

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer on Domestic Terrorism, the 2nd Amendme...

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SPEAKERS

Gov. Whitmer, Christian Heyne, JJ Janflone, Kris Brown, Kelly Sampson



JJ Janflone 00:00

Hey everybody, this is legal disclaimer where I tell you that the views, thoughts and opinions shared on this podcast blog solely to our guests and hosts, and not necessarily Brady or Brady's affiliates. Please note, this podcast contains discussions of violence that some people may find disturbing. It's okay -- we find it disturbing too. Hello, everyone. Welcome back to "Red, Blue, and Brady." Today, Kelly and I are so excited to be joined by the governor of Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer. Together with Kris Brown, president of Brady and Christian Heyne, VP of Policy, we're talking all about the violent plot, that recently it came out, was launched against the governor. The increasing risk of armed insurrection, and why voter intimidation at polling places, from those with firearms, is a major concern. I think it's best if we just go ahead and jump right in. So governor, thank you for joining us today. And I'm wondering, Hey, everybody else, who is not the host of "Red, Blue and Brady," if you are not JJ, can you please introduce yourself?



Kris Brown 01:18

Hi, JJ, and Governor Whitmer. I'm Kris Brown. And I'm the President of Brady. How about Christian, our lone gentleman?



Christian Heyne 01:26

Right. I am Christian Heyne. I'm the Vice President of Policy here at Brady, and very excited for the discussion as well.



Kelly Sampson 01:32

And I'm Kelly Sampson. I'm Senior Counsel and Director of Racial Justice here at Brady and very excited.



JJ Janflone 01:38

And the reason why we're all here today is I think everyone, everyone is very concerned about the state of the world as we get closer and closer to the beginning of November, end of October. And increasingly, we're hearing stories that are combining, sort of, three major topics: domestic terrorism, the Second Amendment and democracy. And those are three things that I don't like to see bundled together, as a unit, in general. And I don't think any of our listeners out there do either. And so I think we need to start maybe off this conversation with discussing the fact that as more and more Americans are heading out to the polls, or mailing their ballots in the coming days, we're hearing more stories about voter suppression. And a lot of times these stories contain, you know, things about armed intimidation. And I'm wondering if we can sort of talk about, more broadly, these stories of sort of armed insurrectionism that we've seen, as well as even little things, well, not little, but very large things about, say people in state capitals, you know, bringing guns into them. And so maybe we can just go ahead, I want to open it up to everyone and say, you know, when it comes to voter intimidation, can we talk about what that actually means?



Gov. Whitmer 02:45

Absolutely. So I'll jump in. But Christian, don't I saw you're getting ready to so don't hesitate to jump in as well. No, I think that you're giving voice to something that we are seeing increasingly alarming signs, that this is something we need to be concerned about, sadly. Earlier this month, law enforcement officers announced charges against 14 members of a multi-state domestic terrorist organization that was plotting to kidnap and apparently put me on some sort of a trial, and then execute me. This was a stunning revelation for a sitting governor to be the target of a plot that had gone so far in. But the FBI and the Michigan State Police collaborated to, to bring these people in I mean, it was -- this is not normal. And and I think that in this moment, where there's so much that's not normal, it's hard to, to muster and maintain the kind of outrage in the sense of, of need for normalcy that's so important. And yet it's more important than ever that we do. This also

came on the heels of a number of protests that have happened here in Michigan, but certainly not alone in Michigan, where we had armed protesters, I mean, the visual capitol, the pictures of the protests at the state capitol, where armed gunman were in the Capitol. We all remember seeing that. But we also know that these armed protests are playing out in various parts of the United States. And just a week after the charges were announced, the president came back to the state and incited more, would not only denounce white supremacy when he was on the debate stage, but came in and, and gave further legitimize these groups. And I think it's a very dangerous moment. And it's also a moment where in response to what actually happened, I quoted Ronald Reagan, and I did that for a very specific purpose because it's important that Americans, on both sides of the aisle, stand up and call out domestic terrorism, in a way that is that is bold and honest. We do not tolerate hate speech, we do not tolerate domestic terrorists who are intent on hurting their fellow Americans. And we've seen a rise in this across the country, but especially against women leaders. Hate and bigotry don't have a place in Michigan or in the United States. We don't tolerate this, and we cannot let it become normal. We have to continue to call this out. And some have said, "Oh, you're so bold to call out the president," what is my option? To pretend it didn't happen, to paper over it, to laugh and act as though it's not serious? It is, and we deserve better and people of good faith needs to stand up and call it out. And elect good, decent people to office so that we can get back to a normal that keeps us safe. But Christian, that was that was a long monologue. What do you think?

