

# [***Interview With Sen. Tim Scott (R-SC); Interview With Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI); Interview With General Jack Keane; Interview With Republican National Committee Co-Chair Lara Trump; Interview With Rep. Byron Donalds (R-FL)***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BHK-8PF1-F072-X0KV-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

MARIA BARTIROMO, FOX NEWS ANCHOR: Good Sunday morning, everyone. Welcome to "Sunday Morning Futures." I'm Maria Bartiromo. Thanks so much for joining us today.

And today: the worst State of the Union in a quarter-century, according to CNN polls, as critics say Joe Biden use the State of the Union address as a campaign rally to attack his political opponent, Donald Trump.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

JOE BIDEN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: Now my predecessor, a former Republican president, tells Putin -- quote -- "Do whatever the hell you want."

My predecessor came to office determined to see Roe v. Wade overturned.

Well, my predecessor and many in this chamber want to take those -- that prescription drug away by repealing Affordable Care Act.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BARTIROMO: So what about the state of America?

The Republican response from South Carolina Senator Tim Scott, Wisconsin Senator Ron Johnson and Florida Congressman Byron Donalds coming up.

Meanwhile, in Georgia, President Trump meets with the parents of murdered Georgia nursing student Laken Riley, vowing to secure the southern border.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DONALD TRUMP, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (R) AND CURRENT U.S. PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: I will fight like no one has ever fought before to ensure that what happened to this American daughter, this incredible, incredible American, that this never happens to any other daughter or anyone else ever again. We will do everything we can that it doesn't happen again.

(CHEERING AND APPLAUSE)

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BARTIROMO: Coming up: It is official. The face of the Republican Party changes with new leadership at the Republican National Committee. Newly installed co-chair Lara Trump is here on her efforts to ensure a transparent and free presidential election, as Attorney General Merrick Garland vows to stop voter I.D. laws.

Then: America's adversaries looming. Four-Star General and former Vice Chief of staff of the Army Jack Keane on the China and Russia threat to America's national security.

It's all right here, right now on "Sunday Morning Futures."

And, today, we spring forward with this Sunday morning with just 239 days until November's presidential election and an expected rematch between President Biden and former President Trump.

In FOX News' latest power rankings, Trump is forecast with 251 electoral votes against Biden's 241. Now 48 votes are up for grabs -- 46 up for grabs. Trump is making major gains with key supporters of Biden, with 28 percent of black voters, 51 percent of voters under the age of 30, 48 percent of Hispanic voters, and 43 percent of suburban women backing the 45th president.

Also, come this November, Republicans will decide on a new leader in the Senate, after Mitch McConnell announced he is stepping down after serving in the leadership position for a record 17 years. But McConnell will stay in the Senate to serve out his term, which ends in January of 2027.

So far, both John Cornyn of Texas and John Thune of South Dakota have announced they will seek to become the next Senate Republican leader.

Joining me right now, in this "Sunday Morning Futures" exclusive, is South Carolina Senator Tim Scott.

Senator, great to see you this morning. Thanks so much for being here.

SEN. TIM SCOTT (R-SC): Good morning, Maria. Thank you.

BARTIROMO: Who would you like to see in that leadership role in the Senate?

SCOTT: You know, it's a great question.

I would like to see someone leading the Senate who is willing and able to work hand in glove with President Trump. We need a majority in the Senate that understands putting America first is working with President Trump.

Our priorities should start with closing the southern border. It should continue on having the next wave of tax cuts that gives Americans their money back, and then we should make sure that we have law and order in our streets. That's not the person, John or John. It's the concept that President Trump will lead our country to a brighter future.

And we must have a new majority leader who wants to work hand in glove with Donald Trump.

BARTIROMO: You know, while President Trump was meeting with the family of Laken Riley, who was murdered by an illegal who crossed into this country in September of 2022, according to the FBI, President Biden was apologizing for calling that person illegal.

SCOTT: It's disgusting.

BARTIROMO: I don't understand this. Can you explain it?

SCOTT: No one can explain that. Talk about disgusting.

Joe Biden is more worried about using the word illegal or undocumented. The word he should use is murderer. Here, we have Donald Trump, our president, sitting down with Laken Riley's family. And you have Joe Biden apologizing for what word he used.

We need a president who's serious about saving American lives by closing the southern border with a Trump wall. We need a president who is serious about saving American lives by reinstating the remain-in-Mexico policy.

