



TRANSCRIPT

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K. Wills Transcripts

**(HEAD-
LINES)**

MR. ROLAND MARTIN: At the top of our agenda this week: the President’s tax compromise bill passes easily in the Senate, and with much drama in the House – but it passed, and he signed it. Plus, the lame-duck Congress moves forward. That’s right – *forward* – on Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell and much more. And will there be civil war in both the Democratic and Republican parties? Our “Washington Watch” newsmaker, Commerce Secretary Gary Locke, on how Pres. Barack Obama’s tax plan will get businesses to hire more folks and help keep more money in your pocket. And in our “Washington Watch” roundtable: Ana Marie Cox, Washington correspondent for “GQ” magazine; Robert Traynham, host of “Roll Call TV” on the Comcast Network; George Curry, syndicated columnist; and Cornell Belcher, Democratic pollster and political strategist. Plus, getting arrested for carrying guns, bankruptcy, inappropriate texting. Gone are the glorious days when we looked up to our pro athletes. I’ll talk about that with Lamell McMorris, a key figure in the business of sports. All that and more today on “Washington Watch.”

**(SEG-
MENT1)**

MR. MARTIN: These days, there isn’t much Pres. Barack Obama, his Democratic base and the Republicans agree upon, but one, common ground among them is the success of small businesses. And joining me today is the man responsible

for helping businesses get back on track to produce more goods and hire more out-of-work folks, Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke.

Well, sir, welcome to the show.

SEC'Y. GARY LOCKE: Well, it's a real honor to be with you.

MR. MARTIN: Well, glad you're here, and I have been saying for quite some time that I felt that the White House should have you out there more so, because, again, your job is specific in terms of dealing with businesses. Let's deal with this payroll tax. How does that truly affect the average small business, and how will that play a role in getting more people hired and more people in this economy?

SEC'Y. LOCKE: Well, first of all, the – they payroll tax reduction applies to the payments that indi- -- individual workers would have to pay toward Social Security, and what this really means is that they're going to pay less, which means more take-home pay for *them*. It doesn't cost the employer anything; it doesn't benefit the employer. It really benefits the individual worker, and so that's a substantial more – substantially more money in their pockets, which they will then use to – to buy groceries, to buy clothes for their children remodel their homes and, ultimately, maybe buy cars. That will really stimulate the economy, when you're putting that much more money in the pockets of working families.

What's really going to also create jobs is the fact that companies will be able to fully deduct 100 percent of whatever they spend in the next year on equipment, remodeling – retooling their assembly lines – completely writing that off, deducting that

100 percent. That's really an encouragement for businesses to accelerate what they were maybe going to spend on r- -- modernization of their plants and facilities -- new equipment -- maybe three years from now, doing it now, which then means they're going to order more things, which produces a -- a lot more work for other people around the economy. Economists all across the country -- conservative[s], Democrats -- estimate that these two measures, more money in the pockets of Americans and allowing businesses to deduct 100 percent [of] their equipment purchases next year, could result in millions of new jobs.

MR. MARTIN: Always interesting when you listen to folks on both sides of the aisle who use small business owners for whatever particular talking point that -- that -- that they have. And the bottom line is we know that three out of four jobs in this country are produced by small businesses. On this whole notion of credit -- opening the credit lines -- the whole point of TARP, the whole point of getting the banks straight was for them to begin to reach out to those small businesses. Are we actually *seeing* that? Are we seeing credit open? Because I -- I hear from small businesses who say, "I *still* am having problems."

SEC'Y. LOCKE: Well, that's why the President was so insistent on the passage of Small Business Jobs Act just a few months ago, passed almost entirely with Democratic votes, on measures that, really, Republicans have supported in the past, but for some reason just leading up to the elections, they did not want to get passed. But it's a \$30 billion incentive to the *community* banks to now offer loans to small

businesses for lines of credit, for loans and things like that. And the small businesses that we've talked to are e[c]static about this, and the community banks will be rewarded for providing capital and loans to small and medium size companies. Like you said, they're really responsible for so much of the growth and the jobs in America.

MR. MARTIN: When I hear Republicans say that we have to keep the tax cuts in place for folks making over \$250,000, they cite small businesses, saying that, "Look. This is who that actually affects." But then when I talk to some small business owners, they say, "*Wait* a minute. That's really not going to have, really, any impact when it comes to me actually hiring people."

So, where do you stand on that and – and, really, breaking down their argument that that is really going to stimulate small business owners to hire?

SEC'Y. LOCKE: Well, the – the – the Republicans have been saying this, but, really, the – the tax provisions that they want – lowering taxes, keeping the low tax rates – or, the Bush tax cuts for the wealthiest 2 percent – really does not benefit small businesses. Yes, small businesses may have gross income of more than \$250,000. That's not what the partners and the owners report by way of their personal income tax. And so, you know, the Donald Trumps of the world and ev- -- even the – the – what they – the Republicans call the small business owners, which are the individual partners in a law firm, making more than \$250,000, they don't really need this tax break. And that's why the President, while he disagreed with extending the Bush tax cuts for the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans, he really wanted to make sure that the tax bill of

everyday, working famil[ies] and Americans did not go up –

MR. MARTIN: So – so –

SEC'Y. LOCKE: -- which is he accepted –

MR. MARTIN: -- so, if I have –

SEC'Y. LOCKE: -- this as part of the compromise.

MR. MARTIN: -- so – so, I have a small business, and my company – let's say we generated – or, we grossed \$500,000 in revenue. Obviously, we have expenses. We have salaries. We have things along those lines. So, let's say at the end of the year, we probably got \$10,000 left with cash. I paid myself in the course of a year \$40,000. So, am I – so, really, am – am I being taxed for the 500,000, or, really, what I'm paying myself? Because when people out[?] there[?] listen to the argument, they assume, oh, if you['ve] got a small business, and you generate a million dollars in revenue, that you're sim- -- sim- -- that you're sitting here, filing your taxes as if you've got a m- -- you made a million dollars.

SEC'Y. LOCKE: No. You file your taxes on your actual profit and what you received by way of income to you as one of the partners, or one of the co-owners of the company. And so if your personal income – if your income that you're reporting on – on the IRS forms – your tax forms – is less than \$250,000, the President has always said that you would be able to keep your tax break. And –

MR. MARTIN: So – so –

SEC'Y. LOCKE: -- in fact –

MR. MARTIN: -- so, if I paid myself 50,000, but my company grossed 500,000, that 250,000+ is not impacting –

SEC'Y. LOCKE: -- no.

MR. MARTIN: -- me.

SEC'Y. LOCKE: No.

MR. MARTIN: It's –

SEC'Y. LOCKE: No.

MR. MARTIN: -- really what I'm paying *myself*.

