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Stephen

All right, welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to another episode of the Weekly Reload Podcast. I'm your host, Stephen Gutowski. I'm also a CNN contributor and the founder of TheReload.com, where you can head over and sign up for our free weekly newsletter that'll keep you up to date on what's going on with guns in America. This week we've had another wild ride here in the political realm.

00:00:42:03 - 00:01:12:16

Stephen

President Biden dropped out of his reelection campaign. Turn the keys over to Kamala Harris in a surprisingly smooth transition to her now being the presumptive nominee. She's already wrapped up, delegate pledges to put her over the the majority mark that she needs. and, that has some significant implications for gun policy moving forward, which is why I want to have one of the, best gun writers in the country on the show.

00:01:12:18 - 00:01:18:04

Stephen

Charles Cooke from National Review, who has been a hasn't been on in a while, but, welcome back to the show, Charles.

00:01:18:06 - 00:01:19:21

Charles

No, thanks for having me.

00:01:19:23 - 00:01:36:22

Stephen

Yeah, yeah. Always. obviously love reading your stuff on on this topic and, and having you on and you were one of the first guests, I think, when we started this show this year ago. So, it's good to have you back. Tell people a little bit more about your background. For anyone who might not have heard of you.

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Charles

Well, I moved to America in 2011, as you can presumably hear from my accent, I'm not from here originally. from England, but, I'm now a proud Floridian, became a citizen in 2018 and didn't grow up as a, Second Amendment advocate, or interested in guns at all, really. But, that changed the more I looked into the issues.

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Charles

And by the time I was 20 or so, I was firmly sold on the right to keep and bear arms.

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Stephen

Yes. And now you are, writing for National Review. You're an editor at National Review. you also write for the NRA magazines as well? Yeah. so, you know, you've and and, you've had quite a lot of experience in political analysis, especially the sort of gun politics side of things. so that's why I think your insight is going to be pretty interesting here.

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Stephen

Let's let's start with, the shift from Joe Biden to Kamala Harris. Do you view that as significant? in the grand scheme of things, when it comes to the 2024 campaign?

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Charles

I do, in some ways, I expect there'll largely be continuity, because the position that the Democratic Party has taken on

guns does not exist in a vacuum. It is the products of what they think they can get away with in the public opinion environment. But there are some differences between Harris and Joe Biden. the first one is that she, at least thus far, has felt it a lot less important to say I support the Second Amendment.

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Charles

But then Joe Biden has, that's one reason for that, is that she actually doesn't support the Second Amendment. She filed an amicus brief and Heller all the way back in 2008, in which, she and her co signatories argued that the Second Amendment doesn't protect an individual. Right. Joe Biden has hinted that he thinks the same thing, but rarely she's been more open about that.

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Charles

And the second difference is she and this is a low bar, given Joe Biden's record, but has even less of a respect for the Constitution per se than Biden does. And she is someone who made the news in 2019 by laughing in Joe Biden's face on live television when he said that she couldn't ban our AR 15 by executive order.

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Charles

she laughed and then said, let's say yes, we can, but you can't. Joe Biden was actually right about that. you need congressional legislation. And then almost certainly review by the Supreme Court. She doesn't seem to think that matters. she's also made comments at various points about doing other gun control by executive order giving Congress 100 days or whatever to get its act together.

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Charles

In her estimation, and then to hand do it herself. If Congress won't act, I will, I think she said so. She does seem to have a more unilateralist approach than Biden did. And relative to other presidents, Biden's been pretty unilateralist on guns. I think we talked about this last time I was on your show. so, those are the two that approach differences.

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Charles

And then on the details, back when she was running against Biden, she took a really out there position on modern sporting rifles, which was that she wanted a mandatory buyback. That's her Orwellian phrase, which essentially means that you don't have a choice. Your guns are confiscated, but you will be remunerated in some way for the confiscation, as far as I'm aware.

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Charles

And, Stephen, you're correct me if I'm wrong. I don't think Biden's ever gone that far. I think his two ideas were to ban the sale of so-called assault weapons going forward. And at some point, he's floated the idea of adding those that were left behind to the NFA, the National Firearms Act. I don't think he's ever mentioned confiscation, unlike her, but she's on a very, short runway here before the election, and she's going to want to limit her vulnerabilities.