Maria, we need a president who is serious enough about saving 70,000 Americans who are dying of fentanyl by getting serious and tough on our border. We don't need a president who's going to backstep and apologize for using the word illegal versus undocumented, when the word he should just use is murderer.

That is disrespectful to the Riley family. And I'm so thankful that President Trump sat down with the family and made the commitment that I would make as well, which is, simply, we will close our southern border and save the sons and daughters of this nation by putting America first.

BARTIROMO: How would you assess the state of the union, sir?

SCOTT: Long and wicked.

He went on forever. I can't think of a worse person to give a long speech than Joe Biden. Wicked, in that I heard a socialist utopia emerging in his words. He's giving away money to student loans. He's giving away money for welfare programs. He's giving away money for the climate.

All I heard was give away, give away, give away and tax more. That is antithetical to who we are as Americans. What Americans want is the ability to control their own future. That requires having their money back. That's why we were better off under President Trump.

BARTIROMO: Yes.

SCOTT: In 2017, he led the greatest tax cuts in the history of our nation, over $2.3 trillion going back to Americans and in their pockets.

BARTIROMO: Right.

SCOTT: So we had the lowest unemployment. We had low inflation, but we had high enthusiasm, high optimism.

Success, Maria, breeds more success. And that's why African-Americans, Hispanics and women voters are coming back to the GOP, because we have a leader.

BARTIROMO: Yes.

SCOTT: We have a leader at the top of the mountain that says we can all do better.

BARTIROMO: Do you believe the black community will come out for Trump this November?

SCOTT: I have never seen the type of enthusiasm for a Republican presidential candidate that I'm seeing right now for President Donald Trump.

Forty percent of African-American men are willing to vote for President Trump. Why? Because they had more money in their pockets, we had more law and order in the streets, and we had a greater future for our kids.

Listen, President Trump is the president that says every child and every zip code deserves a quality education. President Trump is the president who says every neighborhood deserves more police, not defund the police, but let's refund, respect and have our officers where they're needed the most.

We as a people, the American people, love that. But African-Americans are devastated by migrant crime. We're seeing African-American kids staying home from school in New York City so they can put illegal immigrants in the schools. We're watching Colorado and Denver specifically zero out paychecks so illegal immigrants can have more money.

That's devastating poor communities. President Trump stands with a backbone and says, not on my watch.

BARTIROMO: Senator, I was struck by A.G. Merrick Garland's comments recently. He gave a speech and he said that he is going to vow, vow to stop voter I.D. laws. He said it's discriminatory, partly against the black community.

I -- what's wrong with having an I.D. to vote? And why is this attorney general so bent on enforcing no I.D. when you go to the voting booth?

SCOTT: Well, listen, he disrespects the black community with his race- baiting.

Here's what he's suggesting, that we are too dumb, stupid or poor to be able to get a photo I.D. to vote. Let me ask you a question, Maria. Have you ever had the show of a voter I.D. or an I.D. to get on a plane or to cash a check or to check out of your grocery store?

Of course, you can. Of course, you have. And, of course, you should.

BARTIROMO: Right.

SCOTT: We want Joe Biden fired, so Merrick Garland goes out with him the next day.

We should all want voter I.D. Why?

BARTIROMO: Yes.

SCOTT: Because it makes sure that we protect the American process of voting.

Here's what we know from the 2022 election in Georgia. They changed the law. Voter I is still -- voter I.D. is still the law of the land. And they had the highest turnout, and Republicans still won all across the state.

BARTIROMO: Yes.

SCOTT: We know you can have voter I.D., voter integrity.

BARTIROMO: Senator, it's a great point. Obviously, he's making room for the illegals coming into this country.

SCOTT: Crazy.

BARTIROMO: It's great to have this conversation with you, sir. We will continue to follow it.

Thank you for being here.

SCOTT: Look forward to seeing you again, Maria. Thank you.

BARTIROMO: All right, Senator Tim Scott.

And now this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

REP. JAMES COMER (R-KY): It was pretty surprising that the special counsel would state the obvious in writing that Joe Biden's mental capacity is diminished.