C

Christian Heyne 04:50

That was, I mean, you set the stage perfectly, right. I mean, and everything you're saying is exactly right. I think the way you put it, especially, you know, this, this isn't normal, right? We need to reject, we need to reject it. We need to pinch ourselves and remind ourselves, this isn't the way things should be. It's not normal. But also, it shouldn't take any of us by surprise, because there's been a progression here, and an escalation that has been made possible by frankly, a gun lobby and a gun industry that has made this idea of insurrectionism, this idea that somehow Second Amendment rights are tied to the ability to go out and try to intimidate duly elected officials, that somehow these things are linked -- and they're not. They never have been, right. We have this corrupted view of the Second Amendment, that the gun lobby has made popular in such a way that now leaders, our leaders all the way up to the to the top office have have have embraced this, this ideology that is fundamentally dangerous, and frankly has, in the past, led to deadly outcomes as well, right. I mean, if if, if we were to take the the logical sort of premise that we're being fed, that somehow our Second Amendment rights are tied to taking up arms against a government that we perceive as tyrannical, I mean, that's what John Wilkes Booth believed he was doing right. And, frankly, when Gabby Giffords was shot, you know,

her, her shooter posted a series of videos where he said, "You don't have to accept the Federalist laws." I just think that this is an important moment. And we need our words matter, rhetoric matters. And we are seeing that escalation in real time. And it's happening so quickly start with the Bundys. Right, you saw that happening during, you know, the Obama administration. And now, I was in Richmond, Virginia, this year, when we were met with more of these domestic terrorists right from, from around the country that tried to descend upon and intimidate that legislature. And then eventually in Lansing, where, where the legislature was forced to shut down more than once. And now you have this plot where the FBI literally had to arrest people, for the idea of these men who were going to kidnap and ultimately execute the governor who is, who frankly, you are doing your job. We need, in no minced words, no half measures, we need everybody rejecting this, because ultimately, it will only get worse. And we are heading into a period of time where experts around the world are saying that we could be headed to inevitable political violence right here in America. And doesn't matter what party you're a part of that has to be alarming to you. We see too much gun violence every day. We don't need to escalate it into making our political disagreements violent. And that's ultimately what the gun lobby has, sort of, the atmosphere that they've created. So I'm just so thankful for leaders like you, Governor, who are out there and saying the right things, who are out there reminding our country that this isn't normal. And who are out there, who are saying that this is not the vision of the Second Amendment that our Founding Fathers had. And in fact, as we've talked about on this podcast, before, these kinds of insurrections, people bringing up arms against the government, the government called upon militias to quell those insurrections, right. And we saw that this was really another thing. So I do have a tendency to climb up on the soapbox and talk a lot. But you got me very excited there, Governor. And I just think that it's really important that we just reject it out of hand, because, because it has escalated in such a way that people are accepting this as our history. And it's not -- it's a corrupted view of our history.



JJ Janflone 09:44

I think that's actually why all of us are a little flustered to be speaking with you, Governor, because this is a, this is a pivotal moment. Right. I think everyone is paying very close attention. As I mentioned at the beginning, I think Christian as you just demonstrated, the fact that we are actively speaking about insurrectionism happening, and that we have to be talking about a very, to be honest, on a personal level, something that I'm sure was very terrifying, an act of political violence that was planned. That was not, you know, one person, this was a group, this was a planned concerted effort. That's terrifying. And so we're so thankful, though, that you've come out and and spoken so publicly about it, and also the policies and whatnot that you and your constituents have tried to put into place to help people.

