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Made in America Panel Urges Government to Accelerate Funding of Decaying American Infrastructure

Neal Asbury, together with co-host Dr. Rich Roffman, opened the nationally syndicated "Neal Asbury's Made in America" show on Radio America (aired by almost 100 affiliates) by reminiscing about his meeting with Mike Rogers, currently under consideration for the next FBI Director. He found him thoughtful and personable and noted that he is a big fan of talk radio, and actually hosted his own show.

The first guest on Made in America was Aaron Renn, whose piece "Rebuilding American Infrastructure," ran in American Affairs. Renn suggested that when Donald Trump chose "Make America Great Again" as his campaign slogan, he put words to something Americans had increasingly come to see and feel. For many people, their personal lives and communities were no longer as great as they used to be, and they were looking for someone to set things right. Restoring rather than building greatness is an unusual challenge in America. But it is one that has become increasingly real over the last two decades, as much of the country has sunk into a malaise that is physically visible in distressed but once-thriving towns.

"This need to Make America Great Again applies especially to our infrastructure. We have already built fantastic national networks of highways and bridges, airports, rail lines, inland waterways, electricity, water and sewer, and telecom infrastructure. The challenge today is not to build some vast footprint of new infrastructure in the style of the Transcontinental Railroad. Rather, it is to make the infrastructure we already have, much of which has been unconscionably left to decay, great again," proposed Renn.

Renn is a big fan of the proposed Trump \$1 trillion budget to fund infrastructure revitalization, and would like to see some of the funding targeted to surface transportation be allocated to repair decaying water and sewer systems.

Neal pointed to the LaGuardia Airport renovation as a project that should have been completed years ago, but got caught up in political fighting.

Renn agreed, noting that politics and regulations are the culprits in delaying infrastructure projects, and took Democrats to task for not supporting the vital work that needs to be done that would benefit the entire nation.

Dr. Roffman gave high marks to the P3 initiative in Florida that is based on public and private funding of infrastructure projects, and advocated for this to become a national model.

Renn likes the idea but doesn't think it is practical for many regions. It would work best in the Northeast corridor, but regional Democrats and Republicans cannot agree on anything, despite the glaring need for this work.

Neal wants to see the U.S. investing in the kind of bullet trains that have revolutionized Japan's rail system. Or think about the elevated highways in parts of Asia that keep traffic moving.

Renn is a fan, but suggested that the Northeast corridor is the only area where a bullet train makes sense due to the population density and important routes between New York, New Jersey and Washington. However, Renn notes that Amtrak estimates the work at \$150 billion – an indication that U.S. construction rates are way out of line.

The next guest on Made in America was Marvin McIntyre, co-author of "The Outsider: Invest in America," which well before Trump's nomination, "imagined a political outsider, a multi-billionaire with the ability to self-fund a campaign, upending the Republican party, manufacturing public sentiment, and changing the course of politics in our country forever. Spinning a web of coercion, manipulation, and inside information, this former hedge fund manager deals his own house of cards to ruthlessly transform the political landscape."

McIntyre maintained that he did not pattern his fictional character after Trump, who like his character, could be considered the first elected president who ran as an independent. In addition, McIntyre had his character recommend a 15 percent corporate tax rate; like Trump.

"My character is like Trump in many ways because he is forceful and his philosophy is not shaped by a political party. He tells people what they want to hear," suggested McIntyre.

The final guest on Made in America was Jake Novak, senior columnist for CNBC, whose piece "The Trump Budget is Just Telling the Truth—and You Can't Handle the Truth!" proposed that America finally has something it's needed for decades: A budget that starts to tell the truth. And some people don't seem to be able to handle the truth. But they need to start.

"The truth is coming in the form of the White House budget that calls for major cuts to entitlement programs that are not sustainable, taxes that punish productivity and growth, and the fundamental understanding that politicians cannot be trusted to spend our money. We can't spend money we don't have. Somebody

has to tell Democrats that math is real and that we can't just continue to hand out money. Democrats are actually math deniers," maintained Novak.

Dr. Roffman was incredulous that former House speaker John Boehner, was quoted as saying that "tax reform is just happy talk."

Novak opined that it's not up to taxpayers to balance the budget. "That's the responsibility of our elected officials. They need to figure this out. After all, they are spending our money."

This prompted Dr. Roffman to mention Mark Zuckerberg's recent suggestion that we should be giving people free money. That has never worked. Just look at the failure of the War on Poverty, which not only didn't decrease poverty; it actually led to more poverty.

"We are building a system based on the old serf system, where feudal lords handed out money that kept them in servitude for life and killed any initiative to have a purpose in life. Handouts aren't the answer," concluded Novak.

Neal returned to the infrastructure discussion and believes, like Dr. Roffman, that a public/private partnership to fund infrastructure projects will help reduce the \$1 trillion budget that will come out of taxpayer money.

"It worked in Florida. It stimulated the private sector and motivated the public sector. People got the projects completed that were their priorities," noted Dr. Roffman.

The show ended with a brief discussion about the healthcare negotiations. Both Neal and Dr. Roffman are frustrated that despite owning the House and Senate, Republicans have allowed Democrats to co-opt the discussion.

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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