SEC'Y. LOCKE: That's right. It's what you're paying and what you're reporting by way of income to the IRS. And, of course, you have all these expenses, and you may have a – employees that you pay and things like that. And, of course, what the President was able to accomplish in the tax bill was incredibly generous tax measures that will help your company grow and expand and ultimately hire more people. And that's allowing your company to *fully* deduct 100 percent of what your company will invest in by way of new equipment, upgrades to computers, upgrading your assembly line, your new equipment and things like that – *100 percent deduction*. You completely subtract that from your income before you calculate your income taxes.

MR. MARTIN: S- -- separate from the tax compromise – the battle going back and forth – the President has talked about the need for tax reform. The Deficit Commission has also talked about that. You – we hear companies talk about that our corporate tax rates are too high, that that's one of the reasons why companies are going

overseas with their business. S- -- so, talk for a moment about how we tax corporations and what is sound fiscal policy from your standpoint in terms of reforming that for us to be able to grow businesses and for them to stay in America and hire American workers.

SEC'Y. LOCKE: Well, we have a very – very complicated, very complex tax system with a lot of loopholes, a lot of deductions and things like that. And what the President wants to do is engage in a conversation with the – corporate America and with the House and the Senate Democratic and Republican leadership on tax reform that will ultimately eliminate some of these loopholes and I- -- and end up lowering the tax rate for both corporations and individuals, because the way it is now, the tax rates for companies – international companies – is much higher than their international co- -- competitors and almost provides them an incentive to keep all of their earnings offsh- -- offshore, in foreign lands, instead of bringing it back to America, where they can use it to hire more workers, to engage in more research and development, or to simply upgrade their facilities. So, we need to make sure that we have a – a more fair tax system – lower tax system – because the – the taxes of – of countries around the world are much lower.

But, of course, they don't have as complex a tax system as we have. So, we need to simplify it. We need to eliminate some of the tax loopholes, so that we can then lower the tax rates for everyone else.

But he wants to just have a discussion, and there're a lot of ideas that have been advanced. He's not taken a- -- a position on –

MR. MARTIN: Any[?] –

SEC'Y. LOCKE: -- any of these ideas, but he does believe that we need to look at our tax code.

MR. MARTIN: -- what do you make of all of this debate that this president, this administration has a horrible relationship with the business community? The Commerce secretary, typically, is the person who's dealing with – directly with the business community. When we think about Evans under Pres. George W. Bush, when you think about Ron Brown under Pres. Clinton, when you think about Malcolm Baldrige – I mean, again – so, the Commerce secretary – that's really o- -- one of your biggest jobs. What do you make of this relationship? Is it contentious, as we saw with the Chamber of Commerce taking out all these ads slamming the administration in the midterm elections?

SEC'Y. LOCKE: Well, I think that, obviously, there're some areas in which the business community and the administration disagree; but, really, when you look at so many of the issues that we're working on, there is a – a lot of alignment and agreement with the business community. The business community was very supportive, even the Chamber was supportive, of bailing out the banks and of a stimulus bill. The Roundtable was very much supportive of things like healthcare –

MR. MARTIN: CEO –

SEC'Y. LOCKE: -- reform.

MR. MARTIN: -- Roundtable.

SEC'Y. LOCKE: That's right.

MR. MARTIN: Okay.

SEC'Y. LOCKE: And we're, of course, working with the business community on helping them sell more of their products and services all around the world. For instance, the – the trade agreement with Korea, which will really create hundreds of thousands, millions of jobs in America and help American companies sell a lot more of their goods and services to Korea.

MR. MARTIN: Now, the companies like that – the AFL-CIO hates it, so how –

SEC'Y. LOCKE: But autoworkers agree with it, and – and a lot of people in the – in the service industry very much support it as well. So – and – and the President just went on a trip to India about a month or so ago, racked up some \$10 billion worth of sales, creating 50,000 jobs in America. That's what the Korea trade agreement will do as well. So, on so many issues, the business community is very supportive and very complimentary of what this president and the administration have been doing for them.

MR. MARTIN: Small business in terms of creating business – when you look at the numbers, some of the fastest-growing segment: African-American women. So, what specifically is this administration doing to drive that, to really not only help folks create a small business, but, as I talk about all the time, achieve scale? Because it's great to have a thousand, 2,000, 5,000 doing less than a quarter of a million dollars a year; but if you're not in a position where they're going to a million, 5 million, 10 million, 50 million, a hundred million, then you're really not creating the kind of scale. So, what

specific programs are in place to help small businesses – specifically, African-Americans?

SEC'Y. LOCKE: Well, for instance, our Minority Business Development Administration, which is part of the Department of Commerce, has really been s- -- focusing on that very issue, helping minority businesses really reach that scale, working with some of the larger corporations and getting those corporations to really involve our minority businesses – especially in international opportunities. There is such enormous need and hunger for made-in-USA goods and services. When you have countries all around the world that want medical equipment; [are] looking for construction, from airports to roads and bridges to – you – you know, just all kinds of things. And we're really proud of the fact that we're now incorporating small, medium size companies on our trade missions, including minority-owned firms and really giving them those opportunities.

Exports of American-made goods and services are actually up almost 18 percent so far this year, compared to the comparable period of 2009. Exports of manufactured goods are up 22 percent, and a lot of this is through medium and small size companies.

MR. MARTIN: All right. Well, Secretary Locke, we certainly appreciate it. Again, we look forward to having you back on the show to –

SEC'Y. LOCKE: I do –

MR. MARTIN: -- talk about –

SEC'Y. LOCKE: -- too.

MR. MARTIN: -- what's happening with these small business. And, again, we'll be examining, with the tax compromise and others, what happens with the unemployment rate; but, again, on what – where the businesses – small businesses stand.

SEC'Y. LOCKE: That's great.

MR. MARTIN: All right.

SEC'Y. LOCKE: Thank you.

MR. MARTIN: We appreciate it. Thanks a bunch.

SEC'Y. LOCKE: All right. Thank *you*.

MR. MARTIN: All right.

Folks, back in a moment.

[END OF SEGMENT.]

**(SEG-
MENT 2)**

MR. MARTIN: For a guy who got “shellacked” in the midterm elections, Pres. Barack Obama is not sitting around watching the paint dry. He's on the offensive, pushing hard for three, major victories on taxes; Don't Ask, Don't Tell; and on Russian arms control, known as the START treaty. He already has scored one victory and just might get all three.

Here to talk about all that and much more [are]: Ana Marie Cox, Washington correspondent for “GQ” magazine; Robert Traynham, host of “Roll Call TV” on Comcast; George Curry, syndicated columnist; and Cornell Belcher, Democratic pollster and

political strategist and wannabe singer with that nice jacket on.

MR. CORNELL BELCHER: [Laughs.]

[CHUCKLING.]

MR. MARTIN: Yes. You *know* I was gonna to comment on that jacket. Of course. You *know* this –

MR. BELCHER: It's the *holidays*.

MR. MARTIN: -- don't you? What holiday *is* that?

MR. BELCHER: It's –

MR. MARTIN: *You* don't even –

MR. BELCHER: -- [crosstalk].

MR. MARTIN: -- know. All right. Gotcha.

MR. BELCHER: [Laughs.]