K

Kris Brown 10:30

I agree, obviously, with everything you just said, JJ. And I think Christian, the point that you're making at the end is really important -- words matter. Words matter on both sides. Governor Whitmer, when you quoted, because I watched you, I told you, I have a 16-year-old and an 18-year-old, like you, daughters who were watching the news, when this came out, and were shocked, very upset to hear about this. But the steady, calm but decisive manner, in which you call this out, stated it was wrong and noted, with a quote from Ronald Reagan, that this is something that everyone on both sides of the aisle, always historically has believed is wrong, anathema to America, not the way that we should be as a country, I think was really, really important. And being very clear that the biggest risk we have right now in America, despite what we hear from the person currently occupying the White House, is domestic terrorism. And I think the media and others do us all a disfavor when they refer to groups, you know, loosely or more particularly structured groups, like the band of men that came together at the protest at the Capitol, apparently, to make this plot against Governor Whitmer. That's not a militia, in the way that that term was ever intended by our framers. Let's keep in mind that the militias referenced there were supposed to be state militias. These are domestic terrorist cells. And that's exactly what they're doing. And if you heard some of the complaints against Governor Whitmer that were leading them to potentially kidnap, and put her on trial, and then execute her, it included not being able to work out at the gym, during a pandemic. And the addition of arms to these individuals easy, easily accessible arms, that typically are only used like assault weapons in military style operations, frankly, to me is terrifying. So it only, frankly, anchors and makes all of us at Brady more passionate about the need to ensure that we have sensible gun laws, that every court that have looked at it, has found are entirely consistent with the Second Amendment, and that we protect all of our citizens, including our elected officials from this kind of violence. So now I'm worked up and on my soapbox, that I just want to make that point.

K

Kelly Sampson 13:21

I'm wondering if, kind of going along with what you were saying, Kris, a lot of the media reports about what happened seem to focus on the potential kidnapping and not necessarily the trial, or this planned execution. And so I'm wondering if you're comfortable sharing with listeners, if you could talk about what that feels like, personally, as a public official, with a job to do in the middle of pandemic, you're trying to keep the state going and support the public? What it's like to be a public official and know that there's been violence planned against you.



13:51

Yeah. Well, Kelly, I appreciate the nature of that question. I'm glad you raised it, because one of the things that has just befuddled me is the fact that all of the stories are about kidnapping, not the subsequent sham trial and planned execution. And I don't know what that is an inadvertent way of minimizing what happened, or if they think that that's something that is more exciting to readers, I not quite sure what to make of it. I had you know, people say, oh you know, "We would have helped pay the ransom." And like, you think they they were going to keep me? Like no. That's, that's not what these people were talking about. They had film of them shooting their weapons and planning different ways to kill me. I mean, and that's not been a part of the coverage which has been really bizarre. And and I don't know that I understand exactly why, but you all are experts in this field so you can probably tell me. But, you know, I have not read all the affidavits. I have not gone through everything word by word because number one, I am protected by the Michigan State Police and I have literally never worried about my safety. I knew some of this was going on toward the end of the investigation, and it's horrifying. I've had to explain to my daughters though, every time Donald Trump set his sights on me, starting last April, when he called me the "don't, don't call that woman in Michigan," you know. And ever since, every time he has tweeted "Liberate Michigan," or he is focused on me, we see the violent rhetoric go up. We see the online threats go up, we see the threats to me and my family go up. And every single time so when he was here in Lansing yesterday, we saw it ratchet up. He's coming back this week, it will get worse. There's no question. He knows what he's doing. He knows his words matter, and I think that's the most distressing part of it.

G

Gov. Whitmer 15:52

You would expect leaders, no matter what their political affiliation is to get on the phone and say, "Are you okay? How's your family? What do you need?" Mike Dewine, the Republican governor of Ohio, reached out. Charlie Baker, who I do not, I know Mike Dewine pretty well, because we are contiguous states. But I don't know Charlie Baker from Massachusetts very well, but he called me said "It's terrible what's happened? I'm thinking about you." And we chatted, we had a lovely conversation. That's what leaders do. They, they they care about people first. We're partisans after we're, we're human beings. And this moment, I think, is just really been stark and depressing, but also motivating, you know. I'm working my tail off, because I know we deserve and we need better leadership at the national level. So you know, talking to my daughters, though, I think was the hardest part of it all, when the threat started. And, and I've been very blunt with them, because I don't want them to be surprised when news comes out. I want them to feel empowered and safe, and to know what's happening. But to to share with them some of

the most vile, violent rhetoric is, it's just awful that I have to do it.