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Charles

So I would be surprised if any of those ideas or that sort of talk came up, as part of her election campaign. What happens if she wins is a separate question.

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Stephen

Yeah, that's that's, I think the first part I want to explore a little bit more because you're right, those are the big differences, I would say, between Biden and Harris. on on the issue of gun policy. now, certainly Biden like, yeah, like you mentioned, it's sort of a matter of degree with a lot of these things between the two of them.

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Stephen
they they largely agree on the kind of restrictions they want. They have some disagreement about how to get there, or at least what where the sort of limit is because, which is, you know, interesting in the sense that Biden's rulemaking, his, his executive action on, restricting things like pistol bracelets, equipped, firearms or, homemade gun kits, those seem like they're probably not going to stand up in the test, of the courts after the Supreme Court struck down the, the the Trump era bump stock ban, which was justified in very similar ways to what Biden has been doing.

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Stephen
and Harris's main disagreement with them is that she thought they should go even further than those things. but yeah. And then it same thing with, an AR 15 ban, an assault weapons ban. Right. So called assault weapons ban. They it's more a matter of degree. They both want to ban them. They just have a difference of opinion on what to do with the tens of millions that are already in civilian circulation.

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Stephen
and in both cases, Harris would be the left of Biden and. Yeah, but the question is, will she change course in this election? I think, to start off with, because as you mentioned, there's I think there's good reasons why she might not. And if you look at what she's done in this extremely early stage, only less than a week into this, I guess when this when reload members get this, it'll be exactly one weekend.

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Stephen
And and when it goes public on Monday, it'll be just over a week. And, she's mentioned guns in her speeches and in her ad the ad just talks about wanting to be free of gun violence, doesn't talk about policy positions. But she did mention three specific policies in her first two speeches. And those are basically what Biden has been running on.

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Stephen
Universal background check, red flag laws, an assault weapons ban. She doesn't talk about the confiscation aspect of it. Mandatory about. So so far there hasn't been a shift. Do you expect to see a shift? And if not, why not?

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Charles
No, I don't I don't. The Democratic Party's aims on guns have been the same since around 20 1213. Barack Obama downplayed, gun control until after Sandy hook. He didn't even make a push for it after the Aurora, Colorado, shooting. he then adopted, three main policy proposals. One was to ban the sale of so-called assault weapons.

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Charles
another was to limit magazines to ten rounds. And the third was to achieve so-called universal background checks. And, that has broadly been what the Democratic Party has wanted to do until about 2018, where we had that evolved a abomination. And then they added flags to the, to the list, the federal role within red flag legislation tends to be limited to funding, but they still, have have more, interest in it than do the Republicans.

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Charles
So those four things really are the, the aims. come on, Harris. And not to stray too far away from from the question of the Second Amendment, but as a general matter, Kamala Harris has to be careful that what she, brings to the Democratic Party is a replacement for Joe Biden isn't, lopsided loss. And, I say that to somebody who thinks she can win, but the the polls are close.

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Charles

They're one two points between her and Joe Biden. The risk is that those 1 or 2 points are spread much less efficiently than Joe Biden's. In 2020, for example, there is just no great advantage for a Democrat in a presidential election running up the score in California or in New York, but doing worse in Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin or Georgia.

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Charles

And if you, a party is the Democrats, that have made beating Donald Trump the, main aim. You talk about it in scatological terms. You are prone, I think, sensibly, given their rhetoric, to downplaying any more, divisive policies that you might have, whether that be on firearms or fracking, in the hope that you can get through the blue wall, in the Midwest.

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Charles

So I, I would be shocked if between now and the election, Kamala Harris staked out a position on guns that departed significantly or even at all from that, that Joe Biden staked out. And the Institutional Democratic Party has staked out, because I think it will hurt her in those, Midwestern states. She needs to win.

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Stephen

Right. The idea basically is that Kamala Harris has a generally pretty liberal record. In fact, I think she was rated the most liberal. Yes, Senator. During her brief time in the Senate, when she was, senator from California. And she has a whole slew of, soundbites where she's taking very liberal positions, including on guns.

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Stephen

And so she may want to try and write right. So shy away from that during this campaign. That's what you're saying?

