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**Intro:** Welcome to the Let’s Talk Government Podcast that is provided for you by the Department of Government at Minnesota State University, Mankato located in Minnesota in the United States. I am your host Dr. Pat Nelson the chairperson of the Government Department. I want to thank you for joining us as we explore different topics about government. Some may be surprising to you and some may not, so please enjoy.

**Dr. Nelson:** Welcome to episode 12 of the Let's Talk government podcast, and welcome to a new year today. We're going to talk about democracy under assault. I am joined by two faculty members from Minnesota State University ,Mankato, Dr. Kevin Parsneau from the political science program. And he specializes in research around the presidency and Dr. Carl Lafata from the law enforcement and criminal justice programs. And part of his research is around authoritarian personalities and following authoritarianism. So thank you for joining me today. Let's start talking about what happened in the Capitol in Washington DC and the significance of those events, Dr. Kevin Parsneau would, you'd like to talk about what led up to it.

**Dr. Kevin Parsneau:** Well, I mean, to some degree, what led up to it was kind of what, uh, Dr. Slocum and I were talking about in the, in a previous podcast where we said about leading up to the election, uh, the way that the voting was going, where, um, Democrats were voting by mail voting absentee, and many Republicans were voting in person. It resulted in an election day where as the initial votes came in, it looked as they counted early votes. They were counting the votes of the people there. And then through the day and through the next couple of days, absentee, um, vote by mail and so forth were coming in. So there was a lead on election day, uh, for president Trump, and then as time wore on into the evening, and then into later days, increasingly, uh, Biden won the States that Trump appeared to be in the lead in, in the evening of the election day. So this fueled what president Trump had been saying all along, it fueled the idea that there was some legitimacy to some sort of trick in the election where ballots were stopped or something along those lines. It didn't actually happen, but you know, that's been one of Trump's here. We were ahead in the evening, and then all these fake ballots came in. Well, they weren't fake ballots. They were democratic ballots that we knew were coming in. Everyone who followed the issue, knew this was going. And this of course, piles onto his sort of pre election day claimed that there was going to be corruption and cheating if you lost. Um, so that fueled some legitimacy to a bunch of sort of claims where people could look at video. People could look at events and any time you're counting 150 million ballots in 50 States and the district of Columbia, there's going to be something that doesn't look exactly right someplace. Somebody sets a box of something aside, somebody does something. Somebody says something. And every single instance of that was used as proof that there was election fraud, even though repeatedly Republican and democratic and neutral observers said, no, there's no such thing. Republican secretaries of state, who've been big Trump supporters, um, like raffinose burger in Georgia said, look, I'm sorry, but this, there was no corruption here, right? So that's fueled the idea among president Trump's supporters that the election wasn't legitimate, even though all by all measures, this was legitimate. People all showed up at Biden won by more than just one state. He won by a lot of States and he went by a lot of votes, um, in roughly an electoral difference. That last time it happened for Trump, Trump did a landslide. So all, all that said a lot of people were fueled up with the idea that, that somehow the process of counting the electoral college votes as it was concluding on Capitol Hill was somehow illegitimate. And Donald Trump, you know, under the slogan of stop, the steel was telling his supporters that people up on the Capitol were about to steal the election from him. And he called a rally on January 6th, people came, his supporters spoke, Giuliani spoke. I think, uh, Don Jr spoke a couple other people and he got up there and he said, they're up there right now, stealing the election it's fraud has never been worse. He went through his whole litany of every little videotape of somebody moving a box in Pennsylvania or whatever he was complaining about and told them that they had to be strong weakness loses. I can't remember the exact quotes, but you know that they got to March up there and do something and people left and they reacted the way you might expect Americans to react if they believe their democracy or their Republic is under threat. They attacked the people that, that the president said was attacking the democracy, which turned out to be the first branch of government in the process of fulfilling its legitimate constitutional duty. Um,

**Dr. Nelson:** Actually before we go much farther there, doctor personnel, let's talk about that legitimate constitutional duty. So that day we've got the house and Senate they're going over the electoral votes that are cast, they're basically certifying the election, right? They're saying, yes, this is counted correctly. This has come out exactly as we've said. So this is our next president elect and vice president. Mike Pence is presiding over that because that is his constitutional duty. Right? Okay. So even if, and we're going to, we're playing a little effing here, but even if, uh, the mob had gotten into the Capitol and took the infamous Brown boxes that had the electoral votes in it, they wouldn't have stopped that certification because that's just a copy of the vote. Correct?