[CHUCKLING.]

MR. MARTIN: All right. [Chuckles.] All right.

Let's get right to it. Obviously, a huge victory for – for Pres. Obama when it came to the tax compromise. Pushed back Democrats on that measure. Ho- -- how do you think it's going to play in terms of the American public, beyond just the bill itself, but [also] how they see him in terms of leadership, bringing two sides together, when people said it could never get done?

MS. ANA MARIE COX: I think he wound up, like, making – having a big victory on it, which is something that none of us really saw coming. I think it looked like he was

boxing himself into a corner, but the fact he's gotten something out of there shows that he has taken – whatever the lessons of the midterms were supposed to be, he's made something happen, coming out of it.

MR. MARTIN: Okay. Co- -- Cornell sat there and said, "Well, I called it." So – [crosstalk] –

MS. COX: [Chuckles.]

MR. BELCHER: No, I – I – I *did* call it, and – and I've been sort of explaining this for a while. Look. He is exactly where the American people is. When you go out to rural America, they say, "Why can't Democrats and Republicans get along?" And m- -- above everything else, they want bipartisanship, and we s- -- look at bipartisanship as a – as a nasty word on the left, and they look at it as a nasty word on the – on the right, but that's where Middle America is. And on this thing, he came loo- -- out looking like the adult in the room amongst fighting kids, and I think it's a big victory for him. He looks le- -- he looks like a leader right now.

MR. GEORGE CURRY: I think the thing that's surprising, though, is there was so much disagreement from Democrats at this thing. You – they – who feel he gave away too much – gave away the store. And he *did* give away lot, but he s- -- also *got* a lot, too. And there was a lot more things in – in that bill that were actually *good* with it: unemployment extension, a lower payroll tax, and there're some other features in there as well. So, in the end, I think it's a win for him; but it sure didn't look like it.

MR. MARTIN: One of the things that jumped out for me when it came to

Democrats on this is that it seemed they were really ticked off when it came to the estate tax.

MR. CURRY: Um-hum.

MR. BELCHER: Yeah.

MR. MARTIN: And in talking to House Majority Whip James Clyburn and other Democratic leaders, they said, “Look. All throughout the way, that never came up. No one brought it up. And all of a sudden, we g-“ – “we see, when the deal is announced, that it’s in there.” They felt they were bamboozled on that particular issue, Robert.

MR. ROBERT TRAYNHAM: Well, not only just on that issue, but the whole, entire tax deal, specifically. But this is the problem. You know, I will say this about the President. The President most likely will say, “You know what, guys? All of you in the beltway, you’re focused on the sausage making. I’m interes-“ – “more interested in that link when it’s all said and done.”

MS. COX: [Chuckles.]

MR. TRAYNHAM: And so, rightfully so, he can say, “Look. Worry about the process. I’m worried about” – what Cornell said a few moments ago – “about what the American people thinks.”

But, having said that, to George’s point, the sausage making is important because, at the end of the day, his base is still *very*, *very* upset with him because they [we]re *not* in the room when these deals were made. They feel like they’ve been pushed aside. In fact, they feel like they’re not even *relevant* anymore. And if you stop

and think about this for a moment, this was the very same base – specifically, in the House of Representatives, with Speaker Pelosi, with Steny Hoyer – that says, “*Wait a minute. We carried your water for the last 24 months. We’re the ones who delivered on healthcare. We’re the ones who delivered on Guantanamo Bay,*” and so forth. So, you know, “Talk to the hand as relates to us trying” – “try-” – “you trying to push us aside here, because” --

MS. COX: Well –

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- “we’re still relevant.”

MS. COX: -- but, of course, they’ve *already* been pushed aside.

MR. TRAYNHAM: Well, that’s –

MS. COX: I mean –

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- and that’s –

MS. COX: -- like, that’s –

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- the – unfortunate.

MS. COX: -- that’s the problem.

MR. CURRY: [Crosstalk] –

MS. COX: And I would –

MR. CURRY: -- [crosstalk].

MS. COX: -- say that another thing that – that goes to the point that b- -- both of you’re making is I think the Democrats – although they did, you know, complain about it and, I think, had a right to; that ‘sausage’ got made without them in the *room*, to

continue the metaphor – they’re not the ones that were *pictured* complaining. It was actually the Republicans that looked a little bit more like children, Republicans who looked a little bit more like –

MR. TRAYNHAM: Well –

MS. COX: -- I – I – I – they’re the ones who were complaining –

MR. CURRY: But here’s the problem.

MS. COX: -- about it, and he still –

MR. CURRY: Here’s –

MS. COX: -- won.

MR. CURRY: -- the problem. The problem is that even what we wanted, when they went to vote, they didn’t have the *votes* on it. So, it doesn’t *matter*. You can ho- -- talk philosophically all you want. When the House voted without these measures, when the Senate voted, it wasn’t – they didn’t have the votes. So, it’s not like they were suddenly going to get their way.

MR. MARTIN: But here’s –

MR. BELCHER: But one – but –

MR. MARTIN: -- go ahead.

MR. BELCHER: -- one – but one thing quickly here, guys. It’s – it’s not that completely one-sided. What we had – we had *81 votes* in the Senate. When was the last time in – in two years that we had 81 votes on any major piece of major legislation? That’s bipartisanship. There’s Democrats and there’s Republicans. That’s exactly what

the Americans [have] been asking for.

MR. MARTIN: Read a column by Cong. Jesse Jackson, Jr., where he talked about “will Obamanomics look like Reaganomics?” The issue that he raised – he said it’s – forget just the old issue of tax cuts. His point is, how are you going to pay for it? He makes the argument that, with this tax compromise – some \$900 billion, almost a trillion dollars – when they come back in January, with Republicans leading the House, he says they’re going to go after the exact, same programs – social programs, education, healthcare and others – that the President’s supporters will not want them to touch. And so what do you make about that prediction by him by saying, “Rejoice now, but watch. You’re going to have problems come January”?

MS. COX: Well, they – they – they did *not* have a – figure out a way to pay for this enormous tax cut, really, and they *are* going to have to – [chuckles] –

MR. BELCHER: [Chuckles.]

MS. COX: -- they – they *are* going to have to pay for it somehow. And it is going to be a Republican-controlled House, so, yeah, I –

MR. MARTIN: And it won’t –

MS. COX: -- mean this – [crosstalk] –

MR. MARTIN: -- come from defense.

MR. TRAYNHAM: [Crosstalk] –

MS. COX: It –

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- rhetorically speaking, what’s going to be interesting is we’re

going to have this very same conversation two years from now in the presidential campaign as relates to who is the better steward as relates to lower taxes and smaller defi- --

MR. MARTIN: No, no.

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- -cits.

MR. MARTIN: Bu- -- bu- -- bu- -- bu- --

MS. COX: Well -- [crosstalk]- --

MR. TRAYNHAM: The President campaign and --

MR. MARTIN: -- no. But look.

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- said, "Look" --

MR. MARTIN: -- but, Robert, I want you to speak to -- forget two years from now.