I think we see that play out on a daily basis. What I'm concerned about is the fact that with -- hidden within that document is evidence that some of the classified documents he mishandled were from Ukraine and China.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BARTIROMO: And that was House Oversight Committee Chairman Congressman James Comer with me here last month on special counsel Robert Hur's report investigating President Biden's handling of classified documents during his tenure as vice president, Hur declining to bring criminal charges against Biden in part due to what he said the jury would see as -- quote -- "a sympathetic, well-meaning elderly man with a poor memory."

Hur is scheduled to testify this week in front of the House Judiciary Committee. That's coming up this Tuesday, as House Republicans overseeing the Biden impeachment inquiry had their subpoena denied by the White House that the DOJ hand over transcripts and audio related to Hur's interview with President Biden.

Meanwhile, special counsel Jack Smith continues to aggressively pursue criminal charges against former President Trump's handling of classified documents. He filed a number of arguments against Trump's bid to dismiss the case.

Joining me right now in this "Sunday Morning Futures" exclusive is House Oversight Committee member Florida Congressman Byron Donalds.

Congressman, it's great to see you this morning. Thanks so much for being here.

REP. BYRON DONALDS (R-FL): Good to be back with you, Maria.

BARTIROMO: Your reaction to this approach, different approach to the classified documents case?

DONALDS: Look, I think -- I find it to be completely discussing by the Department of Justice.

House Oversight and House Judiciary are doing our jobs. We are requesting the information from the -- from the special counsel on his investigation into -- into Joe Biden. And let's be clear. This is not about Joe Biden's activities during his presidency. It is the fact that he did take classified information from a secure facility when he was vice president and when he was a United States senator.

Both are a violation of the Espionage Act. And having a poor memory does not absolve you from violating the Espionage Act. Being old and elderly does not absolve you from violating the Espionage Act. And so, once again, you see the two-tiered system of justice against Donald Trump simply because he is the Republican nominee and he is actually the person that would blunt the radical Democrat agenda.

So what do the Democrats do? Weaponize the Department of Justice, go after their political rival. It is fascism here in the United States brought to us by Joe Biden and the Democrats.

BARTIROMO: So, what -- where does the impeachment inquiry against President Biden stand at this point? You're a member of the Oversight Committee. And you and James Comer have talked about $30 million that you have identified going to Biden, 170 suspicious activity reports, the gift of a Porsche and two diamonds.

I want to get your take on specifically what evidence you have, the most egregious evidence that you may have that points to Joe Biden being involved in the influence peddling that you and your committee have laid out.

DONALDS: Well, we have it with the fact that we now know that Hunter Biden did bring Joe Biden to this dinner at Cafe Milano.

It has been talked about in various deposition transcripts from Tony Bobulinski to Devon Archer. When we asked Hunter Biden, he couldn't recall. You have the text message famously about requesting money from chairman Zhao. The money showed up a week later. Hunter Biden under oath said he was high, can't remember the text message.

But photos from the laptop from hell demonstrate that he actually was at Joe Biden's house on the day that the text message was sent. So you have Hunter Biden contradicting himself. That's evidence piece number one.

Evidence piece number two is the fact that you have money that flows to Jim Biden on the same day checks are cut to Joe Biden, and then they're calling it a loan. But there are no loan documents that exist. That's number two.

And then, number three and most importantly, I think, if you're talking impeachment, Joe Biden has willfully violated immigration law in the United States. He has also violated Supreme Court ruling when it comes to student loans, and he does it with impunity. So I believe it's partly the Oversight investigation, but it's also the willfulness of Joe Biden to ignore the Supreme Court and to not faithfully take care to execute the laws of the United States when it comes to border security.

BARTIROMO: In fact, during the State of the Union address, he tried to school the Supreme Court, attacking them for their decision on Roe v. Wade. Your reaction?

And, also, give us your assessment of Biden's State of the Union this week.

DONALDS: Well, I found -- I found his scolding of the court disgusting, because the left will say that they want to respect the institution, except when they don't get their way.

And then, when they don't get their way, they want to call out Supreme Court justices in front of the world. That was outrageous. There was a reason why not the entire -- the entire Supreme Court was not there, because I think they understood they didn't want to be subjected to Joe Biden's foolishness.

On a whole, the State of the Union speech was disgusting. I have never seen a speech like this, where the opposition party from the president's party did not stand for an hour in that speech. It was partisan. It was a campaign speech. He was trying to prove himself to his political base, because they have serious questions about his ability. And, frankly, they should have serious questions about his ability.

