



The Economic Club of New York

114th Year
578th Meeting

Charlie Cook
Founder, The Cook Political Report
NBC News Political Analyst

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Webinar

Moderator: Barbara Van Allen
President, The Economic Club of New York

Introduction

President Barbara Van Allen

Good afternoon and welcome to our first event of 2021 and the 578th meeting of The Economic Club of New York in our 114th year. I'm Barbara Van Allen, President of the Club and I'm honored to be here with all of you today. As many of you know, The Economic Club of New York is the nation's leading nonpartisan forum for the respectful exchange of diverse perspectives on economic, social and political issues. I hope we would all agree with the recent unsettling attacks on our democracy, even our nation's capital, that this mission is perhaps more important today than it has ever been.

I'd like to take a moment to recognize those of our 321 members of the Centennial Society that have joined us today as their contributions continue to be the financial backbone of our Club and help enable us to offer our programming now and in the future. A friendly reminder that applications for the ECNY 2021 Class of Fellows – a select group of next-generation business leaders – are still welcome this month. Please visit our website for details. We'd also like to welcome graduate students from Rutgers University, NYU Stern School of Business and the CUNY Graduate Center. We're actually proud, and I just wanted to share, that the Club was able to host 750 graduate and undergraduate students from around the country last year and we hope to do that again this year.

It's a special honor for me to welcome back my friend and our special guest today, Charlie Cook. Charlie is the Editor and Publisher of *The Cook Political Report*, a political analyst for the National Journal Group, and a political analyst for NBC News.

In 1984, he founded the independent, nonpartisan *Cook Political Report*. Now, with a staff of six, it's a publication that the *New York Times* has categorized as "a newsletter that both parties regard as authoritative" and CBS News' Bob Schieffer called "the bible of the political community." And the *Wall Street Journal* has referred to Cook as "the Picasso of election analysis."

Charlie has appeared on a wide variety of media outlets including ABC World News Tonight, the CBS Evening News, the NBC Nightly News, and on ABC's This Week. Over the years, Charlie has served as an Election Night analyst for CBS, CNN, and since 1996, on the NBC News Election Night Decision Desk in New York.

In 2010, Charlie was the co-recipient of the American Political Science Association's prestigious Carey McWilliams Award to honor "a major journalistic contribution to our understanding of politics."

So, just to get going here, the format will begin with a few remarks from Charlie, and actually these are some remarks that are new for the first time to any audience, followed

by a conversation in which I'm fortunate to be doing the honors. We'll end promptly at 2:45. Any questions sent to the Club from members in advance were shared with me. As a reminder, this conversation is on the record and we do have media on the line. Charlie, I'll turn it over to you.

Remarks by Charlie Cook

Thank you Barbara. It's always an honor – and a little intimidating – to speak to the Economic Club, such a prestigious organization with so incredibly impressive people. Normally when it's more than two months after an election and, you know, 20 months before the next election, I don't have a problem with having too much to talk about. But given everything that's happened in the last five years, in the last one year, and in the last week, we've got a lot to talk about.

And rather than doing a more traditional post-election postmortem, what I thought I'd do is sort of go a little higher up, a little 30,000 foot, and talk about, you know, what in the hell is going on and where are we as a nation, and what are the risks and the opportunities for the next two years? And what about impeachment and what about President Biden, how does he fit into all of this? But it does mean to talk a little bit less about the election than I normally would.

Everyone has heard, it's almost become a cliché to say that we are a very deeply partisan, bitterly and narrowly divided country. We're not evenly divided but we're not that far off of evenly divided. It's closer than I think either side would like to admit. The second point that I'm going to talk about is we are a center-right country. Our underlying values, our political values are different from those that are more common in Europe. And, you know, we are a country that most of us are descendants of people that came from other countries for advancement, for better opportunity and that creates, with a little bit more of a self-strong individualism, self-reliance, that sort of thing than you see, desire for upward mobility than you see in a lot of other societies. And the third thing I was going to talk about is how fragile we are as a country and what some of the dangers are with that and then look and talk about maybe where things may be going politically-speaking.