**Dr. Kevin Parsneau:** Right, right there, Dave, there, there was no way for them to actually stop the electoral caucus States. It's not like States don't make copies of this. Right. Right. States make copies of these things in the, in the eighth, in the 18th century, in the 19th century. So in an era when you've got whatever number of copies of everything, there were other legitimate signed copies of the electoral college votes and all the States grabbing there, there were some apparently very Valiant, uh, staff members who zipped those boxes out of there and good for them, the symbolism of that crowd, getting that box and doing that would have been horrible. And it, would've probably fueled more claims that the ones that came in from the state were fraudulent or who knows what would've happened on the internet. Right, right. Um, so yeah, good for them that said, I have no idea how this plan, this, this assault was supposed to have the effect the intended, um, because they couldn't, even, if they could have gotten in there, they couldn't stop the electoral college vote and good for every member of Congress and everybody, including the vice-president who got back in there that evening and fulfilled what was really a ceremonial duty. It's really a ceremonial thing.

**Dr. Nelson:** Well, and I also want to clarify for our listeners here that other, other people have objected to the electoral college votes in the past and the house and Senate. So it's not just unique to this year that there was, there was groups, it was unique how large of a group we're objecting, but there have been objections in the past, right?

**Dr. Kevin Parsneau:** Yeah. In, in 2000, um, a member of the house protested, um, what she considered irregularities, I believe it was in Ohio. It T there was nothing to those irregularities in Ohio they'd been investigated. Um, but she did not get in, in order for it to actually go to a debate in Congress. You have to have both the member of the house and the Senate sign-on no senators were willing to sign on to that challenge of the Bush Gore election. Um, so it wound up not getting debated. In fact, the person presiding was Al Gore himself who had to gavel it down again much to his credit. He's, gaveling down an attempt to make him potentially precedent in order to follow the ceremonial role that is happening at that moment.

**Dr. Nelson:** Great. Okay. So I just wanted to do some clarification. All right. So we've got, uh, president Trump up there making statements such as now, it's time to go walk down to the Capitol and I'm going to be there with you. We're going to go give our Republicans the weak ones, um, go and try and give them the kind of pride and boldness that they need to take back our country. Dr. Lafata. Why would anybody actually March to the Capitol then?

**Dr. Carl Lafata :** Because they see Trump as a legitimate authority that is more legitimate and, um, the rule of law really, or any other elected official or a police chief or law enforcement official. And, you know, I found it was ironic during, uh, the violence, uh, you know, the insurrection last Wednesday that people were carrying thin blue line flags and back the blue and supporting law enforcement life. At the same time, they're dragging these poor officers into the crowd to beat them. And of course, one unfortunately lost his life, defending the Capitol. Um, you know, authoritarianism quite simply is essentially a strict adherence to, you know, it could be a person, a group or religion, uh, called, uh, anything that the person sees as a legitimate afford being Verin is the key word is legitimacy. So we know that law enforcement is, you know, a representative of government's authority. We know that the legislature is the same thing when Donald Trump gets in front of a group of people. And for four years is, you know, just knocking down anybody who disagrees with him essentially de-legitimizing that in the eyes of his followers, uh, it sets the stage for people to rise up against what they see as a, a D legitimate authority or an illegitimate authority. Um, we saw that in Minneapolis this summer where, you know, it's no secret that the Minneapolis police department in this, in the, uh, certain communities within, uh, Minneapolis have had longstanding tensions with the police department and the killing of George Floyd, uh, essentially serve to eliminate any last vestiges of legitimacy in the eyes of some, and those people, uh, that no longer saw Minneapolis police officers as legitimate stewards of the authority vested in them by the community, refuse to comply. Uh, in this particular case, you know, this, uh, insurrection has been the culmination of four years of basically de-legitimizing anything that runs contrary to whatever Donald Trump says is right or correct, and what he has done and what his, his, uh, you know, supporters in, in government have done is, you know, a masterful job of playing to people's fears. In this particular case, it was the fears of a stolen election. Uh, previously it was fears of immigrants or fears of, of riding in the streets if Joe Biden, uh, became president, which you know, is, I think many of us have talked to found somewhat ironic. Um, but authoritarianism is based, uh, it's not, it's not a pathological condition. It's not a mental illness. It's actually something we've come to understand as being a product of nurture more than nature and studies of authoritarian, personalities, and pre fascist tendencies, and things of that nature, uh, really took cold after a war, world war II. When people like Theodore Adorno, social psychologists, uh, like Adorno, um, worked to identify the reasons why seemingly good, honest, righteous German people, middle-class German, people would go along with the Nazi regime and turn a blind eye to the atrocities that they committed. And they found that people tended to submit to authority, uh, to give more power to authority and act on behalf of authority when they were afraid. Um, but Donald's work served as the basis for a gentleman named Bob Altima out of the university of Manitoba who studied authoritarianism for decades. And he's now retired, but you know, one of the quotes I really liked from his work was that authoritarian, Stan 10 steps, closer to the panic button and the rest of us. And when you get people very afraid of whatever it is, you know, like I said, immigrants, it could be changed. It could be, you know, a, you know, a democratic run. Um, and they say big D is in the democratic party, uh, run government. Then people are primed to aggress on behalf of, uh, that, that authority figure. And again, fear is the big component. And if you cross reference, you know, some of these, um, well, if you back, uh, let me back up and say that one of the things that leads to fear is a lack of education, and I'm not talking to greys and things of that nature, but I'm talking about general knowledge people that tend to have less knowledge that don't understand how government works, that don't understand, for example, how vaccines work. And so they're afraid of vaccines. They tend to be more fearful. They tend to therefore be more authoritarian because it's easier for them to give, basically give up, uh, their, their free will to some extent, to the authority figure who tells them what to think, what to believe, how to act, even if that authority figure does not, uh, does not live by that rule, does not walk that talk. They're going to essentially look to that person to provide them with guidance. And so we see that now where people don't bother to understand, uh, again, we talk about vaccines. You don't understand, you know, how the electoral college system works. They don't understand, um, you know, why the Q Anon conspiracy theory is absolutely ridiculous. Um, they, they look at these things as just fact because someone in a position of authority told them it's fact, and they simply don't want to go through the effort of finding out otherwise. So, you know, when you have a situation where people are essentially open to suggestion and willing to go so far as to kill, to assault, to vandalize on behalf of that authority figure, you know, it puts us in a very tenuous place as a country and as a society,