But it was not about the United States of America. It was not addressing the true state of the union, which is unraveling a bunch of the policies of -- policies of Joe Biden, because they have been disastrous for America.

BARTIROMO: Well, this is what I really want to get to. I mean, the State of the Union is an opportunity for America to understand where the country stands on so many issues, whether it's economic or foreign policy or beyond.

I walked away from that State of the Union not really having a clear understanding of what is the state of the union. So, I ask you, what is the state of the union today?

DONALDS: Right now, under Joe Biden, we are a nation in decline.

And it's truly sad because America has so much promise. You can make the clear argument, Maria, that the only reason why our economy is still afloat is really because of the ingenuity, the hard work, the ethic, the grit of the American worker, the American businessman, the American financier, all of them working interdependently to just produce goods and services and enjoy America.

It's the greatest nation in the world. But with this leadership from Joe Biden, where we have fallen behind on the world stage, we are falling behind when it comes to energy. We are falling behind when it comes to regulations. And the government gets bigger as a result.

It's not been good for the United States. We can significantly do better. This is why I believe Donald Trump's going to be the 47th president of the United States.

BARTIROMO: Well, on -- during the State of the Union, Biden said -- and this is a quote -- "I have already cut the deficit by over $1 trillion."

That's just not true, according to the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget. Maya MacGuineas writes this: "More than the entirety of the fall in the deficit can be explained by COVID relief enacted under both Trump and Biden expiring."

So the COVID money has expired, and that is why the deficit went down. COVID-related spending fell by nearly $1.5 trillion between fiscal year '21 and '22, according to the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget.

We're still waiting to see if you all are going to get your work done, the appropriations bills, and avoid a government shutdown within the next two weeks, right?

DONALDS: Oh, that is correct.

Two quick things. Number one, your report is absolutely correct. And then Joe Biden did the dumbest thing ever. He juiced federal spending with his American so-called Rescue Plan, which created the disastrous inflation that has been crippling American consumers.

But when it comes to the federal budget, I do believe we're going to get this work done, finally. And it's important for the American people to understand that House Republicans were prepared to get all this done last September.

But the reason why this can never get resolved is because Chuck Schumer and Senate Democrats wanted to delay, delay, delay, delay, and delay some more, mostly for ***politics***, but also just to get as much money into the government as possible to spend on reckless policy.

It is unfortunate, but this is what happens when you have bad leadership in the Democrat Party. America can do better. And I will even say, for Democrat voters, they can do better as well, because the people leading their party are leading their party into oblivion. It's a shame seeing what's happened to the Democrat Party in America.

BARTIROMO: Congressman, it's great to have you this morning. Thanks very much. We will be watching your work, of course.

Thank you, sir.

DONALDS: Thank you.

BARTIROMO: All right, Congressman Byron Donalds this morning in Florida.

A quick break, then the new leadership at the Republican National Committee, as President Trump strengthens his grip on the Republican Party, and his loyalists Michael Whatley and Lara Trump are voted in on Friday night to lead the RNC.

Lara Trump is here with her priorities for the upcoming election. Can the new team ensure a fair and transparent election?

But, first, the national security impact of China's aggression. FOX News senior strategic analyst, retired Four-Star General Jack Keane is here on the China threat next.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

PETER SCHWEIZER, PRESIDENT, GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY INSTITUTE: I quote extensively from Chinese propaganda ministry officials and military officials. They call TikTok the Trojan horse that they're using against the West.

And they lay out in excruciating detail how they use it as a propaganda tool to undermine the faith of American young people in their own country.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BARTIROMO: And that was Peter Schweizer, author of the bestseller "Blood Money," on the threat TikTok poses to U.S. national security.

This week, the House is expected to vote on a bill that would force Chinese company ByteDance to sell TikTok over concerns that the Chinese Communist Party is influencing the site's algorithm and accessing personal data of the app's users.

Joining me right now with more on the China threat is FOX News senior strategic analyst. He is retired Four-Star General Jack Keane.

General, always a pleasure to see you.

Your reaction to this upcoming vote and the threat that is TikTok?

GEN. JACK KEANE (RET.), FOX NEWS SENIOR STRATEGIC ANALYST: Well, we're clearly moving in the right direction.

I mean, our entire intelligence community, led by the FBI, who's responsible for counterintelligence, are all in agreement here that TikTok is absolutely a threat to our national security. So, this bill is moving in the right direction.

