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Made in America Panel Promotes Trade as an Integral Part of the American Economy and as a Job Creator

Host Neal Asbury, together with co-host Dr. Rich Roffman, opened their nationally syndicated "Neal Asbury's Made in America" show on Radio America (aired by almost 100 affiliates and by the Armed Forces Network) by admonishing Democrats for not supporting a merit-based immigration system that would give priority status to immigrants that possess the advanced skills American industry seeks.

Dr. Roffman maintained that the Democrat position that everybody should be admitted to America—with no attention to their skills—is deeply flawed because it saps resources that should be available to citizens.

Neal also noted that the Democrats really miss the boat by not supporting Trump's infrastructure program, which is badly needed to shore up crumbling bridges and highways.

"Democrats just won't support anything that Republicans support. It's so bad that Democrats wouldn't support Trump singing Happy Birthday," quipped Dr. Roffman.

The first guest on Made in America was Aaron Renn, who proposed that President Trump's proposed \$1.5 trillion infrastructure program takes a page out of his playbook as a real estate developer, leveraging other people's money to build things. Trump is proposing a \$200 billion federal contribution, about 13 percent of his hoped-for investment total; the idea is that the initial federal investment will encourage states, localities, and private investors to contribute the remaining 87 percent.

"Despite Democrats balking at supporting Trump's infrastructure program, Chuck Schumer badly wants money to fund a big infrastructure project for New York, so I think he will be motivated to work something out. Essentially, the federal government will fund up to 20 percent of an infrastructure project, with the rest coming from the states or the private sector. The plan would let states raise funds by converting roads to toll roads, so that users would pay for the needed revenue. The old funding source that was dependent on gas taxes simply isn't enough, especially as more cars become hybrids or are battery-run," according to Renn.

Dr. Roffman agreed, noting that Oregon tried an ill-fated revenue program based on mileage driven, which only attracted 750 people. Doesn't look like a feasible option. Neal is frustrated that Asian countries are able to invest billions in infrastructure programs largely funded by numerous toll roads, which means it is paid by users. Neal believes that this should work in America.

Renn agreed, proposing that when users pay for it, the process becomes very visible. People

know if the project is necessary, which adds more discipline to the process so those infamous "roads to nowhere" are eliminated.

The next guest on Made in America was John Tamny from Freedom Works, who agreed with Neal that regulatory agencies interfere with entrepreneurial growth.

"A real example of an agency that is over reaching is the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), which was founded in 2008, to make sure banks, lenders, and other financial companies treat you fairly. This was in response to a worsening economic picture, which turned out to be a necessary course correction. You have to wonder about the people serving on the CFPB. If they were any good at forecasting, they would have stayed in the private sector to make tons of money. Even the acting head of CFPB, Mick Mulvaney, isn't sure that CFPB needs to exist," proposed Tamny, who thinks that the government shouldn't police lending practices, since lenders aren't in the habit of lending money to people who they know will default on the loan—a risky business structure.

The next guest on Made in America was Philip A. Wallach, from the R Street Institute, who suggested that while members of congress may arrive in Washington with big ideas about how to change policy in service of their constituents' interests, or even about pursuing politics as a vocation, with all the difficult compromises that entails, most members of Congress justly feel they are given no real part in these decisions today.

"The Capitol seems like the right place to pursue these ambitions, given our legislature's constitutionally prescribed responsibility for making fundamental choices about our government's role in its citizens' lives and on the world stage. Normal members find that their job description as legislators is reduced to showing up to cast votes when the leadership instructs—and those are usually carefully stage-managed votes, with little suspense about the outcome. New ideas aren't welcome which is frustrating to new members of Congress," proposed Wallach.

Dr. Roffman referenced the film "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," where an idealistic Jimmy Stewart portrays an earnest congressman who comes to understand that he's part of an ineffectual and even corrupt organization.

The final guest on Made in America was John Manzella, publisher of the Manzella Report, who is an in-demand speaker and author. Manzella conjectures that people who think that trade is diminishing American job opportunities, need to

consider the role of automation in reducing the size of the job market in manufacturing and agriculture.

"At one time there were 9.5 million farms. Today, there are 2.5 million farms, but these farms are driving more agricultural production in history, with millions of fewer workers. There once were 19.5 million manufacturers. Today there are 12.5 million manufacturers, who have greatly expanded productivity and output, with millions of fewer workers," proposed Manzella.

Manzella agreed with Neal and Dr. Roffman that this production is dependent on having the skilled workers needed for today's emerging technologies. The term "skill deficit" readily describes the situation in America where flawed immigration policies are preventing skilled foreign workers from emigrating to the U.S. This is on top of the thousands of kids graduating colleges with degrees that don't lead to a job or career, who could have attended a trade school or participated in apprenticeships which have been slow to emerge in the U.S. despite their great success in Europe.

The discussion turned back to the proposed infrastructure program, where Dr. Roffman is a big advocate of P3 programs that combine funding from the federal government, state government and from the private sector.

Neal agrees and wants to see more user-fee programs that call on those people who use a road, to help pay for it through tolls. This has been very successful in Florida.

Neal also returned to the topic of redundant, ineffectual federal agencies, such as the aforementioned CFPB, or the Commerce department, which has 20 overlapping agencies overseeing trade.

Each week Neal Asbury's Made in America provides Neal's insights into the week's top news stories and their impact on the worlds of entrepreneurship, small business ownership and the overall economy. Neal's analysis, together with co-host Dr. Richard Roffman, a veteran 30-year publisher with extensive domestic and international experience, takes a non-biased approach based on real life experience in business as an American manufacturer and exporter. Made in America airs nationally each Saturday from 7-8:00 PM on Radio America. Link to Made in America at <http://www.nealasburysmadeinamerica.com>.



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