C

Christian Heyne 17:08

Gosh, I just I think that's such an important point, right? Like, people forget about you're a human being right, with a family. The words that the, you know, our leaders are using, that our president is using, that anything that doesn't quell and and prevent further violence, anything that could potentially embolden or empower people to, to continue on, or to even do more of this hate speech and, and to feel empowered and protected, to do more -- that has real consequences. And we see that play out every single day, in this country. If it's, even if it's beyond, you know, thank goodness, this domestic terrorist threat was prevented and stopped. But we know that the violence doesn't end there. We know that the, the these words and, and, you know, if we're not denouncing white supremacy, at a base level, we're not denouncing white supremacy in this country, that has real tangible, horrific consequences that we are seeing day-in and day-out in this country. And, and, and it's happening right now, we still need that leadership, right. And we're lucky to have governors and voices like yourself, but this should not be partisan. And we should really recognize that like, you're in America, we have more guns than we have human beings. And we see the consequences of that every single day. If on top of that you're throwing in that hate is okay, and that these sorts of divisions do require, that's why you have your firearms, then the logical conclusion there is that more violence is going to occur. And we need to remember the community in it. I'm governor, I'm a, I'm a survivor of gun violence. I've talked about it a couple times on this podcast. My, my mom was, was killed with a single bullet to the back, is the simplest way I can put it. You know, the last words she ever will say, on this planet, were to beg for her life. You know, my dad, we're very fortunate, we shot three times and survived it. But you know, every statline, you see about gun violence in America, that is a human being, and it's a family, and it's a community who will never be the same. And, you know, the threats and the violence and the hate that we're perpetuating in this country have real consequences, too. They're not statistics, they're human beings. And we can't lose sight of that, you know, and our leaders can't lose sight of that, because what else are they supposed to be doing other than protecting their constituents? I saw your Attorney General tweet out about this the other day, where she said, you know, our job is to protect people, not guns. You know, and I think like at a baseline, we need to remember that and we need our leaders to remember that. So we'll add it to the list of why we're thankful to have you but why we hope that that kind of courage is contagious, and other leaders pick up on it too.

K

Kris Brown 18:48

I just have to say that so so often, you know, our issue is so tied to both the best and worst

of what we see in the world, Governor Whitmer. And, you know, I'm always so moved. I, I personally have not had a family member lost to gun violence. But we have several people on our staff like Christian, who have suffered that kind of horrific loss, and who focus, for the rest of their lives, just as Jim and Sarah Brady did, around trying to make the world a better and safer place. And I really almost came to tears, hearing what you were saying about your daughters, in part because no one should have to, for someone who is called to service as you have been, and are in a very tough time, have that conversation with your children, or fear as a parent always does, because you internalize these things, more than your own feelings, right, concern about their welfare and wonder how they're feeling. And I just wonder if you might comment a little bit on your view of leadership. In particular, having been through all of this and seeing, you know, people talk about the knock-on effect of who we have in the White House right now. Leslie Stahl, asked him about his words and her view that clearly, he was, you know, encouraging people to say, "lock her up," and he denied it, right. And it's still happening every day. You're a very, very different kind of leader. You know, what it is to lead, but how important do you think real leadership is to these issues, and the knock on effect? Not just for people, right, but for families, for younger people looking up to this and wondering what kind of world we live in. I just wonder if you have some thoughts about that?