And for our audience to understand, it's not suggesting to ban TikTok. The bill really is, they have to change the ownership of TikTok, get rid of ByteDance, and get another company in there who owns it that is not plugged into the Chinese Communist Party. That really is the issue.

And, hopefully, this gets passed. It is a threat to our national security. And, certainly, it most significantly would be if we had a conflict with China in terms of what they know about the American people. It would be a huge advantage to them at that time in how to manipulate them.

BARTIROMO: Yes, it's an important point to make.

I also want to get your take on the threat of Iran, as well as what's happening on Israel and Hamas. You say that there was news broken from the testimony of the chairman of CENTCOM. Talk to us about what's happening and the approach to Iran right now from the United States.

KEANE: Yes, well, a couple things.

First of all, we have to congratulate CENTCOM and our military capability out there in literally shutting down the Iranian-backed militias that have been attacking our bases in Iraq and Syria. After the February 2 and February 7 attack, 85 targets hit, and, obviously, the leader of the Iraqi- backed militia, that shut them down.

They have been shut down for over a month, so good news there. But he also pointed out, in dealing with the Houthis, because we have been out of Yemen for years -- we're still in Iraq and Syria, and we don't have the visibility in Yemen that we used to have.

He has testified that to really stop the Houthis from taking -- from just degrade them to stop them, we would have to impose cost on Iran, and that is something we have all been talking about here with you, Maria, and others. Iran is the center of gravity here, and you have to put their assets at risk.

No one here, to include the CENTCOM commander, is talking about conducting an attack that would suggest we're going to war with Iran and going after infrastructure in Tehran, like we did in Baghdad in 2003. These are limited attacks to get Iran's attention, to make sure they understand that their assets are going to be held at risk.

And that is a step that still needs to be taken. And, hopefully, the administration will release the assets that the CENTCOM commander has to do just that.

BARTIROMO: Yes, I have got to tell you, it doesn't feel like we have got any aggressive response to all of these attacks on our troops in the Middle East.

And even as we're sort of stalling on an aggressive response there and stalling on an aggressive response to the aggression coming out of communist China, President Biden is warning Bibi Netanyahu that he needs to put a cease-fire in place, like immediately.

Biden warned the prime minister of Israel that an assault on Rafah would cross the red line. The president has been talking about this expected cease-fire for a number of days now, and yet there's been no conversation of any expectation that Hamas is going to release the hostages.

KEANE: Yes, I mean, for the life of me, I don't know what is going on here.

The proposal on the table that Israel has is a cease-fire for six weeks, and obviously a release of hostages and significant humanitarian aid. That's on the table. Who is saying no to that? Hamas.

BARTIROMO: Right.

KEANE: They want a permanent cease-fire. They want a withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza.

I mean, those are unrealistic negotiating points. So, it looks like Hamas appears to be digging their heels in here, because they believe they had the wind at their back with the international community condemning Israel for its behavior. And now this just reinforces their position because we have the president of the United States, no less, reinforcing that behavior as well.

Listen, what has to happen here -- and let's put it on the table -- Israel has to destroy the remaining effective Hamas fighting battalion, somewhere in the neighborhood of five to six of them, four of them in Rafah. If they don't do that, and if they don't take down the principal Hamas leaders who are still alive in those tunnel systems, what's going to happen?

Hamas will declare victory, and they will rearm and reattack and threaten Israel again.

BARTIROMO: Yes.

KEANE: That puts Israel's survival at risk. People will not want to live in Israel if they can't take care of their families and feel secure.

BARTIROMO: Of course, yes.

KEANE: That is the objective Hamas is trying to achieve.

BARTIROMO: General, well said on all three accounts. We so appreciate your guidance and time this morning.

Thank you, sir.

Jack Keane joining us this morning.

Quick break, and then: President Biden turns the State of the Union into a campaign speech, attacking President Trump.

Reaction from new incoming Republican leadership. RNC co-chair Lara Trump is here on Biden's State of the Union and revealing comments by Attorney General Merrick Garland when it comes to voter I.D.

Stay with us.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

MERRICK GARLAND, U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL: We are challenging efforts by states and jurisdictions to implement discriminatory, burdensome and unnecessary restrictions on access to the ballot, including those related to mail-in voting, the use of drop boxes and voter I.D. requirements.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BARTIROMO: Voter I.D. requirements.