But in terms of highly combustible, you know what we saw at the Capitol last week, that tragic and shocking situation, there's a lot going on in our society right now. And we're seeing some forms of populism unlike any that we've seen before and combined with nationalism, with isolationism, in some cases with racism and negativism. And some people feel that the way they practice their religion is under attack, that their values are under siege. And others feel upset about political correctness and they're angry that statues of Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses Grant are getting taken down or names changed on schools and they just sort of hit a flaming point over on the right.

But we see this on the other side as well in terms of, you know, the Black Lives Matter, of course it was about law enforcement procedures in treatment of minorities. But it also gets into income inequality, into a perception of a lack of opportunity, a lack of economic and social mobility among minorities as well, or many minorities as well. And all this is coming together and created something that is just a lot more volatile than we've been kind of used to or that I think that we were expecting. So let's talk about each of these three things.

In terms of the partisanship and the polarization, let's step back over the last ten years and basically using the Gallup numbers, about 34% of Americans consider themselves Democrats, 27% percent Republican. So that's a seven-point Democratic advantage with 41% though identifying themselves as Independents. But if you just look at last year's where they aggregated all the Gallup polling for last year, it was a lot narrower between the two parties. It was 30% for Democrats, 29% for Republicans. So Democrats up only one, and Independents at 38%. But the thing is that people tend to think of that block of Independents as this is the swing constituency, the swing center in whichever way they go.

But it's not quite that way because of those people that consider themselves Independent, a lot of them just simply aren't. You know probably 90% of the people, I mean we know that 90% of the people that consider themselves Democrats are going to

vote Democrat down the line and the same thing for Republicans, 90%. But of those people who call themselves Independents, the vast majority of them, actually if you ask them, lean either towards Republicans or lean towards Democrats. And even those Independents who say they lean Republican, they're voting Republican 80% of the time, and the same thing for the Independents who lean Democrat. They're voting Democratic 80% of the time. So some of these people, they like to say, call themselves Independents, but practically speaking they're partisans as well. And that only leaves about 10 or 11% that are honest to God pure Independents without a lean one way or the other. And that 10% is key in a lot of elections but it's not nearly as big as, you know, when people think it's 35% or 40%.

Now in terms of the partisanship of where we are right now, it's incredible the numbers we're seeing in terms of partisanship, in terms of a lack of ticket-splitting. Depending upon which of the two exit polls you look at, among Democrats, people that call themselves Democrats, Joe Biden won 94 to 6 in one and 95 to 4 in the other. So it was either an 88 or 91-point margin. Among Republicans, they voted for Donald Trump, 94 - 6 or 91 to 8 in the other. So 91 or 94-point margin. So each side sort of held serve politically a great deal.

Now what about the ticket-splitting? In 2000, that was the first election, or 2016 – I should say – the last presidential election, that was the first election since we started the

direct election of U.S. senators in 1914, that every single U.S. Senate race was won by the same party that was carrying that state in the presidential, 100%. It had never happened before. Well, what happened this year? 34 out of 35 U.S. Senate races were won by the same party that was carrying that state in the presidential. The only senator that was elected or Senate victor that was elected was Susan Collins in Maine, Susan Collins in Maine. So that's the only one in the entire country. And in the House, you see a corresponding, you know, very similar level. So you just don't see anybody that considers themselves Democrats voting for a Republican or vice versa.

But the other thing we're seeing is something called negative partisanship. And that is where people who hate, it's not just people, it's people who hate the other party and leaders of the other party even more than they like their own party, and Alan Abramowitz from Emory University has written about this a good deal. It's just levels of hostility on each side.

Public Opinion Strategies recently did a survey where they found that, well, 20 years ago 55% of Democrats had a negative opinion of Republicans, 55%. Now it's 83% of Democrats have a negative opinion of Republicans. Twenty years ago, 65% of Republicans had a negative opinion of Democrats. Now it's 86% of Republicans have negative opinions of Democrats.

But it's worse than that. Some surveys that we've seen recently from the Public Religion Research Institute shows that 80% of Democrats believe that the Republican party has been taken over by racists, 80% of Democrats. And 82% of Republicans believe the Democratic party has been taken over by Socialists. I mean that's how bad it's gotten in the sort of assumption of the worst. You know in some polling we're seeing 86% of, well, let's say, and their emphasis on issues, totally different. For example, 77% of Democrats will say healthcare is one of the three critical issues facing the country, 77%. But only 48% of Republicans. Seventy-two percent of Democrats say climate change is one of the three most critical, but only 17% of Republicans believe that climate change is one of the three most critical. Sixty-three percent of Democrats say foreign interference in our presidential elections is one of the top three issues, but only 26% of Republicans do.