G

Gov. Whitmer 22:06

Well, I do. You know, every day we're setting a standard in this country, and the longer the standard gets lowered, more likely, it is a permanent lowering. I mean, I think about people like Dr. Fauci. You know I, I've been in politics, I run for office, I've got thick skin. I'm not saying it's thick enough to handle all the crap that's been thrown my way, right. No one should have to deal with this. I'm trying to save lives and the act of saving lives has put my own in danger, which is -- that's just not right. But I know that this kind of job is going to be tough. I knew that coming in. People like Dr. Fauci, who has spanned six administrations, who his life's work is I mean, he's one of the most revered, respected people on the planet when it comes especially to a pandemic, like we're confronting. He has to have security now, because he's taken heat from the guy with the biggest megaphone in America. Leslie Stahl who we just quoted, now has security because she's getting death threats for interviewing a sitting president. The failure to see the humanity, I think, is part of what's plaguing us as a nation when it comes to COVID. And it's part of what's plaguing us as a nation when it comes to gun violence, and probably a litany of other subjects that we could put into the mix. You know, climate change, I mean, I can make an argument for every really important issue that we're confronting as a nation. I think that leadership, if you're a person who runs for an office like this, or they are the White House, humanity and humility are two essential components to good leadership, that the hubris and the inability to see people as people, I think, is what has really gotten

this country as far down the road as we are with this current administration. I, when when you talk about your, your mother, Christian, not everyone should have to go through an experience where they lose someone to gun violence to understand why this issue is so important to all of us. Not everyone should lose someone to COVID, like I have, and I bet Kelly's family knows people that, you know, confronted COVID or maybe lost a battle with COVID. Not every one of us should have to have that experience to understand what the threat is, and to care about one another. And yet, there's such a divide in this country right now and it's been exacerbated through the inhumanity and the, maybe natural, tendency to not look at that increasing toll and think about that it's really people were talking about. It's not just 225,000, it's 225,000 people who have died from COVID-19. It is the gun violence every day in this country, it shouldn't have to happen to you to see the problem in it. And that's what leadership, I think is, it's got to be about seeing the humanity and others that you serve, and having the humility to seek out the smartest people to actually resolve the problems.



JJ Janflone 25:21

And I think one of the things that's present there, many people feeling a lack of leadership is this feeling that violence is becoming increasingly normalized. And that escalation of violence, particularly gun violence, is becoming increasingly normalized in the US. I mean, part of that is because we lose 100 Americans a day to gun violence. People get accustomed to it, we shouldn't be accustomed to losing people through gun violence, through COVID. But I think part of that normalization has been a lot of effort done by the gun lobby and other groups to normalize this escalation of violence with firearms. And what I'm speaking of here in particular, is, you know, the initial plot, unfortunately, against you it called for storming the Michigan State Capitol building, where you can currently still openly carry a firearm. And I think we should unpack that a little bit for listeners, who are very confused, or it's a little foreign of an idea that they can A: carry gun anywhere and B: certainly not into a governmental with building. And about how laws like this have real implications for public safety, and, you know, potentially have even a disparate impact on other fundamental rights. So I'm wondering if we can just try to tease out just a little bit of that.



Gov. Whitmer 26:27

Sure. Well, as we're unpacking that, I should explain why I talked to Kelly a minute ago, because Kelly's from Detroit. And we know that the city of Detroit was hit really hard with COVID-19. And, you know, it's taken a toll, and it's why we were taking it so seriously. But, when you think about in our state capitol, the fact that guns are permitted, I know the whole world saw those pictures of Michigan with these armed protesters and wondered

"What on earth is happening, that's allowed?" I heard from so many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, wondering, why is that okay, how is that okay? This is a building, that there is no security in, that I mean, there are Capitol Police, but they, they don't check you when you come into the building. Anyone can walk into our state capitol, the theory being it's the people's building, and they should be able to have access to it. The irony, though, is the legislature, who decides whether or not there's a ban on guns on the Capitol, they are in a building across the street, where you cannot open-carry a weapon and where you are checked at the door. And so they protect themselves, but the fourth grade classes that come here to the Capitol, to learn about state government, they don't have the same protections that their legislators do in their office building across the street. And it is, it does not make sense. It is ridiculous. Those pictures, I talked to so many of my colleagues, or my friends from the legislature, I used to be a legislator, so I think of them as colleagues still on occasion. But I talked to so many of them and the gallery where that where they vote is open to I'm sorry, where they vote, the floor is open to a gallery that's all the way above them. So a lot of them have been showing up with bulletproof vests on to go and vote and to just do their job. It's not right. And we've got a battle here, the Capitol commission, four of the members of it are appointed by the leaders of the legislature, who are, one of whom got thrown off a plane for open-carrying a gun onto the plane by accident. And then the others who are appointed by me, so I have one, only one third of the votes on it. And that's why this is still able to do it. And it sends a message. I mean, and it scares the heck out of a lot of people who work here every single day, including the press.