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Charles

That's exactly what I'm saying. Now, of course, that doesn't mean that she won't go back to it once she's or she's won office, which is often I mean, as I said, Barack Obama, the first mentioned, I think I'm right in saying of a ban on so-called assault weapons from Barack Obama came in 2012. So, you know, there is a difference between running for president and being president.

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Charles

and.

00:12:35:14 - 00:13:12:00

Stephen

She made Obama didn't didn't emphasize that aspect. He was the thing he tried to get wasn't a universal background check. Bill was, you know, mentioned to true, and, and, and, that's been one of the interesting things about Joe Biden's campaign is that he has been much more aggressive than really Democrats since Al Gore. On pushing as always, but like, yeah, but Biden may have support or sorry, Obama may have supported it or and lots of Democrats have supported it, but it hasn't been the marquee issue of a presidential campaign since the 90s.

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Stephen

and so was already kind of pushing out there on it. Right.

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Charles

Right. And of course, there is a continuity there because Joe Biden was instrumentally involved in passing while in the Senate right there, which.

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Stephen

Is one of his big talking points about it.

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Charles

Yeah, yeah. I do think that Obama moved an enormous amount. You're right in saying it wasn't his centerpiece, but he started off in 2008, nine, ten, referring to guns infrequently. Once he won with a filibuster proof majority in the Senate, they didn't move to do anything. but by the end of his presidency, he was putting out executive orders and he was praising Australia.

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Charles

I mean, this is something that. Yeah, I used to write about a lot. He was praising Australia, which was gun confiscation. It's not true that he called for it in the United States. But he did say we know how to do it. Look at Australia.

00:13:57:07 - 00:14:35:20

Stephen

So he moved to after he was already president right after was done reelection. And but in the elections, he was you know, the Democrats had been a lot more cautious about this issue, until recent years. And, but, you know, and one of the things that Biden seems to have been doing right before he ended up dropping out was going back to guns and highlighting it and emphasizing it even more so as perhaps a play to try and, you know, goose enthusiasm among his base voters who say he was having a lot of trouble with this coalition of trying to get them excited about voting for another Biden term.

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Stephen

And this was one of the issues. You know, he went and spoke at every town's, convention for the first time. He had the surgeon general come out and make a bunch of, gun policy proclamations. And, you know, he's been laser focused on so weapons, as is his marquee gun policy. Right? That's all been spent. And, so, you know, it's interesting, Harris coming into that environment where, she may have, at least for the moment, solved some of the enthusiasm issues that the the ticket was having.

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Stephen

And I wonder whether she continues to go down that same path of emphasizing gun policy or if she tries to even de-emphasize it a bit as, a way of getting away from the the too liberal label that she's probably going to have to struggle with against.

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Charles

Yeah. I mean, I just think and I don't just say this because I'm an advocate of the Second Amendment, although I obviously have a rooting interest here, but I just think it would be a profound mistake, given a the Midwestern state challenge that she has, which we've already talked about, and b, the growth sometimes overstated, but nevertheless, real growth in gun ownership among nonwhite men.

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Charles

you know, it is just increasingly the case that you cannot divide up the country by gun owner and non gun owner in the way that you could, in the 90s and early 2000. And, she had to be careful with that. because, it's not a cultural signifier in, say, Georgia quite the way, that it once was.

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Charles

So I think it would be a profound mistake on her part to do it. That doesn't mean she won't do it. She isn't a particularly good politician.

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Stephen

It she didn't run a great 2020 campaign, that's for sure. But, you know, it's been four years she's been vice president. Maybe she's improved. She's certainly this one week. She's seemed pretty competent so far, but, needed that kind of goes well into this, the interesting state of gun policy in this election because, you know, the, the very early polling, again, you know, a lot of this polling that we're getting right now, coming right after the RNC, right after the Trump assassination attempt, right after your presidential party, your presidential switch on the Democratic ticket is maybe not going to be the most reliable stuff.

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Stephen

we might want to wait until things settle out a little bit. But we do have some indications on this. And, it does line up with what we've been seeing. You know, Biden is has done very poorly on gun policy, in particular his his approval ratings there have been lower throughout his entire presidency than even his overall rating, which which wasn't great to begin with.

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Stephen

and if you look at the the most recent YouGov poll that asked about Trump versus Harris on guns, Trump actually, is is polling better? More people think he would handle the issue better. And yet at the same time, the Republicans and Trump have gone quiet on the issue. they're they're definitely de-emphasizing it. They may not be changing positions, necessarily.

