't do everything right. In fact, there's probably a lot of people who would say we don't do much right. But the point of it is I don't think this is one of those issues that we ought to be fooling around and privatizing.

M. I'm glad to hear you say that.

JS Hey, thanks for calling.

JS OK. Hi, Jean.

J. Yes.

JS How are you?

J. Fine thank you.

JS Good, good, good.

J. This is for Karen.

JS OK.

J. Karen, this is Jean.

JT Hi Jean.

J. I would like to know if there is still anyone hope for getting sanitation in ? Our river used to be the most beautiful river in the world. And now we have salt water that's back a long way up. And I wonder if there's any hope. I was told several years ago there wasn't. But I still there is.

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KT Jean, I think there's a couple of things that need to happen on the west side and I think the development of the Citrus County well system being in the central part, where we've not had the salt water treatment. And this is not a popular statement for me to make, but I think it's something that we're all going to have to realize at some point. That we're going to have to go to the east side of 19 and further inland than trying to continue to do leap frogging in those areas over there. I mean because we are having salt water intrusion. We're not going to be able to have that water. And once it's hit, it's going to start to come across even on the east side. So we need to make sure that that's not happening. And I think that we're going to have to look at some of these wells projects that are out there and providing water over there as versus just through wells. Again, not a very popular issue, but I think it's something if you're looking at water future issues, that's an issue that we're going to have to do. The second thing, though, that I think that has to happen and I think that there are some things, you know, we redid and will look at the revolving sewage that actually is kind of a partnership between the federal and state. And what I'd like to see is in some of those areas because the other area that we have that's a problem is the sewage plant and the package plants over there that need to get off that river so that we don't have a degradation that we're having today. And I think there's some things that we can do in that. There's some storm water issue that we can also look at. Jean, I hope that answered your question.

J. Well, it helped. But will it get some action here. Really, the river is so polluted anymore. It's bad. We used to drink the blue water.

KT Absolutely.

J. And now it's impossible. That used to be the best water that flowed through here. It was so cold, so fresh. It's better than the water we have now.

KT Yeah. And the degradation and you know that's an issue with storm water. You know, one of the projects that we talked about earlier was specifically to take storm water runoff water and send it to some of the large agricultural land. And it really served two purposes. One, it gets rid of storm water so that it's not going into our rivers and lakes, and two, it gives an irrigation system for agriculture so they're not having to go into aqua to dig more wells to irrigate. So, it saves money, saves water and gives us a filtering system.

JS Jean, I hope that helps.

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J. Thank you very much, Karen, and don't worry, you'll have my vote.

KT Thanks.

JS Hi David. Hey, I'm sorry we lost you before.

D. I have a question for Congresswoman Thurman. I've read that one of Mr. Garlits' reasons for running is income taxes went up. So can you please tell me whose taxes went up and whose didn't. And what this did for the budget and the deficit.

KT OK. The numbers that we've been given and also looking at the census information before I ever took the budget vote which I think we talked about last time I was here, Jack, was that out of 600,000 people in this district, which was what all congressional districts are is about 600,000, that of all of that, only about 1,800 actually making that \$200,000 and above would be affected by this. But what it did do was look at some issues for what I call the working class poor. And that is on the earned income tax credit. But here we have 1,800 that are affected at all by the taxes, and it varies depending on what, you know, income bracket they are in. But it's those that are making over I think it was \$180,000. We actually did something for those working families as well which is about 51,000 families in this district to get help. And they have to be working. It is not a, you know, welfare recipient or any things that kind of draws people's attention. People get up, they go to work, you know, and they're working below poverty. Or they find how many children they have, like of mostly on a four family, four members of a family. We did things for small businesses. You know, the fact that we, I mean if you needed to buy a microphone, quite honestly, Jack, for the first time, I don't know what they cost, but it used to be that you could get a \$10,000 credit, it now went to \$17,500 because one of the things that we saw was the infusion of capital expenses into a business is what allows that business to grow. Is it that extra computer, is that, you know, whatever a tool it is that's necessary for them to work. We allowed them to take a 25% reduction on their health care so that a business could actually, you know, an individual owner could take 25% off their income tax for paying health care. Another way to get people into the health care system again to help drive that cost of health care down.

D.

KT Yes. I mean what's even more amazing on all of this is that we've actually dropped the deficit by a third. And they say that it is the third time in a row and since Truman--the best we've done since Truman. So, yeah, we really have driven that deficit down. I got to tell you though, I mean the other half

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10 DC
"up there"
of this is when I went up there just what 21 months ago, you've got a \$4 trillion dollar debt. I left a state legislature that had a balanced budget. This is not an easy choice that we're having to make up there, but when I got elected, people said to me, "Karen, please don't leave the debt for our grandchildren and children." Yes, there are still some things going up, but a lot of it's due to the trillion dollars or \$4 trillion dollars that was there originally. And we're just continuing to try to cut back on our discretionary spending to try to solve this problem.