But on the other way, if I go in the other direction, 63% of Republicans say that terrorism is one of the top three things, only 50% of Democrats do. Sixty percent of Republicans believe immigration is one of the top issues, only 42% of Democrats. And 50% of Republicans believe crime is a top issue, but only 38% of Democrats do. So what we're seeing, one poll two years ago from Pew Research, 55% of Republicans believe that Democrats were more immoral than other Americans. Forty-seven percent of Democrats believe that Republicans were more immoral than Americans as a whole. And just a little bit more flippantly, 60% of Democrats wouldn't want their son or

daughter to marry Republican. Sixty-three percent of Republicans wouldn't want their son or daughter to marry Democrat.

But what we're seeing is these escalating levels of partisanship. And if you think back to George H.W. Bush, 41, nobody hated George H.W. Bush. But think about what's happened since then. The level of animosity among Republicans towards Bill Clinton was something the likes of which we had not seen in a long time, even going back when I first moved to Washington, when President Nixon was in office, far more. And then George W. Bush came in, the level of animosity towards him among Democrats was even more than the animosity of Republicans towards Clinton. And then when Obama came in, it went to an all-new level of Republicans having a greater level of animosity towards Obama than they did for Clinton. And then when Trump came in, it was flipped over the other way around.

Now part of what we're seeing is an ideological sorting where we're seeing the people that were conservative, that were conservative Democrats and some moderates basically either left the Democratic party or they died or pulled out of politics. And the same thing for Liberal and a lot of moderate Republicans. They either died or they left the Republican party. So the parties are more ideologically coherent than they used to be. And that helps along with the media environment, social media, all these things are creating a greater intensity than we ever saw before.

And then finally we're seeing some realignment taking place. I mean we have been seeing for 20, 30 years a combination of rural and small-town Whites leaving the Democratic party and moving more and more over towards the Republican party and the same thing among working class, Whites with less than four-year college degree, leaving the Democratic party and moving towards the Republican party. And then conversely, more suburban voters, college-educated, White suburban voters, particularly but not exclusively women, moving in the opposite direction. And so we're seeing less income, economic class related as much as who you are, how much education, where you live, that sort of thing.

Now, all of this with these two parties that are narrowly divided, not evenly, but narrowly divided and that small, little group in the middle that can tip the balance one way or the other, what it means is that small margins can have really big impact. In other words, you know in football, they say that football is a game of inches where, you know, the length of a football can make the difference between winning or losing the Super Bowl or a national championship. You know, and in business, you know the second highest market share can be considered a good thing. But in politics, the second highest market share is called losing. Politics is far more binary. And what that means is that we've got, we see so many of these elections that turn on such small numbers.

A couple of my favorites was in 1910 there was a race in the 36th District of New York

where a Democrat won election to Congress by one vote, one vote. In 1974, there was a New Hampshire Senate race that at one point it was up two votes. They ended up re-running the race before all was said and done. In the 8th District of Indiana back in 1984, they had a race that turned on four votes. But in this election, just passed in November, in Iowa's 2nd District, the Republican won by six votes, six votes out of over, almost 400,000 cast. And in New York's 22nd District, you've got, right now it's still, there are like 2,500 votes that are being contested, but right now the Republican Claudia Tenney, who is the former congresswoman from that district is ahead by 12 points.

Now let's take it to the presidential level, to the big show. Back in 2016, there were five states that Hillary Clinton won, or excuse me, five states that Hillary Clinton lost by a point and a half or less – Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Florida, a total of 75 electoral votes in states that she lost by one and a half percentage points or less. Conversely, Trump only lost one state by a point and a half or less and that was New Hampshire with only four electoral votes, so that Donald Trump benefitted enormously with the close races breaking his way.