I want to --

OFF CAMERA: To now.

MR. MARTIN: -- speak to a *month* from now. What's going to happen when you have Democrats who are saying, "Okay. All you guys -- you 81 votes -- you guys wanted this, but you're going to be crowing when they tr-" -- "when they take that knife to education" --

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- and guess --

MR. MARTIN: -- "when they" --

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- what's going to hap- --

MR. MARTIN: -- "take" --

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- -pen?

MR. MARTIN: -- go ahead.

MR. TRAYNHAM: There's going to be another civil war within the Democratic Party. You're going to have Democrat versus Democrat, liberal versus progressive, saying, "Well, *wait* a minute here. What do we stand for? Why are we" -- "Why are we cutting the very programs that we championed," you know, "ten years ago, 15 years" --

MR. MARTIN: George --

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- "ago?"

MR. MARTIN: -- will Pres. Obama look like Pres. Bill Clinton when it came to the welfare debate?

MR. TRAYNHAM: Yes!

MR. CURRY: Well --

MR. TRAYNHAM: I'll answer that question. I'm not even --

MR. CURRY: You're --

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- George.

MR. CURRY: -- you're not George. Don't answer my --

MR. TRAYNHAM: [Chuckles.]

MR. CURRY: -- t- -- you're trying to take my time, Robert.

MR. TRAYNHAM: You're better-lookin' --

MR. BELCHER: [Chuckles.]

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- you're better-lookin' than me.

MR. CURRY: The point is he's going – he's going to look bad. The problem is this. *Nobody* want talks about- -- talk about this. As a country, we're – we're as – among industrialized country, only *two* countries pay less tax- -- in *personal* tax[es] than us. That's Turkey and Mexico. And corporate taxes, we're *fourth* from the bottom. America can afford to pay taxes where they[?] were before, because even with the Clinton success, we were not having these tax rates. Bush is the first president to – to have a tax rate [sic] during a *war*. *It does not make sense*, and *none* of it makes sense.

MR. BELCHER: And I think we're going to see tax reform is going to be one of the first things up on the agenda. They're going to have to sort of tackle tax reform. But, guys, it's not going to be such a[n] ideological battle, 'cause you know what you['ve] got to do to get the deficit under control? You['ve] got to do something about Social Security, you['ve] got to do something about Medicare, and you['ve] got to do something about defense.

MS. COX: And – [crosstalk] –

[CROSSTALK.]

MR. BELCHER: Those aren't –

MS. COX: -- and –

MR. MARTIN: And, Cornell –

MR. BELCHER: -- and – and –

MR. MARTIN: -- and none – look. And I don't care if you're Democrat or Republican. They're *not going to touch those* –

MR. BELCHER: I –

MR. MARTIN: -- *three*.

MR. BELCHER: -- but –

MR. MARTIN: I'm not delusional on this. They're not gonna *touch* it!

MR. BELCHER: -- there're th- -- ha- -- going to have to be hard conversations.

And there's no right or left sort of co- --

MR. TRAYNHAM: But those hard –

MR. BELCHER: -- constituency –

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- convers- --

MR. BELCHER: -- for Social Security.

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- but –

MR. BELCHER: That's *broad*.

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- but you realize those hard conversations are going to be had within the Democratic Party.

MR. MARTIN: No! They're g- --

[CROSSTALK.]

MR. MARTIN: -- no, no, no, no, no.

[CROSSTALK.]

MR. MARTIN: Ho- -- hold on one second.

[CROSSTALK.]

MR. MARTIN: Hold on one second. If you look at those issues, Republicans do

not want to touch anything with defense. Democrats say, “Don’t you *touch* Social Security and Medicare.” So, both sides –

MR. TRAYNHAM: But – but –

MR. MARTIN: -- are going –

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- of course.

MR. MARTIN: -- to have issues –

MR. TRAYNHAM: But, Roland –

MR. MARTIN: -- with those three, major –

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- but here’s the political –

MR. MARTIN: -- points.

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- reality. We know the House is going to be controlled by Republicans. We know the Democrats control the Senate, so the *President* is going to be sitting in the middle, trying to pick and choose between –

MR. MARTIN: Not –

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- which one.

MR. MARTIN: -- not necessarily.

MR. TRAYNHAM: So, thus –

MR. MARTIN: When –

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- in the –

MR. MARTIN: -- you –

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- process –

MR. MARTIN: -- not necessarily. But when you have those conservative Democrats in the Senate, who can easily align with the GOP on those critical issues – and so they may, on some of those issues, have the 60 votes needed.

MS. COX: And –

MR. BELCHER: [Crosstalk]- --

MS. COX: -- they're going to be the ones – and they're the ones who are the most in trouble, going in y- -- here, who –

MR. TRAYNHAM: [Crosstalk] –

MS. COX: -- had the biggest –

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- 24.

MS. COX: -- scare – yeah, who –

MR. BELCHER: -- but – but –

MS. COX: -- who had the –

MR. BELCHER: -- also –

MS. COX: -- biggest scare –

MR. BELCHER: -- real quickly –

MS. COX: -- in the past –

MR. BELCHER: -- Robert, th- --

MS. COX: -- election.

MR. BELCHER: -- y- -- you act like Boehner's got his – got the lion by the tail, too, 'cause all those Tea Party conservatives – you know, a lot of this legislation got

pushed forward now, 'cause they might not have been onboard with the –

MR. MARTIN: And –

MR. BELCHER: -- compromise. They're –

MR. MARTIN: -- and we –

MR. BELCHER: -- not for –

MR. MARTIN: -- and we –

MR. BELCHER: -- the compromise –

MR. MARTIN: -- saw what –

MR. BELCHER: -- also.

MR. MARTIN: -- happened when –

MR. BELCHER: So, he's got his –

MR. MARTIN: -- they –

MR. BELCHER: -- hands full, too.

MR. MARTIN: -- and we saw what the Tea Party folks did when it came to the omnid- [sic] -- omnibus bill. I mean Sen. Mitch McConnell had –

MR. TRAYNHAM: Sure.

MR. MARTIN: -- his earmarks in there. They shut *him* down.

MR. TRAYNHAM: Sure.

[CROSSTALK.]

MR. MARTIN: They made –

MR. TRAYNHAM: Sure. Sure –

MR. MARTIN: -- them --

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- sure.

[CROSSTALK.]

MR. MARTIN: -- pull it.

MR. TRAYNHAM: But the difference is they do not control the White House, so, thus, in the process, their butts are not on the line when it --

MR. MARTIN: No, no, no --

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- comes to --

MR. MARTIN: -- no, no.

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- governing.

MR. MARTIN: No, no, no.

MR. TRAYNHAM: That's --

MR. MARTIN: Robert --

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- the difference.

MR. MARTIN: -- Robert, Robert --

MR. TRAYNHAM: That's the difference --

MR. MARTIN: -- when you --

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- Roland.

MR. MARTIN: -- control, now, a chamber, you['ve] got a[n] issue.