That was Attorney General Merrick Garland vowing last weekend that the Department of Justice will confront any state that implements tougher election security measures, including rules to show your I.D.

In Houston on Friday, the Republican National Committee elected Michael Whatley to replace Ronna McDaniel as chairman and Lara Trump as co-chair. Both received the endorsement of former President Trump, who told me exclusively in an interview last month at Mar-a-Lago that changes were coming to the RNC leadership. And, certainly, they have.

Joining me right now is the woman herself, the co-chair, the new co-chair of the RNC, Lara Trump, who begins day one on Monday tomorrow.

Lara, great to see you. Congratulations.

LARA TRUMP, CO-CHAIR, REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE: Thank you so much, Maria. I really appreciate it.

BARTIROMO: What is your priority leading the RNC right now?

L. TRUMP: Well, you just heard from the top law enforcement officer in the country, Merrick Garland, that he doesn't want voter I.D. anywhere, that he wants to basically give access, as I just heard from him, to anyone, whether they are legally able to vote or not.

That is a huge problem. We have three pillars that we need to focus on at the RNC to ensure victory on November 5, turn out the vote, protect the vote, and raise money. But I would argue that maybe the most important of those three is protecting the vote, election integrity.

We have to ensure that, when people go vote, they feel like their vote counts, that they are inspired to go vote. We can never allow what happened in 2020 and the questions surrounding that election to ever happen again.

So, I will tell you right now what is already under way at the RNC. We have for the first time ever an Election Integrity Division. This means vast resources dedicated solely to this cause. We are going to have, and we have already started working on -- and I will tell you Monday we're going to expand all of it -- a nationwide network of volunteers, whether it's poll watchers, trained poll workers.

These are people who can physically go in, count ballots that are coming in, know how many are coming in, how many are going out. Volunteer and paid attorneys. If you are an attorney who wants to volunteer, we want you, DonaldJTrump.com, GOP.com. Please come volunteer.

And we currently have 78 lawsuits out right now in 23 states across this country to make it easier to vote and harder to cheat. And here's what I want to say. To anyone out there who is thinking about cheating in an election, we will go after you. You will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. It is not worth it.

Every person in this country, Maria, whether you are a Republican or Democrat, should want free, fair and transparent elections.

BARTIROMO: Of course.

L. TRUMP: That's what we're going to focus on.

BARTIROMO: Well, look, you just heard A.G. Garland.

You are going to be fighting up -- an uphill battle, because they do not want voter I.D.s. He said he's going to vow to stop states that have voter I.D.s. And you have to question whether or not this is about the 10 million illegals who have come into this country on Joe Biden's watch.

I had a friend the other day tell me she was standing at a food truck. Two gentlemen approached her. One had tattoos all over his face. They looked like illegals, she said. And one had a clipboard. And he said to her: "Hello, miss, do you want to sign up to become a Democrat and vote?"

So you're talking about people that you want to hire. They're already doing that. And they may be doing it with illegals coming into this country.

L. TRUMP: Yes, well, you do have to ask yourself, why would you not want something so basic like voter I.D.? And I think you're right.

People say, why do we have a fully open southern border? Why is it you are willing to allow fentanyl to pour over and kill 100,000 Americans a year? Why is it you're allowing 169 people on the terror watch list last fiscal year to come over?

And I think the only thing people can figure is that the Democrats are bleeding and hemorrhaging voters. They understand that they cannot fool people in this country any longer. So they have to import people. And the only reason you wouldn't want voter I.D. is if you want people who cannot vote to vote in these elections. It is insane.

But it's exactly the reason, Maria, that this is our number one focus at the RNC. You look at things like ballot harvesting. This is a tactic that the Democrats have used for decades. We are going to have a legal ballot harvesting operation at the RNC.

It is already under way. And we will expand it again starting on Monday, starting next week, when we are in that office. I can guarantee you that, over the next eight months, you are going to see things happen at the Republican National Committee unlike you have ever seen before, because this is a must-win election.

If Donald Trump is not elected on November 5 of this year, I do not believe we have the same country on the other side. If these people are able to use their communist tactics, like they have, to try and stop this one man, if they are able to continue to destroy this country, we will never get it back.

So we are laser-focused, we are ready to go, and we are ready to work hard.

BARTIROMO: Is it too late already? The Democrats' machine is ongoing and has been on. Remember what Kamala Harris, the vice president, said the other day.