Well, what happened in this election? In this election, Biden won five states with margins of a point and a half or less, five states – Georgia, Arizona, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, a total of 57 electoral votes. Trump only won one state by less than a point and a half. So really small groups of voters, plots of voters can have huge, huge

ramifications given our binary state. This kind of reminds you of the butterfly theory and chaos theory that small, you know, a butterfly can flap its wings and cause tornadoes in other places. Well, this is small groups of votes can have huge, huge policy consequences. But we are seeing these escalating levels of partisanship.

Now, part of what we're seeing, though, and this gets in to what we saw last week, is that there are a group of Americans that, you know, when animals get like wild, if an animal is cornered, look at how they react. If a person, a person's survival instinct, and we have groups of people in this country that – right or wrong – they perceive themselves as being in some form of danger. And whether it's their economic livelihoods and whether they think that the, you know, whether it's trade policy or governmental policy or environmental, whether it's their livelihoods, their ways of life, they think that their religion is being used against them and they're unable to practice their religion, that morality of society is going downhill, that the country is going downhill.

There was a piece in yesterday's *Washington Post*, where they interviewed a former CIA counter-terrorism analyst who said that, was talking about groups of people and she was equating sort of what we're seeing with some terrorists in the Middle East and some of the behavior that we've seen of late is people that believe that we had this glorious past and it got screwed up and now we need to do something about it. The world used to be a better place and it's someone else's fault that it isn't and that

President Trump basically played on and amplified these messages of people that felt threatened and that that's sort of what brought them to this, is in their minds the economy is under siege. They feel, you know, they feel under siege. So, anyway, we've got some really weird things going on.

Now, a second point, center-right country. One of the things we noticed is that, you know, people, you know a lot of my Democratic friends and a lot of my friends in New York say how in the world can you say that this is a center-right country. Well, think about it for a second. Given all the things that President Trump has said and done, given his style, his leadership style, 47% of the vote, he won 47% of the vote, one point higher than he did four years ago. Now, one point higher. And the thing is, now granted there were fewer votes for Independents or third-party candidates so Biden obviously did better than Clinton did, but 47%. Then he got 74 million votes, 11 million more than the 63 million that he got last time. Then he carried 25 states.

Now the thing is obviously there were people that were either (a) they were, they liked what he says and his style and his approach and they hate the people that he hates, and they feel like the people that hate him are the people that hate them. But then you have a second group that are more conventional establishment legacy Republicans – I call them – that aren't like President Trump in terms of style or demeanor and they wish he wouldn't be that way. But to them, the tax cuts, the fewer and less onerous

regulation equaled a stronger economy and they liked those conservative judges. And to them, it was worth the price, that that was worth the price of paying for President Trump's style.

Now, in terms of how volatile this all is, let me ask you a question. Who was the last President of the United States, who while he was president did not see, their party did not lose their majority in either the House or the Senate? Which was the last one? You know the answer? George H.W. Bush. Because if you think about it, Bill Clinton in 1994, he lost control of the House and the Senate in that election. George W. Bush lost both the House and the Senate in 2006. Obama lost the Democratic majority in the House in 2010 and the Senate in 2014. And then now Trump lost the majority of the House in 2018 and in this election, in November, lost the majority in the Senate.

These margins are so narrow that it doesn't take much for the whole House and the whole Senate to go back and forth. And think about that in the context that we had gone, up until 1994, we had gone 40 consecutive years with the House in Democratic hands after the '54 election all the way until '94, and the Senate had been in Democratic hands for 36 of the previous 40 years. So center-right country with not big gaps in between. The third is just how fragile, how delicate our democracy is, our country is right now where just the wrong match, the wrong spark can set it off. It's just incredibly combustible.

And, you know, when you think about, not just what happened last week, but think about all the protests that we had over the last year after various law enforcement incidents, but the thing is they were more than about law enforcement. It was about people that are, as I said a little while ago, income equality, a lack of opportunity, all these things so that you've got a lot of anger and feeling of repression on the one side and obviously – we know from last week – a lot on the other side. This is not a healthy, healthy situation to have at all and where people feel threatened by it.