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Stephen

They haven't articulated a change in policy, what they want to do. But they just haven't talked about it wasn't at the RNC. It's not in the platform. Trump didn't mention it in his acceptance speech. What do you make of this dichotomy here? Because we're seeing Democrats emphasize it, even though they're doing worse in the polling on the issue.

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Stephen

And Republicans have gone quiet.

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Charles

I think that it is in large part the product of conservative successes on the Second Amendment for 30 years. I don't think that the the invisible Second Amendment within the Republican National Convention platform is equivocal to say abortion, where Republicans are clearly running away from the issue because it hurts them. I think that it is a non-factor, because it has, since the mid 1990s, largely been a rout politically.

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Charles

And the Democrats are left having to push the issue. I mean, if you look at the changes over the last 30 years, we've got three Supreme Court cases, one that affirms the individual right to keep and bear arms, one that applies that individual right to the states and one that creates a usable test. doesn't mean a perfect test, but a usable test for gun regulation.

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Charles

We have 28 nine constitutional carry states now. In 2001 there was one, and there are six states that you and I wouldn't approve of, concealed carry, but they're all effectively, shall issue, the number of gun owners, has, the number of guns has increased enormously. I mean, to, you know, what is it, half a billion of them, as opposed to 170 million.

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Charles

And in 1990, the, gun ownership is diversified. the assault weapons ban is gone. Now, that isn't to say there are no challenges, and there certainly shouldn't be any arrogance or, euphoria here, but I think that the reason you're aren't hearing much about it from the right is that they just feel as if they've made huge progress.

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Charles

this issue, I don't think they're downplaying it.

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Stephen

That's interesting. So you don't you don't view, the lack of attention to this issue by the Republican Party. the recently like, hey, you know, this is kind of a recent change because, you know, Trump has spoken to the NRA twice already this year. And one of the things that I thought was notable in his last speech at the NRA annual meeting in May is that he emphasized this idea that gun gun owners don't vote, which is something you do hear sometimes in the gun rights movement, people say something like, I, I've never heard like a really detailed explanation of what that supposed to mean.

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Stephen

I think it's just the concept that almost half the country owns a gun. And obviously if they all voted just on guns.

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Charles

00:20:56:05 - 00:21:16:12

Stephen

presumably with the way the parties break down, Republicans would win every race almost. that's kind of the basic concept that I get from when people say that. But Trump himself said it at the NRA and and then now he's gone away from talking about the issue. in recent, you know, he gave a record long acceptance speech.

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Stephen

You didn't mention gun policy or the Second Amendment at all in there. it feels like they think it's holding them back in some way, perhaps.

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Charles

I would think so, yes. I'm not saying you're wrong. It's just not the sense I get. The sense I get is they think they've won.

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Stephen

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Charles

And it's because there hasn't really been a contested. I'm trying to think. I mean, other than the, the two years ago, there was that bipartisan bill, which I didn't like, but it didn't do an enormous amount. I mean, if you had said 30 years ago,

here's what this bill does to people who at that point were fairly convinced and with good reason that the Second Amendment was going to go away over time, if you would, said, that's the bill Congress passed, you'd have said, okay, fine.

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Charles

the last big fight over guns was in 2013, and Republicans won it. And since that point, I mean, every state that is not about the 7 or 8 states that are implacably hostile to the Second Amendment has expanded gun rights. And it's just what happens when Republicans win you. So, for example, what happened in Florida the moment the Republicans got a supermajority 80 off to 2022, in Louisiana, Democratic Governor Bel Edwards was swapped out for a Republican.

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Charles

They passed constitutional carry and loosened some other gun restrictions. in Kentucky, although they have a Democratic governor, Andy Beshear. the state legislature passes whatever gun rights expansions it once he vetoes them and then it overrides the veto. you know, this is just what what states have done, from from Georgia to Nebraska to Idaho in the last few years.

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Charles

You can now drive, essentially, you know, 70, 80% of the of the country without having to have a permit to carry a firearm. I just think and there's a risk to this, too, but I just think that Republicans have got to the point to which they think, well, this isn't an issue that people are thinking about.

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Charles

It's not an issue that is riling people up. whether you're right that there are actually a whole bunch of people out there who should be voting, but, because they're not being asked, here's a really interesting question. but I think it's more likely this is overconfidence than it is, embarrassment.

