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Made in America Panel Urges Congress to Get Back to Policies Instead of Politics

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 urging Congress to stop putting politics before policies so that we can move this country forward.

"While we argue over politics, our competitors are eating our lunch. They are taking advantage of our nation's polarization," according to Neal.

Dr. Roffman agreed, hoping that Congress can look for solutions that will get us back to discussing important policies.

The first guest on Made in America was James Wallner from the R Street Institute, who proposed that "Democrats have threatened to filibuster Republican efforts to debate important legislation on the Senate floor. But this is nothing new. The filibuster has been used in the past to frustrate both Democratic and Republican majorities. It has prevented both liberal and conservative policies from passing. This has made it the bane of Senate majorities, their co-partisans in the House of Representatives, and the president."

Wallner suggested that the Senate's current rules already give majorities the power to end needless delays. And using those rules to clamp down on minority obstruction will be of greater benefit to Republicans than eliminating the filibuster, which would have long-term repercussions for the institution more generally.

"Republicans should move to begin debate on a bill. They would then keep the Senate in the same legislative day by recessing, instead of adjourning, at the end of each day. Once a senator has given two speeches, that member may not speak again. Democrats' filibuster ends when the members who are committed to blocking debate on the bill have given the two speeches the rule allots them. At that point, the Senate's presiding officer may put the question (i.e., call for a vote) on adoption of the motion to proceed, which is a simple-majority vote. Make it painful to obstruct a vote," maintained Wallner.

Neal noted that the fight in Congress is indicative of a very divided country that can't get anything passed, like tax reform and healthcare reform.

"I just returned from China, where I have a manufacturing plant that only carries a 15 percent tax rate. I'm being assessed 30 percent in the U.S., but communist China can prosper by lowering the corporate tax rate. This expands the

tax base, allowing China to invest in infrastructure, job growth and exports," noted Neal.

Dr. Roffman agreed with Neal that America's inability to create and maintain jobs poses the greatest threat to the nation.

The next guest on Made in America was Sage Levine, author of "Women Rocking Business," whose mission is to empower women entrepreneurs.

Her philosophy emphasizes "Collaboration rather than Competition; Empowerment rather than Power Over; Resource Sharing rather than Resource Extraction; Growing an organization that gives Back to the World; and Bigger is NOT always better... We Value Joy before Material Gain."

"Women start businesses at a rate 1 1/2 times faster than men, but they also fail faster than men. Women need to learn entrepreneurship but still embrace women values and empowerment. I instill the value that generosity and nurturing are real assets. The growth of women entrepreneurs is growing but many lack leadership skills. Women want it all and can have it all," maintained Levine.

Dr. Roffman concurred with Levine's assessment, noting that Miami has a thriving community of successful women. One of the reasons they are successful is that they can fall back on peer and mentoring groups to help them succeed.

"Women represent the largest untapped business resource," concluded Neal.

The final guest on Made in America was Charles Hughes, who revealed that a new working paper by Grace Lordan of the London School of Economics and David Neumark of the University of California at Irvine finds that increasing the minimum wage lowers the share of jobs susceptible to automation held by low-skill workers. A \$1 increase in the minimum wage lowers this share by 0.43 percentage points. Increases also adversely affect the workers' likelihood of being employed and hours worked.

"It is estimated that 50 percent of today's jobs will eventually be replaced by automation and artificial intelligence. I just came back from Mobile, Alabama, where a private spaceflight company owned by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos plans to build a powerful new rocket engine in Alabama. It will be heavily automated but will still create hundreds of high-paying jobs. Workers being replaced by automation is a trend that workers should be paying attention to if they want to have a job," predicted Dr. Roffman, who

has followed the surge in robots over the past three years.

Hughes agreed, noting that while younger workers see large effects in many sectors, the estimate for manufacturing is close to zero. In contrast, the share for older workers in "automatable" jobs in manufacturing decreases by 1.68 percentage points in response to a \$1 minimum wage increase. Previous minimum wage studies might have overlooked the extent of this effect on this subgroup of older workers. Along other demographic dimensions, female and African-American workers tended to see larger adverse effects, although the magnitude of these differences varied by industry.

The discussion segued to a news item about Elon Musk being outplayed by former employees that have created a battery company that will compete directly with Musk himself.

"Musk was a well known supporter of Obama who received billions of dollars in government subsidies to fund his operations. The new Romeo Plant in Los Angeles, owned and operated by former employees, has raised \$30,000,000 in funding for a power pack that is smaller and lasts longer than Musk's battery packs. They already have \$65,000,000 in orders for 2019," according to Dr. Roffman.

Neal revisited the negotiations underway on NAFTA; an agreement which Neal supports since it has proved a boon to his manufacturing export business.

"I want access to Mexico and Canada with the favorable terms that allows me to make a profit. We trade more with NAFTA countries than with Japan and China combined. Pushing to overturn NAFTA is a really bad idea that will push America backwards on global trade," proposed Neal.

Finally, Dr. Roffman predicted that Amazon's purchase of Whole Foods will change the way consumers shop for groceries. "Instead of going to the store to buy groceries, the groceries will come to them."

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



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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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