She says now they are going to pay people to come out and get engaged into voting. She said, government -- and this is all taxpayer dollars. People should understand, this is your money being used to pay college students to register voters. She said college students could soon earn money for registering other voters right now.

They will receive money through the work study, a federal program that pays most of students' wages while employed at a part-time job, taxpayer money.

L. TRUMP: Yes, it is unbelievable.

Imagine Donald Trump using taxpayer money to influence the outcome of an election when he was president. People would have gone berserk over it. But this is very, very problematic. It is not too late. I think that what we have to understand right now is that every tool in our war chest, we have to bring out, because they are desperate.

They are floundering. They are trying to sell a product to the American people in Joe Biden that they don't want. Look at the polling between Joe Biden and Donald Trump. If the election were held today, Donald Trump would win handily, no problem, hands down.

We have to ensure that, over the next eight months, we get people out to early-vote, we ballot-harvest like nothing we have ever seen, and we ensure that every person who is legally able to vote can do so and anyone who legally is not able to vote cannot do so.

We have to protect that vote once it's in. And that is how we are going to win on November 5.

BARTIROMO: All right, Lara, we will be watching your work, for sure. Thank you so much for joining us this morning.

L. TRUMP: Thank you.

BARTIROMO: All right.

L. TRUMP: You got it.

BARTIROMO: RNC co-chair Lara Trump joining us this morning from Florida.

Quick break, and then: campaigning at the State of the Union, the president's priorities failing to align with those of regular Americans, as Joe Biden kicks off his State of the Union yelling about Ukraine, then tries to school the Supreme Court on abortion, before misleading the country on his handling of the open border and the high-priced economy.

Senate Homeland Security member Ron Johnson the more than 10 million illegals in America on Joe Biden's watch and why now we're not even supposed to admit that they are illegal and have broken the law to get here. Ron Johnson is next.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SEN. ROGER MARSHALL (R-KS): Now they're making fentanyl precursors. This Chinese mafia, the Triad, smuggles it to Mexico and then they hand that over to the cartel, and into the United States it comes.

Over the last five years, this Chinese Triad has monopolized money laundering. They have that down to an art now, and now we're seeing this explosion of massage parlors, which the Chinese Triad is running.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BARTIROMO: And that was Kansas Senator Roger Marshall with me here last weekend on how the Chinese organized crime networks work with dangerous drug cartels in transporting people into America.

Then they put women to work in human trafficking businesses, exploiting President Biden's disastrous open border policy. On Thursday, the House passed the Laken Riley Act, which requires illegal migrants charged with theft or burglary to be held by Immigration and Customs Enforcement; 37 Democrats joined Republicans in passing that legislation.

The bill is named after 22-year-old Georgia nursing student Laken Riley, who law enforcement say was murdered by Jose Antonio Ibarra, who entered the country illegally in September 2022 through the El Paso, Texas, open border. The Venezuelan national had previously been arrested in Georgia for shoplifting, and then he was arrested in New York. But New York let him out.

The bill now heads to the Senate, with its future in the Democrat- controlled chamber uncertain.

Joining me right now with more on how Biden's border crisis is impacting communities across the country is Wisconsin Senator Ron Johnson, a member of the Senate Homeland Security Committee and, of course, a longtime friend of this program and one of the original truth-tellers out there.

Senator, good to see you. Thank you so much for joining us.

Your reaction to the open border?

SEN. RON JOHNSON (R-WI): Good morning, Maria.

Well, first of all, I think it's the -- exactly what's going to happen in the Senate with the Laken Riley bill is certain. It won't be brought up, just like we haven't held one hearing on the open border.

And when you hear President Biden apologize for calling an illegal alien that murdered Laken Riley illegal, he should have used undocumented, it just shows exactly what their attitude is toward their open border policy. They want an open border. They cause this problem.

And I think what's even more disturbing is, when you hear more and more reports of the military-aged men, these camps in the Darien Gap, the NGOs, the nongovernmental organizations that are located right next to these camps, by the way, the American taxpayer is funding these nongovernmental organizations.

So, you can basically say that not only does the Biden administration, their open border policy facilitate some of the multibillion-dollar business model of some of the most evil people on the planet, we literally are paying and orchestrating this invasion of America that is a clear and present danger to this country.

This is beyond the pale. And yet President Biden is apologizing for calling a murderer an illegal immigrant. So it's amazing.