So, now, let's put all that aside. Where are we right now? I'm actually a little hopeful, and I'm going to get into the impeachment stuff in just a minute, but you know if you think about the last 60 years in American politics, from 1960 through 2020, now in the first 16 years of that 60 years, we had four presidents over 16 years – John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, and Gerald Ford. All four of these presidents had served in the House of Representatives. I mean Gerry Ford for 24 years including nine years as House Minority Leader. John F. Kennedy had spent six years in the House. Lyndon Johnson, 11 years in the House. Richard Nixon, four years in the House. In fact, actually Kennedy, Nixon, and Ford overlapped by about two years. Johnson had just moved over to the Senate.

Three out of those four – Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon – had all served in the United States Senate. Johnson for twelve years, Kennedy for seven years, Nixon for just two

years but then became Vice President where he was President of the Senate. And then three had served as Vice President. But what you had was 16 years of governing of people that had an intimate knowledge of government, both from a process and a policy side and who understood institutions and what the mores, what the norms were, and they had relationships – relationships from the Hill that they brought with them into the presidency.

Now that was the first 16 of those 60 years. For the most recent 44 years, we've had 24 years of governors with none of them having the slightest bit of Washington experience whatsoever. We had one with, we've had eight years with minimal DC or congressional experience and four years, Trump with no experience whatsoever. But Carter and Reagan, 12 years, absolutely, you know, all in state government, not in Washington. And the same with Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. Now George H.W. Bush was the break in the that period where he had a long tenure of governmental service and had those relationships that I'm talking about. And then Donald Trump had none of that.

But the thing is, it's having the relationships and building trust and having people having trust in you and building trust that I think makes this presidency potentially one more like back in the old days. And when you think about it, Joe Biden came to the Senate in 1972, in fact actually Biden was in the Senate for 12 years before Mitch McConnell was ever even elected. And then they overlapped for 24 years in the U.S. Senate and then

obviously Biden for the next eight years after that, Biden was the President of the Senate, was with McConnell all the time. And in the Obama administration, Biden became known as the McConnell Whisperer because he was basically, the President had no relationship at all with Mitch McConnell, and Biden did have something of a relationship there.

I think that what we're going to see, you know, and I don't want to get schmaltzy about this, but the thing is when you think about, you know, look at two things if you're interested in this at all. You can go on Google and you can find the ceremony when Joe Biden was, they were doing the farewell to the Senate, when Biden was leaving as Vice President, and listen to Mitch McConnell's remarks about Joe Biden. That was really, really interesting. And a few years before that where Biden went down to Louisville, Kentucky, to the University of Louisville, Mitch McConnell's alma mater, to speak at the McConnell Institute, and listen to the back and forth of these guys talking. And you can just tell there is something there that we have not seen in a long time between presidents and leaders from the other side. And consider that McConnell was the only Republican senator that was at Bo Biden's funeral up in Wilmington. These are people that go back a long, long way and I would suggest that the chemistry will be different and that we've seen, just in the last week or so, we've seen something of a change in that chemistry.

Now, when do you get this kind of partisanship, this horrific partisanship that we're having today? I think it comes from two things. One is when one party, a majority or a dominant party, a party in a dominating position, just jams things down the throats of the other party, you know, takes advantage of the minority party. And the other, well, okay, but think about this now. With Democrats, they will have a wafer-thin majority in the House of Representatives, and they will have a paper-thin majority in the U.S. Senate. Nobody is jamming anything down anybody's throats for the next two years.

And the second thing is when you have a polarizing, highly polarizing personality that creates a huge amount of animus on the other side, and Biden, personality-wise, isn't really like that. And I think temperamentally, just sort of bring that together, there are only two possibilities policy-wise, legislative policy-wise over the next two years. And one is either things are built from the center out – an agenda coming from the far left has no chance of passing, an agenda coming from the far right has no chance of passing. Only things constructed from the center out has the slightest chance of victory so that either it will be more centrist, incremental type movement of less polarizing, less controversial, less ideological, or just simply nothing will happen whatsoever.

Now, how does impeachment fit into all this? Now, I'm not going to argue for a moment that President Trump hasn't done things that are absolutely completely inappropriate.

Again, I'm not a lawyer, but maybe even illegal. I'm not even going to argue that. But the

thing about it is, think about this, there is basically no way on this planet that he is going to be impeached, that he can be convicted and removed from office before he leaves office anyway because it requires not a majority, not the two-thirds that's required for conviction, but for the Senate to even take up anything other than pro forma business requires unanimous consent until January 19, the day before the inauguration. Now, does anybody think you can get unanimous consent to start a trial? No.