Ana, answer --

[CROSSTALK.]

MR. MARTIN: -- this question.

MS. COX: [Laughs.]

MR. MARTIN: How – how will –

MR. TRAYNHAM: No.

MR. MARTIN: -- how will the Republicans confront the whole issue of raising the d- -- the deficit ceiling?

MS. COX: Well, they're ha- -- going to try to put it onto the Democrats whatever way they can, even if they're con- -- in control. I mean they're going to – they have the – they have the cover of no- -- of not –

MR. TRAYNHAM: That's my point.

MS. COX: -- [chuckles] – s- --

MR. TRAYNHAM: Oba- -- the President is in a very interesting position, where either: a) he's going to piss – he's going to really, um, alienate – [chuckles] – his Democra- --

MR. MARTIN: You can go ahead and say –

[LAUGHTER.]

MR. MARTIN: -- “piss ‘em off,” Robert!

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- [laughs] – it's a Sunday show, so –

MR. MARTIN: It's okay.

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- I don't want to –

MR. MARTIN: Yeah, it's *okay*.

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- look. Look. He's going to -- look. At the end of the day, we -- we keep hearing about this triangulation type thing. He's going to have to decide whether or not he's going to go with Republicans sahm- -- sometimes and anger the left, or if he's going to go with the left and anger the right. He's in a very interesting position --

MR. MARTIN: George.

[CROSSTALK.]

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- and the question is --

MR. CURRY: The --

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- how does he govern?

MR. CURRY: -- Republicans can't pretend that they have no control, and when it ca- -- comes to --

MR. BELCHER: Right.

MR. CURRY: -- it's one thing to be outside the tent urinating, to pi- -- clean up for you --

MR. TRAYNHAM: [Chuckles.]

MR. CURRY: -- and another thing to be saying, "You now have responsibility." So, you just can't be the --

MR. TRAYNHAM: For *what*?

MR. CURRY: -- you just can't *be* part of -- [crosstalk] -- you have Hou- --

MR. BELCHER: [Crosstalk] -- the *House*!

MR. CURRY: -- you gotta – you gotta *join*. You –

MR. MARTIN: [Crosstalk.]

MR. CURRY: -- gotta – you gotta help govern now.

MR. BELCHER: They have to *govern* now.

MR. CURRY: You[‘ve] got to come up with some *ideas* for –

MR. TRAYNHAM: John Boeh- --

MR. CURRY: -- a change.

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- John Boehner will – they – and they *will*. John Boehner will pass a whole bunch of stuff, but it’s going to die in the Senate, a; and, b, the President’s going –

MR. BELCHER: It’s going – it’s going to die in the *Senate*?

MR. MARTIN: Oh. So –

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- probably.

MR. MARTIN: -- so – oh, so –

MR. TRAYNHAM: Probably.

MR. MARTIN: -- so – so, basically, exactly what Democrats did for the last two years: pass a whole bunch of stuff, and the Senate –

MR. BELCHER: But –

MR. MARTIN: -- didn’t do a- --

MR. BELCHER: -- but – but also –

[CROSSTALK.]

MR. MARTIN: -- di- -- di- -- didn't --

MR. TRAYNHAM: *Sure.*

MR. MARTIN: -- do --

MR. BELCHER: -- but --

MR. MARTIN: -- jack.

MR. BELCHER: -- also, look --

MR. TRAYNHAM: *Sure.*

MR. BELCHER: -- but also --

MR. MARTIN: Okay. Go ahead.

MR. BELCHER: -- look at what Romney did this -- this year, and look at what -- what Thune -- what -- what -- what Thune has come out [with]. So, that civil war th- -- ideal isn't necessarily just on the Democratic side, 'cause they -- you've already got Thune and Romney sort of battling each other o- -- over this legislation b- -- about the Republican primary that's coming up for -- for -- for the --

MR. TRAYNHAM: This is over --

MR. BELCHER: -- presidential.

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- tax cuts.

MR. BELCHER: Yes, around the tax --

OFF CAMERA: Yeah.

MR. MARTIN: Will --

MR. BELCHER: -- cuts.

MR. MARTIN: -- will one of the President's biggest critics on the left be happy come January 1st, and that is Don't Ask, Don't Tell?

MS. COX: It's looking like they – they *will* be. I mean loo- -- it's looking like this is actually going to happen. I mean I think that a lot of – they have some conservative pickups that they didn't think they were going to get. I – I – I actually think that – who is the Pennsylvania guy that came out? The – the – the –

MR. MARTIN: Casey?

MS. COX: -- the – Ca- -- no – *no!* No, *no!* The guy who's pre- -- senator-elect, who's the Tea Party candi- --

MR. MARTIN: Oh.

MS. COX: -- -date.

MR. TRAYNHAM: Toomey.

MR. MARTIN: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Toomey.

MS. COX: *Toomey* –

MR. TRAYNHAM: Toomey.

MR. MARTIN: Toomey, Toomey, Toomey.

MS. COX: -- who said – who –

MR. TRAYNHAM: Pat Toomey.

MS. COX: -- who said he w- -- who – who said – he's – he s- – he said he supported repeal of [Don't] Ask, Don't Tell. I think that actually gave cover to a lot of people of Dem- -- de- -- in the GOP who're on the fence about this. And also, flace [sic]

– let’s face it. This is one area where the military and the government is *so far behind* the rest of America.

MR. TRAYNHAM: It’s long overdue. The President campaign on this, obviously, in 2008. It’s a big, nice gift to the American people, but even more importantly, to his base; because, again, this is something –

MR. MARTIN: No. To –

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- he campaigned –

MR. MARTIN: -- a *part* –

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- over[?] –

MR. MARTIN: -- of his base. That is –

MR. BELCHER: [Chuckles.]

MR. MARTIN: -- gays and –

MR. TRAYNHAM: Well –

MR. MARTIN: -- -bians. I mean – I mean the –

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- oh, okay.

MR. MARTIN: -- you know –

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- well –

MR. MARTIN: -- the other parts of his –

MS. COX: And –

MR. MARTIN: -- base –

MS. COX: -- people –

MR. MARTIN: -- do- -- don't necessarily --

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- well --

MR. MARTIN: -- support it.

MS. COX: -- [crosstalk] -- people who --

MR. MARTIN: But I'm just -- [crosstalk]- --

MS. COX: -- who -- who -- who aren't gay and lesbian -- [chuckles] -- maybe think that this is a bad -- who say this is a bad --

MR. MARTIN: Right.

MS. COX: -- policy. And also, I mean he has the support of the *military* on this, and that was a key thing they really wanted.

MR. MARTIN: Does John --

MR. BELCHER: But there's also [crosstalk]- --

MR. MARTIN: -- McCain look --

MR. BELCHER: -- support over --

MR. MARTIN: -- absolutely idiotic --

OFF CAMERA: He -- he --

MS. COX: In 20 years --

MR. MARTIN: -- on this issue?

MS. COX: -- he *is* going to look --

MR. BELCHER: He *does*.