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Stephen

Interesting. So, so when you look at the way these two campaigns have gone in the last couple of weeks, here, you think it's more about Democrats have to emphasize this issue to try and turn out the gun control voters that exist, whereas Republicans don't need to do it, necessarily emphasize, or they don't feel like they need to emphasize it because they've had a lot of success.

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Stephen

And those people who care about that are going to turn out anyway. Is that kind of where you're at or.

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Charles

Yeah, I broadly think that. I don't think it was smart. I'd have put it in the RNC platform, but I think it was inspired by that sentiment. Yeah.

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Stephen

Okay. Interesting. well, since you mentioned Andy Beshear there for a moment, let's talk about the vice presidential possible picks that Kamala Harris has and whether you think there's any likelihood of balancing the ticket on this issue, so to speak, especially given the direction the Democratic Party has gone, as you mentioned, like they're pretty well solidified, almost across the board.

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Stephen

Even all the moderates that are being talked about kind of have a lot of the same gun control positions that Kamala Harris has, or at least it's maybe like a Biden Harris difference, where it's a matter of degree more than, the goals of a policy.

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Charles

Yeah. And before we get to the VP stuff, I mean, one reason for that is that they are more observant of what polls often show than of how gun control gets legislated once the details, the topic of conversation. And so what you'll see is 90% of Americans want universal background checks, I'll say, and there are some polls that show this.

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Charles

it's just that when you put it up for a vote in Maine or Oregon or Nevada, it either passes or fails by, you know, 52 to 48.

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Stephen

It doesn't perform as well in practice, especially when put directly to voters, right, as it does in polling.

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Charles

Yeah. So the Democratic Party, I think, has reached a point at which even the moderates will look at the polling and say, oh, I'm, I can back this. What they think is sort of moderate. gun control. the VP question with Harris is very interesting, given what we were talking about earlier, because the whole point of the VP candidate, insofar as VP candidates matter, is to moderate the ticket and presumably to win a state she needs.

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Charles

so and if you pick Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania, you're trying to win Pennsylvania, you're probably trying to help yourself in Wisconsin and Michigan as well. Have you picked Mark Kelly in Arizona and you're presumably trying to win Arizona? And maybe you think that will help you in Nevada and possibly Georgia? that being so, the last thing you want, is for that person to reinforce rather than offset the reputation that Harris has for radicalism.

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Charles

And I actually think that is a risk with Mark Kelly. Now, I will talk about this sensitively, because Mark Kelly's wife, Gabby Giffords, was shot in the head. And it was an appalling thing, that happened. But I don't think, for example, that if they pick him and then, he is too vocal about gun control in Arizona, that it's necessarily going to do for Kamala Harris what she needs to be done.

00:27:25:06 - 00:27:26:09

Charles

so I.

00:27:26:09 - 00:27:31:21

Stephen

We did found an entire one of the major gun control group. Right? Names. Right. Ex-wife.

00:27:31:23 - 00:27:58:18

Charles

So I, I have a, I have a feeling that the job of the VP, candidate for the Democrats is going to be to do the opposite, which is which is to downplay this stuff. Now, we should say, I should say I don't actually think the Republicans have done a very good job on this themselves, because I think they've doubled down on Trump with JD Vance.

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Charles

And Trump is actually not that popular. So if I if I had been advising them, which of course I never would be asked to, then I would have said go for someone else, I'd have picked a Glenn Youngkin or a Duckburg. long before I did pick JD Vance. The Democrats probably won't make that mistake. And, if the candidate that they choose ends up sort of running in the same lane as her on guns, I can't see how that's going to help, because all of the states that she needs are pretty pro-gun.

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Charles

You know, Pennsylvania's pretty pro-gun. Michigan, Wisconsin and Wisconsin was the last state to put, Constitution right to bear arms in the state constitution. but that sort of shows you that it was still a live issue in 1999. and then, Arizona is famously pro-gun. It was one of the first constitutional carry states, open carry state to, Nevada is a pro-gun state, and Georgia has some of the loosest gun laws in the country.

00:29:02:05 - 00:29:10:00

Charles

North Carolina is another one that that she needs to, to do better. And so I, I'd be shocked if they went all in on that.