C

Christian Heyne 28:48

Right, well, I think it's it always reminds me of that, you know, and now we're having this debate about guns and polling places to which I know you're very familiar with as well, just from the leadership that you're in so many in Michigan have been providing there. But this idea that one fundamental right, can supersede another, right. And I think, you know, our ability to be able to operate as a as a democracy. I mean, our elections dictate that, not the people carrying the weapons, right. And we need to really remember that, and even Abraham Lincoln would would talk about it, right, when he would, when he, when he spoke about how, you know, our democracy should be decided by the ballot box, not the bullet box, and we are still seeing that happen. Time and time again. I do want just real quick as well to I'm gonna ask a question, JJ and Kelly, if that's okay, I've been on a couple times I feel like I have figured out how to do it. But um, I think the other thing that's so incredible about where we are today in gun violence prevention is, you know, there is this long standing conventional wisdom that we just shouldn't talk about guns or that it's a third rail issue, and I think what we have seen for the last 10 years is that that's just not true. You know, Virginia, fundamentally, Virginia was a place where you could carry right

into the Assembly building as well. That all changed as did a slate of their guns, their gun policies. And it's because gun violence prevention was such a winning issue in that state, where the NRA is headquartered. I think it's important that people recognize that gun owners and non-gun owners alike support so much of the things that we're talking about. We're talking about a small faction of extremists and domestic terrorists, but there are gun owners everywhere across the country that want gun violence to stop, that support universal background checks, that support the, you know, that don't want those things. So I just want to I just wanted to ask you sort of what your thoughts are, and how it has been talking about gun violence prevention, as the governor of a state with such a proud experience and gun ownership as well, because we know that, that they care about this too.

G

Gov. Whitmer 30:54

Yeah no Christian, I think what you said is, is truly accurate. The vast majority of responsible gun owners recognize that our laws are not sufficient to keep guns out of the hands of people that shouldn't have them, that are inherently dangerous to themselves or to others. We have a proud hunting culture in Michigan. I mean, I'll tell you how, how ingrained that is. When I was first in the legislature and I looked at the legislative calendar, I'm like, "Why are we taking two weeks off before Thanksgiving? Like I don't get it." And they explained that's hunting season. And now I know opening day is November 15, because the legislature shuts down for hunting season, for a few weeks. That probably sounds bizarre to some who are listening to this conversation. But if there is a, an important hunting culture in Michigan, vast majority of people who consider themselves to be a part of that, that proud culture, also recognize that we need to have responsible laws on the books to keep guns out of the hands of people that are intent on hurting others, are intent on threatening others and violating the law. I mean, I think that there's a way to talk about this, that we can bring more people into the conversation. But I also know that as a mom, with kids in the public schools, I live in, you know, consistent fear that there will be some violence at a school in Michigan as the governor of the state, I am glad that we have not had a major incident. But I know Michigan is not any different than other states. And a lot of the issues we're confronting are not any different. And that's why we need to have, I think, more thoughtful national policies to protect everyone across this country.

K

Kelly Sampson 32:46

And Governor, I want to go back to something you mentioned, when you were talking about guns in the state house, intimidating elected officials that they're trying to do their job. Because we've seen trends around guns at polling places trying to intimidate voters and poll workers as they try to exercise the right to vote, and that's been something that's

been happening in many states, but in Michigan in particular, I know that Secretary of State Benson, and Attorney General Nessel, as well as you and your colleagues and counterparts in other states, have been fighting to ban guns in the polls. And we just saw last night that a judge in Michigan rejected an opportunity to ban guns at the polls. And so I'm wondering if you could talk about what that process was like to try to ban guns from polling places, and why that would be so important in the middle of an election?