MS. COX: -- like the --

MR. MARTIN: In 20 –

MS. COX: -- last segregationist.

MR. MARTIN: -- in *20 years*?

MS. COX: In *ten* years. In *five* –

MR. MARTIN: [Crosstalk] –

MS. COX: -- years.

MR. MARTIN: -- *two months*.

MR. BELCHER: And the –

MS. COX: Yeah.

MR. BELCHER: -- problem –

MR. TRAYNHAM: [Chuckles.]

MR. BELCHER: -- and – and the – and the problem is the polling *shows* this.

You've got – over 60 percent of Americans think this is the right thing to *do*.

MS. COX: Hell – and – [unintelligible] – his own *house*, I mean –

MR. MARTIN: [Laughs.]

MS. COX: -- the majority of people –

[CHUCKLING.]

MR. BELCHER: His own house think it – right[?].

MS. COX: -- agree. Exactly.

MR. MARTIN: And on that note, we'll leave it that. Ana Marie, Robert, George, Cornell, we certainly appreciate it. Thanks a bunch.

And you don't have to leave that jacket here. Take it with you.

[CHUCKLING.]

MR. BELCHER: [Laughs.]

MR. MARTIN: They say they aren't role models, but there was a time when they were. I'm talking about pro athletes. Where have all the good guys gone? We'll talk about that next with a man who knows the score.

[END OF SEGMENT.]

**(SEG-
MENT 3)**

MR. MARTIN: Some of our pro athletes are making headlines nowadays, but it's not for draining threes or scoring touchdowns on the field. It's for unsportsmanlike conduct off the field: arrests, bankruptcy, domestic violence – you name it. Joining me today to talk about our sometimes disappointing sports figures, also those who are doing some good things, is Lamell McMorris, founder of Perennial Sports and Entertainment, a company that represents many professional football and basketball players. He was a former lead negotiator for the Major League Baseball Umpires union and the National Basketball Referees Association.

Lamell, welcome to "Washington Watch."

MR. LAMELL McMORRIS: Thanks for having me.

MR. MARTIN: Man, i- -- is it – it's interesting out here. When you look at athletes today, people look at the money. They look at the fame, the fortune and – you name it. And you always hear them ask the question, "How could some of these folks

make some of the dumbest decisions you've ever seen in your life?"

MR. McMORRIS: Sure.

MR. MARTIN: Floyd Maywe- -- M- -- Maywether gets arrested.

MR. McMORRIS: Sure.

MR. MARTIN: You know, domestic violence with his girlfriend. Now, another deal. And so, h- -- how do you deal with athletes and trying to say, "Look. You're a walking brand. You're" –

MR. McMORRIS: Sure.

MR. MARTIN: -- "a walking corporation"?

MR. McMORRIS: It's very difficult. You know, we're dealing with a group of individuals, some of them that are attempting to transition out of very rough environments, very rough communities. What I've found is that you have to surround these individuals with good people, people that have not only their best interests at heart on the field, on the court, but off the field – and not just during their tenure as an athlete, but post their career in the professional ranks.

MR. MARTIN: Now, when you talk about surrounding folks, I mean I – I look at athletes today – especially high school athletes.

MR. McMORRIS: Sure.

MR. MARTIN: I mean the game has changed now. When you go- – we have guys now in the seventh and eighth grade who are now thinking and operating like guys did 15, 20 years ago, when they were high school seniors. And so then you have, now,

all of a sudden, all these folks who are pulling at them at those early ages; and so before they even get to you –

MR. McMORRIS: Without a doubt.

MR. MARTIN: -- they've been in a situation for six, eight, ten years where they've had folks basically surrounding them, some folks say, like vultures – not really looking out for their best interests.

MR. McMORRIS: Without a doubt, and that continues to be the case. And – and like anything else in society, it always comes back to caring parents, caring guardians, caring family members. And, you know, unfortunately, that tends to be not the norm.

But we've tried to take the initiative to get our folks involved even while they're playing in extracurricular activities that have nothing to do with their careers. For example, I had one athlete that did an internship in between his training here in Washington, D.C., when he was a Redskin[s]. He worked as an intern in a member of Congress' office. We get them involved to speak out in the community – foundations, et cetera. It's just the things that you have to do to try to, you know, set off and augment their – their past.

MR. MARTIN: Is the money the big difference maker? I mean, you know, obviously, 20, 30 years ago, you didn't have athletes making the amount of money they're –

MR. McMORRIS: Sure.

MR. MARTIN: -- making now. But all of a sudden – and people don't really think about it. Even if a guy went to college, he's still coming out 22 years old.

MR. McMORRIS: Oh, sure. Or –

MR. MARTIN: People[?] –

MR. McMORRIS: -- less.

MR. MARTIN: -- and – and folks are sitting there, offering significant amounts of money that [have] never even *seen* that much money in their lifetimes.

MR. McMORRIS: You have to ask yourself if these individuals are in it for the love of the game. I think, you know, as – as someone from Chicago who watched, you know, Walter Payton, and you grew up watching – and, you know, M- -- Michael Jordan, maybe, for example. Sports is big business, and it has been for a long time.

MR. MARTIN: First of all, it is a business.

MR. McMORRIS: *It is a business.* No – without a doubt – and these individuals are professional athletes, and they get paid to perform and to excel in their given sport. But I think with that, you know, pros and cons. Perhaps, we've lost the love and the essence of the real game.

MR. MARTIN: We – we – we saw this issue with Cam Newton –

MR. McMORRIS: Yes.

MR. MARTIN: -- in terms of his father – allegations his father tried to get \$100,000+ --

MR. McMORRIS: Sure.

MR. MARTIN: -- out of universities for his son to play there. There're parents who are watching right now. They have kids who are star athletes in elementary school and middle school and high school. What would you tell that mother – and more than likely, it's a mother, not a father; but let's say the mother and the father are out there – when it comes to an athlete – a – a son or a daughter who is doing great, and they're sta- -- they're already thinking “pro ball,” “pro ball for my son,” or daughter?

MR. McMORRIS: Well, the message from their youth and – and that – to those parents [is] they have to begin now by saying, “Look, this is a means to an end – not the end itself,” that sports can help you excel and achieve some of the goals you have in your life. It can help set off some of the expenses to go to school, et cetera. And when parents have that message at the forefront, I think it helps to ground the athlete in a *different* way than the athlete seeing that, “This is *the* only way, and this is the only way that I'm going to make it out of my current situation.”

MR. MARTIN: What would you tell them about somebody saying, “Hey, I want to represent your child. I” – “I want to be your child's marketing representative”? And they, frankly, have no idea what they're talking –

MR. McMORRIS: Without –

MR. MARTIN: -- about –

MR. McMORRIS: -- without a doubt.

MR. MARTIN: -- but, again, there are people who are already pulling at them right now. And these folks don't know. They may – the- -- they're saying, “Well, hey,

so-and-so's a good friend. [It] should be okay."