So we're talking about one day and then you have...so the thing is you're not going to be removing him from office before he's going to leave and the 25th Amendment is not going to be invoked because the thing is handpicked cabinets do not throw out a president unless they're under a coma and in some kind of vegetative state. It doesn't happen. And some of the members that have left the cabinet are the ones that would have voted, might have voted for it. So that's not happening.

So the question is do Democrats want to, or is it in Joe Biden's best interest for this thing to be pursued and to threaten the environment continuing to be as toxic, and going in and basically creating a situation where he can't get anything through Congress? It is not in his interest for this to go forward or to pursue this in any way. And the thing is it would be, I mean the people that hate Democrats, the people that are so anti-Democratic, they fully expect Democrats to impeach and try to remove him from office.

Now, what if, let's say, you know what we're just going to try to contain it. You know, the Speaker has already talked to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Well, anyway, the point is it's not going to, he is not going to be removed from office before January 20 so why poison the well for something that can't possibly succeed other than it'll make you feel better.

But we're going to have, I'll turn it back to Barbara in one second, but the incredibly narrow margins you've got in the House, in the Senate, that, you know, 2022, I mean there's going to be a hell of a midterm election, but the key thing is going to be either things are done with a consensus or they're not going to happen at all. And I just kind of think that we may have a situation that might lead itself to that and to one where Nancy Pelosi can say to AOC and the Squad, you know what, I agree with a lot of what you say, but you know what, it can't pass. And then McConnell can turn to the far right and his party and say, you know what, I agree with you, but it can't pass. And so center-out is the only way things are going to happen. So, you know, infrastructure, things like that, you're not going to see big tax hikes. You're not going to be seeing polarizing legislation. I think it's going to be down the middle and more incremental and, you know, I think at least politically-speaking, that could be fairly healthy. Okay, Barbara...

QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

PRESIDENT BARBARA VAN ALLEN: So I don't want to skip over Georgia completely. So just to go back to Georgia, which obviously was decisive in terms of a new majority in the Senate, what happened there? I mean for a long time we thought those races would land in the red column and of course everything switched. I know unprecedented money flowed into Georgia. What would be your thoughts about the factors that drove that outcome?

CHARLIE COOK: First of all, I think a lot of people have a hard time, you know, the old axiom about generals fighting the last war. Well, in politics people tend to wage the last campaign and they tend to, you know, view a state or a group in a static way when things are dynamic, they change. And the fact is there are places in the south that are changing rapidly and there are other places in the south that aren't changing much at all. And Georgia is one of the states where it is changing rapidly. And yes, it's a growing minority population, absolutely, but it's also an influx of non-minorities, of Whites, moving in from other parts of the country. They're not from Georgia. They're not from the south. They are bringing in voting patterns that are more like the country as a whole than indigenous southern conservative politics.

And when you saw Stacey Abrams come as close as she did in the 2018 governor's

race, when you saw the Senate race, or the presidential race, excuse me, where Joe Biden wins by a quarter of one percentage point, then you look at the two Senate races in the November 3, in the regular race that was Republican David Perdue and Democrat Jon Ossoff and there was a Libertarian that got about 2 ½ points. But basically Perdue got 49, basically it's 49 ½ and Ossoff got a touch over 48...49 ½ - 48. Wow, that's pretty close. What about in the other where you had, I think it was like eight Democrats got a combined 48% of the vote, about six or seven Republicans got a combined 49-point-something percent of the vote?

I mean this state, I would argue that Georgia is the most evenly split state in the country and that it would have, I mean it was a race that, what I've been saying for a while was this is going to be double or nothing. That Democrats will either lose both of them or they win both. But we're in an era of straight ticket voting and anybody that was going to show up for David Perdue was going to vote for Kelly Loeffler as well. Anybody who was going to show up and vote for Raphael Warnock was going to vote for Jon Ossoff as well. No ticket splitting at all. And that's basically what happened. Tiny, tiny, tiny, little differences.