33:35

Well, I first thing to say I'm really grateful that in 2018, we elected people like Jocelyn Benson and Dana Nessel. As we go into this historic election, had one of those races gone the other way, I'd be a lot more concerned about our strategy going into the actual election and making sure every vote gets counted and, and that we keep people safe at the polls. If you didn't buy into and believe in those values, it would be a lot more concerning for me. All that being said, I remain concerned, of course, with this, the rhetoric. I mean, as I mentioned, Donald Trump was here in Michigan yesterday, he'll be back. And they do the "Lock her up" chant every time, and the you know, yesterday they ridiculed whether or not there really was a plot, a kidnapping plot, I mean, just belittling it. And it's this kind of attitude that gives license to and oxygen to and credibility to these groups that threaten their fellow Americans and perhaps want to intimidate people who want to vote on on Tuesday. It's also why we have really worked hard to make sure people in Michigan now, you can go vote now. And the more people that vote now, the less likely they'll wait in line for a long time and be subjected to COVID-19 spread or intimidation at the polls on election day. And we're really pushing to make sure people know that this is, this is a right that is available for the first time this year because we amended our constitution in '18. The right to vote is fundamental. The right to participate in this democracy with the confidence that your vote has integrity and will get counted, and that you will be safe when you vote is fundamental to the core of this democracy that we have. And we're going to do everything we can to ensure that every vote gets counted, and every voter is safe.

K

Kris Brown 35:28

Thank you so much for that and for your leadership around these issues. Brady has been involved in the issues around voter intimidation, and certainly armed intimidation, obviously, from our genesis. And we have been very focused on this. And this election, for all of the reasons that you've talked about, the main concern that we have is historically disenfranchised communities, those who have had all kinds of obstacles and hurdles, intentional put in their way to vote, may be those that are targeted for these kinds of activities. So knowing that you are doing everything you can to ensure that they can vote,

and that they can vote early too, as you're saying, now go in and cast the vote, I think is so critically important. Obviously, we see all across this country, historic numbers of people voting in states like yours who've opened it up. So I just want to say thank you so much for doing that. Because the issue of gun violence and the impact, particularly on communities of color, those are the exact same communities that historically have been disenfranchised from the ballot box. And if that hadn't happened, I honestly believe we'd have more leaders, frankly, like you, and more gun violence champions. So we aim to help you and other leaders across this country fix that, in a real way.



36:54

Yeah, well, the work that you're doing is so important. And it's such a great resource for so many of us that are trying to tackle a lot of different issues. But to be able to learn from and work with you, I think is really important. So I appreciate everything that you're doing.



JJ Janflone 37:11

Well, and we appreciate you. So I love that this was a this was a lovely happy fest despite the fact that we were talking about very hard, difficult things, but tough stuff. Yeah, I think it's this is one of the thing about gun violence, is it's so intersectional, that it touches on so many things. But even just to be able to tease out one or two threads, especially a big thing like democracy, is a pretty good way to spend about 30 minutes. So I want to thank you on behalf of Brady, so much for joining us, Governor. And before we have to bid you adieu, if people out there, they want to get more information, where can people find that info?



Kris Brown 37:44

For Brady, Bradyunited.org. And I would call attention to our page that is constantly being updated with information about armed intimidation at the polls, all sorts of resources for voters and other elected officials on the front lines of this. So please do find out more information there.



JJ Janflone 38:03

Well, thank you all so much for joining us today. And let's go vote!



Gov. Whitmer 38:07

All right, let's do it! Thank you, everybody.



JJ Janflone 38:10

Thank you. Hey, want to share with the podcast? Listeners can now get in touch with us here at "Red, Blue and Brady" via phone or text message. Simply call or text us at 480-744-3452 with your thoughts, questions, concerns, ideas, whatever! You know what else you should share? As voters continue to head to the polls. We all deserve to feel safe while exercising our right to the ballot. No one should ever be threatened with guns while exercising their right to vote. Guns at the polls is not only dangerous, it is voter suppression -- plain and simple. Brady is working tirelessly to keep voters in our election safe. Visit our website, DisarmElections.com for tools and resources on how you can advocate for gun-free polling places, and ensure safe voting in your state. Thanks for listening. As always Brady's life saving work in Congress, the courts and communities across the country is made possible thanks to you. For more information on Brady or how to get involved in the fight against gun violence, please like and subscribe to the podcast, get in touch with us at Bradyunited.org or on social @Bradybuzz. Be brave and remember -- take action not sides.