JS OK. Does that help?

D. Certainly.

JS Great. Thanks for calling.

JS Hi Joe.

J. Hey, how are you doing?

JS Hey, thanks for holding on.

J. You're very welcome.

KT Hey Joe.

J. Hi Karen.

KT How are you?

J. Fantastic. I'm 49 and 50 weeks. I've got two more to go--I hit the 50 number!

KT Alright!

J. I'm a Vietnam veteran and I just want to thank you very much for what you do for Vietnam veterans and all veterans.

KT Well thank you.

J. I'm a Republican, but you've got my vote.

KT Well thanks. I appreciate that.

J. That's all I've got to say.

JS Thanks for calling, Joe.

J. Thank you very, very much for what you do.

JS And now we've got the famous Hey Steve.

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KT Is this Steve?

S. This is Steve.

KT Is this the one you were telling me about, Jack, the one that hasn't called you for three weeks?

JS No, he has called, well, we haven't spoken for three weeks.

KT Oh, OK.

S. Karen, you've got two more Republicans here who will vote for you.

KT Oh, well great! Well, I appreciate that. And I got to tell you Jack was really disappointed in not hearing from you for a couple weeks.

S. I let him breath once in a while.

JS Hey Steve, I do have a question for you. When you call me, you put me through the mill. I mean I have to leave here taking aspirins. How come you're being so nice?

S. Well I have a good side once in a while. First of all, Karen is a very lovely lady.

KT Well, thank you Steve.

S. When we met just recently at the Civic Center here in County and I was the one that ran you over the barrel on the gun control.

KT Oh, OK.

JS Oh, so you did. Well, thank you Steve. That's great.

S. Aside from that, it seems the Republicans what to bring us back to voodoo economics.

KT There is something to be said about that. I don't want anymore debts to worry about.

S. That's right. I've got a trivia question to answer, it's trivial, but I feel it's important to a lot of people on the road.

JS OK, go ahead.

S. On route 75 going south, the rest areas are very slim. I mean, you've got maybe one more after Bushnell and the one after Bushnell going south, you've got almost 100 miles before

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you get to Venice, and there's still nothing. Now I would like to know, Karen, if you've got any clout in Tallahassee to sort of get maybe one or two more put on the highway.

KT I don't know that I have any more clout in Tallahassee, but the interstate is a part of the federal highway system as well. So there certainly is. I think actually, Steve, part of that was to make that I don't want to say a limited access cause it is unlimited access, because there's not much in between Tampa and going south. One thing that generally happens is that you get a lot of gas stations and there's very environmental sensitive lands around there so they were being very careful. But that doesn't have any real interest as far as a rest station.

JS You want to reduce the deficit?

KT Yeah.

JS Portable pay toilets! Right Steve?

S. I was on this trip going south, you know, and all you see are senior citizens, not that I'm a senior citizens. But

KT Me too, Steve.

S. I see some of them in wheelchairs and canes, you know, and it's pretty difficult for some of these people, you know, especially if they got, you know, a

KT Steve, I know exactly. Steve, you know, that is a very good point too, because they do have to stop more often.

S. It's true.

KT And there are some considerations to be made for that and, you know, it's a very good point.

JS I've got to cut you off, Steve.

S. OK.

KT Thanks Steve.

S. Good luck.

KT Thanks.

JS Hi Joe.

J. Hi. How are you doing?

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JS OK. You, too?

J. Yeah. I'm doing pretty good, I'm sitting here painting a picture of something here and make something to do, but I listen to you at the same time.

JS Well good.

J. For those of you talk about medicine, how some people have to make a choice between their medicine or eating, or something like that and sometimes they're paying my bills, you know.

KT That's true, isn't it?

J. A person is on SSD. That's what I'm on now and it's really just about half of what I used to make working. I don't know how they figure out that you're not going to use as much gas, maybe or something, but I been attending doctors so much that I use a lot gas, too. So I'm paying a lot of state tax that way.

KT Yeah. Are you having to make some choices, Joe.

J. Yes I have been.

KT What is your pharmaceutical bill in a monthly total?

J. \$115 just for me.

KT Just for you.

J. My wife, see manages to do a little babysitting to make enough money for hers. She's been trying to get on disability, also. Well they say she can't because I get too much. Well too much is too little. Because everybody knows that, that has anything to do with social security. And I don't have any other income at the present, but I hope to have in the future here.

JS Joe, did you apply for Medicare?

J. Yes I have Medicare and I have their supplemental. Really it's not any good to me, unless I need it to go into the hospital. I mean you don't get anything out of it otherwise much.

JS Right. But you are on Medicare right now?

J. My family doctor that I go to he isn't a subscriber, so all he does is he just takes the price off the bill, so it isn't quite as high as, well he charges \$40 and he charges me \$33. Which is a help, but at the present time I didn't want a

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change because he's been satisfied with me, you know.