MR. McMORRIS: I'd be less inclined to be attracted to the bling. I'd be interested in those folks that show a very sincere interest in educating me about the process *first* – not all that you can do for my son or my daughter, if you represent them.

MR. MARTIN: Are you also seeing in – wi- -- with the clients that you have, really s- -- people sitting them down and saying, "No. Let's have some real conversation about your money. You can go get the big house right now. You can go get the tricked-out car and – and put \$200,000 into it. You can't even resell it for \$30,000. But we're going to talk about what your life is going to be like after those checks stop coming"?

MR. McMORRIS: You've probably hit on probably one of the most difficult aspects of representing an athlete in this era. You now, you're dealing with a – a – I believe, a society of young people that want everything right now and, for the most part, have an entitlement theology, fortuna- -- fortunately, and mentality – and, probably, it *is* a theology. But, fortunately, ours is that, you know, our responsibility is for their contract and what they do on and off the field, and the business of the athlete. We try to put, as representatives, as agents, a firewall between ourselves and their financial interests; but it's a very, very difficult task for those folks who are financial planners that –

MR. MARTIN: Yeah, but – but –

MR. McMORRIS: -- [crosstalk].

MR. MARTIN: -- but the – but let's be honest.

MR. McMORRIS: Sure.

MR. MARTIN: You're a young brother.

MR. McMORRIS: Sure.

MR. MARTIN: You're sitting there, [the] same way I am –

MR. McMORRIS: Sure.

MR. MARTIN: -- going, "*Dude*, do you know what you're *doing*?" "Do" – I mean, Do y- – "You" – "You might think that's a great idea, but do you *understand* Derrick Coleman, Rick Mahorn, Kenny Anderson – a plethora of athletes" –

MR. McMORRIS: Sure.

MR. MARTIN: -- "who had m- – "all the money in the world, and now are filing for bankruptcy?" I mean, *surely*, you're sitting there, watching and going, "I gotta say *something*."

MR. McMORRIS: Well, perhaps, that's one of the competitive advantages that I have. One, I can still relate. Most of us still listen to the same music. We still like the same things, and so, yes. Different from most agents that represent athletes and look like you and I, I can have a different conversation. I wish I could do that with *every* athlete. And, yes, I feel that's part of my responsibility. Without a doubt.

MR. MARTIN: Well, again, I mean I certainly hope that a lot of these young guys realize that the moment they have right now they can never recapture. And so it's great to have all the people coming at you and pulling at you, but you have to be thinking long-term about your future, because once that money's gone, it's gone.

MR. McMORRIS: I applaud you for having this dialogue, because *this* discussion doesn't happen enough – unfortunately – and, hopefully – hopefully, we can keep it going.

MR. MARTIN: Oh, absolutely. Lamell, we appreciate it. Thanks a lot.

MR. McMORRIS: Thanks for having me.

MR. MARTIN: All right.

Folks still to come, R&B sensation Usher brings a fan up on the stage to kick it with him in Madison Square Garden during a concert. Oh, he got a *kick* all right. TV One's James Hill is up next with that story and much more in "Web Watch."

[END OF SEGMENT.]

**(SEG-
MENT 4)**

MR. MARTIN: It's probably among the top-viewed stories on the Web this week. R&B singer Usher takes one to the head during a concert. But before we get to that, there's another big story that's got people posting, blogging and tweeting. TV One's director of digital media James Hill is here now with what appears to be an HIV-AIDS breakthrough.

MR. JAMES HILL: Well, let's slow down. At – CNN reported this story. My jaw dropped when I first read the headlines, and –

MR. MARTIN: A lot of folks' did.

MR. HILL: -- right. Man cured of HIV. What it turns out is – and the story was actually reported a *year* ago, but the actual, final medical report came up this year. This

guy had HIV and leukemia. He –

MR. MARTIN: Right.

MR. HILL: -- was given a bone tr- -- a bone marrow transplant. Came back.

Now he has no HIV –

MR. MARTIN: Stem cells. St- --

MR. HILL: Stem cells – right.

MR. MARTIN: Right.

MR. HILL: Exactly. But it's not really a *cure*, necessarily, 'cause you[ve] got to find – is your bone marrow going to match –

MR. MARTIN: Right. Right, right –

MR. HILL: -- my bone –

MR. MARTIN: -- right.

MR. HILL: -- marrow? So, it's not a universal cure. And what's amazing is that the online response – it fluctuates between hope and anger. Some people are really excited about it, and other people feel let down that this is not really the cure that, you know, I – the world is waiting for, that it's so specific. So –

MR. MARTIN: But I tell you what. When – I mean when that story was reported, I mean it shot across –

MR. HILL: Oh, yeah.

MR. MARTIN: -- you know, Twitter and Facebook. You – Black Planet – you name it – and a lot of people were really intrigued by it. Ray Lewis Thornton, a big-time

AIDS activist – she lives with AIDS – sh- -- you know, [the] first thing she said [was], “I’m going to talk to my doctor [and] find out about this.”

MR. HILL: Right. And – and that’s the thing – is it is a – it is a signal of hope, but it is not the “I’m going to give you a shot, and you’re good to go” – which I think people thought it was.

MR. MARTIN: Another story that folks were talking about: Michael Vick –

MR. HILL: Michael Vick.

MR. MARTIN: -- gives an interview with NBC and “The Griot,” and he – he’s asked a question, and he talks about, you know, wanting to own a dog again. I – I don’t get it.

MR. HILL: It’s *Christmastime*, Roland. He wants – [chuckles] – a present. He wants a puppy like anybody else, but apparently, PETA says this man – I think the quote is, he should “never in *life*” own another dog. And, you know, I – I – a lot of people online are saying, “Hey, look. The man did 18 years” – “18 months in prison. He’s back on top. He’s leading the Eagles.” You know, “It’s a victory. Go Philadelphia.” But should he have a dog? A – a lot of people say, “Yeah, he *should*.”

MR. MARTIN: I – I tweeted that I felt he should not have a- -- answered the question that way, because in the midst of rehabbing your image, stay away from *any* conversation about dogs. Even if you –

MR. HILL: But how long?

MR. MARTIN: -- want to own a dog –

MR. HILL: How long do you –

MR. MARTIN: *No.*

MR. HILL: -- do it?

MR. MARTIN: No, no, I – first of all, I thi- -- frankly, I think it's two, three, four years. Here's the deal. He's trying to get a big contract. He's having a phenomenal year, [an] MVP type season. You don't want to mess with what you've already built up. No need to try to go back in the past and having PETA [and] other people coming out, criticizing you. I just think there're some topics – hey, you just leave it alone. Rebuild your image, and get to that five years from now – but not right now.

MR. HILL: So, let sleeping dogs lie.

MR. MARTIN: Absolutely.

MR. HILL: [Chuckles.]

MR. MARTIN: Let's talk about Usher. This – this video is amazing. Usher invites a woman onstage, and –

MR. HILL: Yeah. He gets kicked in the face.