And do I think that the President's behavior after the election, would that have made the difference? Yeah, probably, probably, but it was going to be close anyway. But would it have, given how close both of these were, would that have made the difference? Yeah,

probably, which could be helpful for Republicans that are trying, you know, for the legacy Republican party that wants to move away and go back in a different direction and put Donald Trump in the rearview mirror. What happened in Georgia, I mean obviously they hated losing both those seats. They hated losing their majority. But it might make it a little easier – that and the tragedy of last week – a little easier to eradicate sort of the problems that Donald Trump has created for their parties.

PRESIDENT BARBARA VAN ALLEN: When you think about giving advice to the new Senate Committee Chairs, for example, Sherrod Brown, for banking, what advice would you give given the environment in terms of a go forward for success, policy success?

CHARLIE COOK: I would say to any Committee Chairman, if you don't have at least a group of four Republicans on your committee on board a piece of legislation, then I wouldn't bother pushing it. I mean you need to have some Republican names on it and you need to, you know, you need to sell that, okay, look, this is not, I mean what do, the 47% – and this is an exaggeration, but to a certain extent the 47% that voted for Donald Trump, what do they expect? They're expecting socialism, or put it this way, I'd say two-thirds of that 47% are expecting socialism.

So what happens if Democrats don't behave in a socialist manner? What if it's sort of go back to, ideologically speaking, more or less where sort of Bill Clinton was. And that's

the thing, is where Joe Biden, the question is who is Joe Biden going to be? And look, times change. Of course times change. But I think that Joe Biden is, if you were just going to say as a blanket statement, not quite as liberal as Barack Obama but maybe a little bit more liberal than Bill Clinton but closer to Clinton than to Obama, but with the biggest difference is that it's clear that Biden is going to embrace climate change in a very big way.

But I think what you can see Biden doing on this and using this as an example of your question is that to make it, is climate change, can it be a job creator or can it be a job killer? And a job creator is retrofitting houses to make them more energy efficient. It's basically getting people to move to new, buy new things that are more energy efficient, but it's not things that are job killers. And that's why I think you saw Joe Biden start backing away on going after fracking and things like that is that it's either, you know, is the environment, is it a thing we need to do to save the world or is it something that's just going to kill the jobs of the people that aren't in the knowledge economy? Which is it going to be?

PRESIDENT BARBARA VAN ALLEN: Well, I see that the clock is already at 2:44.

Thank you so much for these insights, Charlie. I have about ten more questions. Next time we have you we're going to make sure whoever the interviewer is we give you a full hour. And I do want to also say that hopefully we'll all strengthen our resolve to

demonstrate fairness and equity and compassion, you know, as we look forward with hope and optimism that our country was founded on.

CHARLIE COOK: Well, I'll just say one more thing is that if we just lower the temperature, just dial back the rhetoric, lower the temperature. That was pretty scary last week. That really, really was. Actually I will quote a Republican congressman that will go unnamed. I would say what did the election, what were the voters saying? And I'm going to use an ugly word, Barbara, with your permission. This Republican congressman said what the voters were saying is don't be an asshole and don't be a socialist.

And if you think about it, that was a rejection of Donald Trump and his behavior and his style, but it was not a rejection of the Republican party. And that it could have been a rejection of the Republican party but I think you had a group of voters that at the very end, they'd been hearing about Democratic socialism, they'd been hearing about Medicare for All, they'd been thinking about de-fund the police and all these things, and I think they just decided, you know what, if we're going to give Joe Biden the keys, maybe we won't give them a full tank of gas and a credit card. And so they limited it to basically throwing out President Trump but, and that kind of gets me back to the center-right country is that that was not ideological. That was about style. That was about personality. So I think it's important that Democrats not over-read this election and think

it was an ideological victory because I don't think it was.

PRESIDENT BARBARA VAN ALLEN: Okay, well, thank you. I just want to mention for everyone on the call that we have a lot of outstanding speakers lined up. We have, this Thursday, the 14th, Ginni Rometty and Charles Phillips will be on. We have Larry Summers and Jason Furman coming on the 19th, Garry Kasparov, the world chess champion, coming on the 26th of January. Adena Friedman, the CEO of Nasdaq will join us on February 2. And, of course, Jerome Powell, who we all enjoy hearing from, February 10 and many more. And thank you again, Charlie, for joining us today. Everyone please stay healthy and safe. Thank you.