KT That's an issue.

J. I'm a diabetic and also I have high blood pressure and I also have another problem of being a big guy. So I can't get any insurance anywhere much, without paying right through the nose for it.

KT Yeah. That was a part of some of that. It's tough out there and I think people don't realize just how hard, when you've got medical problems.

J. I had miscalculated on my medicine the last part of the month, so I called to see if

KT Well that's good.

J. And actually, they're better than the ARR supplemental way to buy medicine.

KT There's another way to do that, too, that helps cut cost. My understanding is either you do it (I'll probably get in trouble for this) through mail order.

JS That's one way, you're right, but there is another way, too. Joe, keep this mind: if you go to your doctor and we talked about this Karen, in fact, I think it was your idea who brought it up last time, go to your doctor and say you're having trouble meeting the bills for your drugs. He can write to the drug company for you and very often, a good majority of the cases, you can get your drugs through the doctor at greatly reduced or free. Now I have a lot of listeners who have done that since Karen was here last, and it's a very positive thing that's happening.

J. There was a time when I was hurt on the job that I couldn't work and I didn't have any income, period. Nothing coming in, except for a little bit, my wife was making \$100 a week and sometimes less. I was able to get them to do that thing, they gave me medicine. And I got to where he asked me if I was able to pay for it, and I back paying for it. What I take is a real expensive medicine for high blood pressure, \$62.22 for a month's supply.

JS Joe, I have to cut you off. But I would tell you to go to your doctor and he can help you. OK, we'll see you.

JS Hi Lynn.


L. Hi. I'd like to ask Karen some questions which she probably doesn't like.

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JS OK, but I have tell you Lynn, please we've only got about two minutes left, OK.


L. OK. I want to know why the Democrats or the Democrats until Clinton came along, why did he back his on everything? He had the gift of gab, just like him, promising people we've done this, and we've done that. And why does he always blame Reagan for the debts, we had all the Democrats years before. I mean, what kind of deal is this? You must like him, you OK everything he wants.

JS OK. Let her answer, OK?

 KT Lynn, that is not true. In fact, if you look at my voting record specifically with the President, since that's what you're referring to, it's only been about 74% of the time. Let me suggest to you that compare apples to apples. And the question that I would ask you is to ask the Republican members of Congress from Florida how often that they have supported their leadership in these issues and my guess is that it's higher than 74% of time. So, I mean I have not, I have looked at issues in this district as I saw them and I thought the people in this area wanted and were concerned about. So I don't know where your figures are from other than what might, you know, some people just say during campaign time, but it's at 74%. I think that's, if I remember correctly in my old teaching days, that's a low C.

L. Well I don't know that, as far as, I mean you're only talking about Florida. I speak to the people general in this country. I mean they've been pulled right along constantly by you politicians which are but you basically do not keep a promise to anything you say. For the simple reason, here you are, you praise a President that lies went to Vietnam and here's a man that turned his back on his country. And you have the audacity and the gull to praise him. How can you? I thought our country here he is. Are you going to tell me that \$25,000 that he has OK'd for the Russian officers so that they can buy a home. Would he do it for my boys or the boy next door or anyone else?

JS OK, will you let her answer, please.

 KT I don't know that I have praised him. I think we've talked in generalities on pieces of legislation here. But let me suggest to you, you're not the only one that has had a strong military background. I mean, I got to tell you that my Dad was 24 years in military, he was in the Air Force. He was a tailgunner in the B52 and he had the luxury of living until he was 43 years old, buried in Arlington now. And this is not a situation that I don't understand and appreciate. I don't

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OK
know why you've been given the impression that I've followed or praised. I mean I will tell you that when I see people do a good job, I tell them they've done a good job. If I think they've done a bad job, then I tell them that they've done a bad job. And I certainly have tried to vote the convictions that I have lived by, and it's not being a politician. I don't think that has anything to do with it. I think it has to try to have an understanding of the constituency that you represent.

He likes her!
JS And I think just what you explained to Lynn and everyone else about your Dad and your background, being brought up in the military, it brings to the forefront one very particular issue. That as you get closer to a bigger election, the things said about you become, and not about you, by the other person in general, become less truthful, more for scare tactics and I think people have to realize that. A lot of things they may be hearing about you, about anybody, are not necessarily totally the truth. In some cases, outright lies. And I agree with Lynn. These are the politicians that we're trying to get rid of. And it's very, very important. I'm glad you brought that up about your Dad, because that does refute a couple of things that I have heard.

typical
KT Jack, I've got to tell you, and that's who I am, and that's what I was raised on. I mean, I can't even imagine anybody thinking that there was any problem.

JS I want to thank you very much, Karen, for being here.

KT Thank you for having me.

JS Karen Thurman, the incumbent running for Democrat District 5, House of Representatives.

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