MR. MARTIN: W- --

MR. HILL: But – so – and – he brings her out. He's doing his typical smooth man, Usher thing. He's got her on, like, a fake bed; and he's singing to her. And, you know, she innocently turns around to sort of face him and, like, clocks him in the face with her shoe. And he – the thing is he takes it real graciously. The audience goes *wild*. They're just laughing and screaming.

MR. MARTIN: [Laughs.]

MR. HILL: They go wild. And the funny thing is *that's* the big story. You Tube – it's got probably over a million hits by now.

But the *other* story is that she posted an apology video – the actual fan who kicked him in the face. And she's apologizing profusely. She even t- -- picks up the shoe that she kicked him with and throws it away.

MR. MARTIN: So – so, basically, she – she was a little bit awkward in bed.

MR. HILL: A little bit. A little bit.

[CHUCKLING.]

MR. MARTIN: Well, Usher learned the hard way how those things work.

Well, James, we certainly appreciate it. Thanks a bunch.

MR. HILL: All right. Thanks a lot.

MR. MARTIN: Folks, up next: remember Shirley Sherrod, the African-American woman fired from the Agriculture Department for supposedly racist comments? Well, guess where she's been working lately. You'll be surprised.

[END OF SEGMENT.]

**(SEG-
MENT 5)**

MR. MARTIN: When, Shirley Sherrod was fired by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack in July for comments taken out of context, he apologized to her, and she decided not to return to the Department of Agriculture. Recently, asked Secretary Vilsack what he had learned from the whole Shirley Sherrod affair, and he revealed

something very surprising.

[VIDEO CLIP.]

SEC'Y. TOM VILSACK: Well, first of all, let me say that we were fortunate to have Shirley's help and assistance as we create what we refer to as "strike forces." We are looking at persistent-poverty counties in a number of states, starting in three states in the South, and we're taking teams of USDA officials down and really spending time with community-building organizations to try to make sure that those folks in those persistent-poverty counties, many of which are counties of color, are able to access more effectively and successfully USDA projects. And – and Shirley's been involved and engaged in that, and we – and helping consult with us on this, and we certainly appreciate her willingness –

MR. MARTIN: S- --

SEC'Y. VILSACK: -- to do that.

MR. MARTIN: -- so, she *is* doing some work –

SEC'Y. VILSACK: Yes.

MR. MARTIN: -- with you in that – in that area.

SEC'Y. VILSACK: Yes.

MR. MARTIN: Okay.

SEC'Y. VILSACK: Yeah.

What did I learn? Well – [chuckles] – a lot of things. One is that it – it's – it is important, in this position that I have, to make sure that I have all the facts before I

make decisions and before I direct staff. Secondly, I learned that when I direct staff, I need to be very specific in my instructions, and so that there's no misunderstanding or potential confusion for – for my instructions in terms of what my intent is. And I've – I actually learned what a w- -- wonderfully warm, thoughtful and forgiving individual Shirley Sherrard [sic – phonetic] is.

MR. MARTIN: Also, last point here. You mentioned these various opportunities in agriculture. I spoke to a USDA unit a few months ago in Kansas City, and also, I spent time – I'm a native of Texas. I've talked to folks with FFA. There's an African-American who's actually the head of Future Farmers of America. My brother was a[n] agriculture [and] economics major at Texas A&M University, my alma mater as well. And there's still so few African-Americans in agriculture, but there are vast opportunities. And so what is your department doing in terms of reaching out to HBCUs and other A- -- African-American groups to say, "Here are available opportunities, so don't necessarily think it's all about just the farmer out there, stuck out in the middle of the country. There are actual opportunities – job opportunities – that you can be involved in"?

SEC'Y. VILSACK: Three things. One, within USDA, we have an Office of Outreach and Advocacy, which is designed to go out into minority communities and basically let them know about opportunities that – that cou- -- they could utilize for their communities, using USDA programs.

Secondly, we have a very active and engaged internship program within USDA.

We're encouraging young people – bright, young people from all over the country, including historic[ally] Black colleges, to intern at USDA; and many of them are actually offered an internship and then a permanent job position at USDA, following the internship and following their graduation. So, we are – and we are keeping track of, and – and making sure that, as we set up these internship opportunities, that we are attracting a diverse group of young people to work in USDA.

We're engaged in, I think, a cultural transformation. Perlie Reed, who's our undersecretary – assistant secretary of administration, is engaged in a cultural transformation in which we want to be an inclusive and diverse workforce that's representative of America. So, we are going through training. We are going through a series of programs designed to make sure that folks are sensitive and aware of how to hire, how to promote, how to encourage individuals at USDA.

So, there's a broad – broad range of efforts at USDA. As I said, we've started a new chapter. I'm proud of that new chapter. It starts with settling these lawsuits, but it continues.

MR. MARTIN: Well, we recently had our "Let's Move" initiative with First Lady Michelle Obama, and –

SEC'Y. VILSACK: Yes.

MR. MARTIN: -- in that particular special here on TV One, and we talked to Will Allen there in Milwaukee there and what he's doing there. And we also talked to some students at River Terrace Elementary School. What the principal told us is that, as a

result of their efforts and that initiative, all of a sudden, we have young, Black kids who are now talking about a future in farming, a future in culinary. And so that's one of the reasons why I wanted you to speak to that – because there're some great things out there for Black kids, moving forward, in agriculture.

SEC'Y. VILSACK: A- -- absolutely, and we are encouraging that with – and with the Child Nutrition Act that recently passed the House and the Senate, there's going to be more of that activity. We're also very much engaged in urban gardens, encouraging more farmers markets in communities to support agriculture. So, there're tremendous opportunities in s- -- in agriculture, in agricultural research and in rural development.

MR. MARTIN: All right. Well, Secretary Vilsack, we certainly appreciate it.

Thanks a bunch.

SEC'Y. VILSACK: Thank you.

[END OF CONVERSATION WITH SEC'Y. TOM VILSACK.]

MR. MARTIN: It's time now for "My Perspective."

With millions of Americans out of work, don't you think it sounds pretty stupid to have Sen. John Kyl and Sen. Jim DeMint complaining about having to work around the Christmas holidays? *Seriously*. These two senators have complained that Sen. Harry Reid has them working during the Christmas break, because they say it's unfair with these holy days for Christians. It really was a shot at Reid, because he's a Mormon.

But here's the real issue for me. We're *paying* you to work. There are millions of Americans who are going to be working on the 27th, the 28th, the 29th, and the 30th – all

those days after Christmas. Why can't the *Senate* actually work those days? Do you know how many days they take off *every, single year*?

Give me a break! There's a lot of work to be done, and so stop complaining about having to do a job. Trust me. Many would love to have your six-figure job.

That's my perspective. What's yours?

Folks, we'll be right back.

[END OF SEGMENT.]

**(SEG-
MENT 6)**

MR. MARTIN: That's it for this edition of TV One's "Washington Watch."

I'm Roland Martin. Have a merry Christmas, a great Kwanzaa, and have a blessed week.

[END.]