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Stephen

Yeah. But who I guess that's the issue there that if you're thinking about this particular issue gun policy. And you look around at those, those people you've mentioned Shapiro Kelly, you know that they they also support all three of those major policies, including assault weapons ban. Yeah. They may not be as vocal about it or make it the forefront of what they talk about on guns, but they do support those things.

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Stephen

The only one who really offers significant variation is kind of the from Kentucky. And, I don't know if he fits that other profile of, you know, Kentucky is not a state they're trying to win. They maybe it helps them in, in other sort of Midwestern or southern states, but but, I don't know where do you if.

00:29:54:17 - 00:30:00:06

Stephen

Yeah, she's trying to balance this issue on the VP ticket. Who could she possibly pick?

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Charles

Yeah. So I think Beshear is fool's gold. I don't have anything against the guy, but he wins in Kentucky for two reasons. One is that the Beshear name is famous. His father was governor. People trust the bushes, and they're willing to vote for a Democrat in a very red state as a result. And the second is that the Republicans have a supermajority in both houses of the state legislature and every single veto, literally every single veto that Bashir signs on to the paper is, is overturned.

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Charles

So if you are a, middle of the ground Kentucky voter, which is more conservative than in many other states, you can vote for the Democrat with the name you trust, without actually giving up any policy. And I think that makes him look artificially moderate and attractive. And I would not if I were advising the Democrats, counsel them to take him.

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Charles

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Stephen

And I also I mentioned this on my on the news update, but Beshear doesn't even really fit that old blue dog, pro-gun Democrat mold. Anyway, his biggest pro-gun accomplishments are kind of allowing things to become law without trying to veto them. now he has he does opposing a sovereign's ban and things like that. So it does bring some balance.

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Stephen

But it's even even there. It's not like your traditional actual like card and then, Democrat.

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Charles

So I think their best shot would be to pick someone like Josh Shapiro, who just seems moderate, the seeming moderate point is often lost on people, but there are some people who just seem moderate, and there are some people who don't.

00:31:35:03 - 00:31:35:15

Stephen

And he's a.

00:31:35:15 - 00:31:36:15

Charles

Biden.

00:31:36:17 - 00:31:41:18

Stephen

Profile, high profile, competent things like fixing I-95, some of the other stuff he's been involved with.

00:31:41:21 - 00:31:59:05

Charles

Also, he just doesn't look radical based, like Joe Biden has benefited from this. He doesn't seem radical. If you tell a voter who's 73 years old, Joe Biden is a radical, they will say, no, he's not. And they remember him for 50 years in the Senate. if you tell them that Kamala Harris is radical, they might believe you.

00:31:59:05 - 00:32:19:22

Charles

And she is, but they might believe you. It's partly affect. And Josh Shapiro hasn't the affect of somebody, who is reasonable. And if he were picked at even if he holds the positions that you're Adam rated, then, he might not pay for it. I do worry for them with with Mark Kelly, just because he's very well known for founding a gun control group.

00:32:19:22 - 00:32:39:20

Charles

And again, he's lived through a personal tragedy. This isn't a criticism, but that that's one of the things he's done. You can't run away from that. Once you've done it, you'd have to lean into it. so I think that best option is to pick someone who has a, moderate effect and just ask them, please don't go on and on and on about guns when you're talking to people in Scranton.

00:32:39:22 - 00:33:11:23

Stephen

Right? Right. Yeah. No, that makes a lot of sense. And, you know, so let's just briefly here at the end, because that is we don't know. We can't know this when we can't know what the campaign is going to do either. But if if Kamala Harris becomes president, do you what do you expect her then to be more true to the the stuff she said about running in the primary, I mean primary campaign to be fair, is something where you are trying to run, usually to towards your base and then you run back to the center in a general that's, you know, how it usually goes.

00:33:11:23 - 00:33:23:19

Stephen

Not every time, but but, you know, do you think she'd be more true to that? Do you think she'd stick with how the Biden administration has done things, or do you think she's, you know, where do you see her going? If she is elected.

00:33:23:21 - 00:33:47:16

Charles

I think she'll move into a much more hostile anti Second Amendment position. And I think one of the reasons for that, Stephen, is that she just has no muscle memory at all. That pushes her in the other direction. I mean, if you look at someone like Joe Biden, Biden is bad on the Second Amendment. He's been terrible.