BARTIROMO: It's unbelievable. It's amazing that he apologized. He says: I should not have called him an illegal. I should have said undocumented.

Why? He illegally broke into the country and then committed chaos and murder. There's a breaking story last night from your colleague Senator Bill Hagerty who had an amendment which barred illegal aliens from being counted in allotting congressional seats and Electoral College votes.

He says: "We now know if Dems care more about their political power or the citizens they supposedly represent."

The amendment did not pass in the Senate.

JOHNSON: No.

And, again, people need to understand that even if the illegal immigrants aren't allowed to vote -- and, of course, Democrats doing everything they can, mail-in balloting, reduce the controls over our elections. They want these illegal immigrants to be able to vote.

But even if they're not able to, what will happen is, our census will be impacted by this, because the census counts all residents, legal and illegal, documented or undocumented. And so what you're going to see is these illegal immigrants flood into states like California, and then California will get more members of Congress.

They will be able to tip the balance in Congress. So even if they're not able to vote, this is definitely impacting our electorate and basic governance. And so we will have Democrat policies, radical left policies continue to destroy this country.

BARTIROMO: Senator, I want to get your take on whether or not anything changes with the new makeup of the Senate. We know Mitch McConnell is not going to get -- go for reelection. So let's take a short break and then talk about that and a lot more with you.

Senator Ron Johnson is with us this morning.

Stay with us. We will be right back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BARTIROMO: Well, welcome back.

And I'm back with Senator Ron Johnson.

Senator, Mitch McConnell has announced he will not seek reelection. Who do you want to see in that leadership position?

JOHNSON: Well, first of all, Maria, I appreciate the fact that Leader McConnell announced early, so we can go through a process.

You know I come from the private sector, right? And in most successful organizations, they have a mission statement, a vision statement. They establish principles that they run their organization by. They establish goals. They identify the roles that people play in accomplishing those goals and that mission.

That's not Congress. That's not our conference. So what I have been trying to drive is a process to, first of all, have the Republican Conference in the Senate know what we're about. What is our mission? We just passed with Republican votes over $12 billion in earmarks, 6,000 earmarks, 600 pages of them.

It had been the Republican Conference position to oppose earmarks as the gateway drug to all this massive deficit spending. Then, all of a sudden, we're voting for earmarks. So we need to go through that process.

My own proposed mission statement would be, first of all, show what we're for. We're obviously for the things that made this country great, freedom, free market system, defending the Constitution. But in -- right now, at this moment in time, we must counter the ideology, the policies of the radical left, which is the Democratic Party, that is literally destroying this country.

We have not done an effective job doing that. So I want to go through that process. I'm hoping, in the definition of that and development of that mission statement, those leaders will help define it, fully embrace it, and then commit to leading based on those principles, or not violate them, as we have in the past.

BARTIROMO: Well, I mean, you keep saying and your colleagues in the House keep saying you don't want to continue with Nancy Pelosi's budget.

And what do we have over and over again? Nancy Pelosi's budget. I can say the same thing about that. You just avoided a government shutdown because of another minibus, right? You have got upcoming deadlines where we could see a government shutdown. Joe Biden says he already cut the deficit by over $1 trillion. That's false. We know that.

The Committee for a Responsible Budget says that that was all COVID relief money that went away. So you're still in it.

JOHNSON: Yes, let's face it. The uniparty has no problem mortgaging and plundering our children's future.

In 2019, before the pandemic, federal government spending was $4.4 trillion. Now we have pretty well locked in a new baseline at $6.4 trillion. Our population has increased less than 2 percent, and yet spending has increased 45 percent.

And most members of Congress, both sides of the aisle, unfortunately...

BARTIROMO: Yes.

JOHNSON: ... are OK with that. They're just whistling by the graveyard. That has to change.

BARTIROMO: So, it sounds like...

JOHNSON: And that's the kind of process, that's the kind of discussion I'm trying to drive in the Senate.

BARTIROMO: It sounds like you're not in on John Cornyn or John Thune becoming the next leadership here?

JOHNSON: We need to go through that process and define who we are and let the American people know...

BARTIROMO: OK.

JOHNSON: ... this is what we're going to do to push back on this radical leftism.

BARTIROMO: Senator -- Senator, thank you.

Senator Ron Johnson.

I will see you tomorrow on FOX Business, "Mornings With Maria."

Have a great Sunday.

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