00:33:47:18 - 00:34:20:07

Charles

but he knows enough people who are gun owners or second Amendment enthusiasts, that there is something in him that, at least comprehends where they're coming from, even if he thinks they're wrong. And you he sort of, in recent years lost the ability to triangulate properly as president. But he used to be much better at talking about that, when he was a bit younger.

00:34:20:09 - 00:34:44:15

Charles

Well, she she's never had that. I mean, she's a San Francisco progressive. They don't have that. She doesn't know those people. She didn't grow up with them. She's not friends with them. I doubt she's met many of them. And when, something terrible happens, which you will, the instinct is going to be, go, go do something. And I think she's going to just go straight into it.

00:34:44:15 - 00:35:05:17

Charles

And, I mean, she, she, she doesn't even have a constitutional check on her here intellectually, because she doesn't believe that there is such a thing as an individual right to bear arms that she's made clear. So I would expect her, even if inadvertently, just to go back to the positions that she held the moment. She's not worried about election, and perhaps it would take a second term.

00:35:05:17 - 00:35:16:10

Charles

I've got this as a thought. Second term from all of Harris. but I would I would very much see her as as reverting. I just don't believe her on this.

00:35:16:12 - 00:35:39:01

Stephen

okay. Well, look, we'll have to have you on again down the line to, to see how well we predicted things. Yeah, and see how how they turn out or how things go. by the way, in the meantime, one of the other things that, in at least in certain circles you're well known for is your, appreciation for roller coasters.

00:35:39:01 - 00:35:40:07

Charles

That's true.

00:35:40:09 - 00:35:45:05

Stephen

have you been to any parks this summer? Have you? What have you been?

00:35:45:05 - 00:36:04:05

Charles

I haven't, but in ten days I am embarking for National Review on a, a trip. I'll keep the details of it. mysterious for now, but that that, that will involve some roller coasters.

00:36:04:06 - 00:36:05:22

Stephen

Okay.

00:36:06:00 - 00:36:29:07

Charles

but I have not been on it. I mean, I take the kids, so I've been we've been to Universal Studios, Veloster Coaster, and Disney Guardians of the Galaxy. It's pretty good. but I haven't been to Museum Park outside of I just don't. True. That's not true. I went to Virginia. I went to Busch Gardens Williamsburg in, April, which was awesome.

00:36:29:09 - 00:36:31:07

Stephen

You went without me? I'm very offended.

00:36:31:09 - 00:36:39:11

Charles

Was a family. It was a family vacation to Colonial Williamsburg. And on the last day, I sort of. I bullied them into going to Boston.

00:36:39:16 - 00:36:42:18

Stephen

I haven't been to Busch Gardens. have you been to King's Dominion there?

00:36:42:19 - 00:36:43:22

Charles

I have absolutely.

00:36:43:22 - 00:36:45:05

Stephen

Okay. Which one do you prefer?

00:36:45:05 - 00:36:50:00

Charles

The two. You know, I, I went to King's Dominion with Cam Edwards. Speaking of guns and rollercoasters, I.

00:36:50:00 - 00:36:53:08

Stephen

This he was just on the show now. last live cam.

00:36:53:13 - 00:37:10:01

Charles

He's the best. So, so. Well, I think Busch Gardens Williamsburg is the is the superior Park. It's certainly prettier. Okay. It's the setting is incredible. and they have some terrific rides, but so does does Kings really intimidates is.

00:37:10:02 - 00:37:10:10

Stephen

Yeah.

00:37:10:14 - 00:37:11:12

Charles

Something else it's.

00:37:11:12 - 00:37:15:01

Stephen

Going to say Twisted Timbers and Intimidator. That's a pretty good one too.

00:37:15:01 - 00:37:16:02

Charles

That's true.

00:37:16:04 - 00:37:19:02

Stephen

They did get rid of volcano. That was another fantasy.

00:37:19:04 - 00:37:26:14

Charles

I never you know, that broke my heart. So I'd wanted to go on that since I was 13, when I first read about it in an English paper. Yeah, I bet.

00:37:26:15 - 00:37:27:13

Stephen

It was great.

00:37:27:15 - 00:37:30:14

Charles

By the time I got there, it was closed, and it's. And then they took it out.

00:37:30:20 - 00:37:48:00

Stephen

And said, you know, I want to try Top Thrill, too, but I don't know if that's ever going to actually open for real, because I opened running and then immediately closed it. And I'm kind of worried that because it's like Zamperla, which is a new it's not a new manufacturer, but they haven't done, like these big scale roller coasters before, right?

00:37:48:02 - 00:37:55:19

Stephen

I don't know, but I you know what? I think my girlfriend wants to go to see Creed. and they're playing Hershey in August.

00:37:55:19 - 00:37:58:05

Charles

So that's the park I need to get to.

00:37:58:06 - 00:38:14:09

Stephen

Yeah. Have you never been to Hershey? It's Kelly. I was there last year. yeah, because they they opened canned ammonium, which is a, you know, bomb. And, then they, they got an arm seat because they did wild cancer.

00:38:14:11 - 00:38:15:05

Charles

That's right.

00:38:15:07 - 00:38:22:18

Stephen

It's apparently supposed to be perhaps the best arms, which is kind of surprising. Oh, I think iron gwazi which is down your, your way.

00:38:22:18 - 00:38:25:15

Charles

Now, I've been on that. That is truly incredible. Yeah.

00:38:25:17 - 00:38:32:00

Stephen

Yeah. So I don't know. Well, you're welcome to come with, with us when we go to Hershey at the end of August.

00:38:32:02 - 00:38:37:20

Charles

Okay. let me know when you go going, because I, I've never been to Hershey Park. I really want to go.

00:38:37:22 - 00:39:01:14

Stephen

It is a fantastic park. Yeah, it's probably the only like outside of. It's the only, like, individual park other than carnivals, which is another Pennsylvania, just totally different experience. Sort of park, old fashioned park. But, you know, everything's Six Flags and, and, Cedar Fair merged and then all the other big parks are owned by Universal or Disney.

00:39:01:15 - 00:39:06:10

Stephen

So Hershey's kind of you're only like, maybe, I guess Dolly world. Right. Dollywood.

00:39:06:11 - 00:39:11:21

Charles

Dollywood, and then, Dollywood. What's it called? And Holiday World in Indiana.

00:39:11:23 - 00:39:19:18

Stephen

I think that might be owned by a chain or something, too. Okay. Either way, I mean, aren't they together? I don't know, this is.

00:39:20:00 - 00:39:23:01

Charles

Holiday. Well, that's still owned by the family, but I could be wrong.

00:39:23:03 - 00:39:56:02

Stephen

I've gotten this, far afield. I can see the roller coaster, too. Here's a here's a secret for, don't know. And the freebie in this, but when the NRA had their annual meeting in Dallas, when Trump was president, we went to Six Flags that were Texas, right? Yes. And I was I was supposed to be there to cover Donald Trump speech, and I did I just was covering it from I remember it was like a crappy, barbecue because.

00:39:56:04 - 00:40:21:03

Stephen

Yeah, yeah. In the Six Flags, no one knew. No one knew the difference. and so nobody send this to the free Beacon. But that's that's a true story. And we wrote all the the Six Flags over Texas. There was all six American flags at that point. Because if you recall, one of the flags over Texas is, not corporate friendly anymore.

00:40:21:05 - 00:40:26:06

Stephen

so it's just six American flags now, but, yeah, the new Texas Giant, I think is the best right there.

00:40:26:08 - 00:40:30:14

Charles

Yeah. It's incredible. RNC RNC for the win.

00:40:30:16 - 00:40:49:04

Stephen

good part of them. And it's small. It's not much more than I expect because I thought everything in Texas. Right, right. I figured it'd be like Cedar Point size, but it was more like, just the normal six Flags. America can take part. Yeah, it was still good. Anyway, I will let you know about our Hershey trip, and maybe we'll get an update.

00:40:49:06 - 00:40:57:20

Stephen

that happens, but thank you so much for being with us this week. we will have to have you on again real soon. Tell people where they can find more of your work.

00:40:57:22 - 00:41:10:00

Charles

so I write it. National Review. I also write in, America's First Freedom. The NRA's magazine. And I'm on Twitter at at Charles CW. Cooke. Cooke with an e.™

00:41:10:01 - 00:41:16:08

Stephen

All right. Wonderful. I'm going to tell everybody a little bit about The Dispatch now that's sponsoring this episode. So head over that.