**Dr. Nelson:** I think that's a perfect way to segue into Dr. Parsons. Now, why then if we have a group following an authoritarian figure, like the current president, why would this attack on the Capitol be seen as threatening democracy?

**Dr. Kevin Parsneau:** Well, in one sense, the day of the attack is not a specific threat, right? They're not going to get in there and get, I mean, but on the other hand, it was very close. I mean, some of the video where you see the Capitol police or Marshall's, or whoever it was at the door holding one side, you see members of the house just on the other side. Um, so the I, and then there's the guy going through, uh, the chamber with zip ties, right? And, um, people were found that they had bombs and guns and other things in the vicinity. I don't know if anybody on the presence was known to have a bomb or anything, but the, the idea that members, legitimate members of the house members of the Senate, people marching around saying they were going to execute or kill my pants that you'd kill democratically elected people. That's a threat to a democracy, even if that's not going to stop the electoral college from making Joe Biden, the president. Right. And then the other effect of that is I think something that we're still going to have to live with, if, if there's a group of people willing to do something along these lines, don't members of Congress, whether they're Republicans going against their party, Democrats, whoever do they have to constantly look over their back to think one of these types of people is in my neighborhood, in my house, right? This protest, this, you know, not, can we look at any peaceful protests, um, and think, Oh, well, this protest is just good old Americans being patriotic, or is this gonna turn into something? Right. So I think the idea that people have to think about how they're going to vote in fear of how that might affect their personal life and their families in a way that crosses the line of just somebody told me they didn't like my vote by marching, right. Is certainly a threat to democracy. And I think, I guess for me, I hear people talking about how they're going to vote in the future. And you hear like Mitch McConnell saying this, this, I can't remember the exact phrase, but he's basically saying, yeah, it makes sense that this could fall under something that president Trump could be impeached for. Um, and yet Republican members of the house and Senate still sort of waffling on just saying things like Joe Biden won the election fair and square. Right. Was it Jim Jordan yesterday or the day before who wouldn't say in the committee that Joe Biden won? He said, well, I don't have to say that Joe Biden will be the president. That's good enough to say, okay, why you saying it? Is it, is it out of fear of violence? I hope not. I don't, I don't know, but I think that's the, that's the threat, going ahead. If we're going to have politically motivated mob violence like this, how, how stable of a democracy can you feel? Even if for the rest of our lives, people still show up in Congress and vote and everything looks relatively normal.

**Dr. Carl Lafata:** Well, and I think Jim Jordan's, uh, you know, refusal to admit that Joe Biden legitimately won this election, uh, stems more from his fealty to Donald Trump than, you know, any sort of fear. I mean, he just received, uh, did he just receive her? He's about to receive the, the presidential medal of freedom from Donald Trump. So, you know, there's, there's, uh, I think, uh, a different motivation for him. Um, there's a representative out of my home state of Michigan, uh, Peter Meyer, who's a freshmen GOP rep. And he actually said publicly, you know, that, uh, other Republican Congress, people have told him that they refuse to, um, you know, support, uh, or, or, um, they refuse to stand up essentially, uh, you know, after the, the assault on the Capitol, because they feared for their safety, they feared for their family safety. And this is the thing when government becomes de-legitimized when the free press becomes de-legitimized, you know, even law enforcement can't sit back and go, well, they'll respect the rule of law. They won't, if you've ever seen, uh, the Boogaloo boys, uh, which is another far-right militia group, they wear, uh, Hawaiian shirts. That's what they're known for. And one of the reasons they wear Hawaiian shirts is because of something they called that they're preparing for, which is, you know, Boogaloo. Uh, they refer to Boogaloo as the, uh, uh, coming civil war and they refer to that as the big Lou owl. Um, and one of the reasons they adopt that kind of a Hawaiian luau, uh, look is because they talk about pig roast as being a part of that, uh, luau tradition. So, you know, roasting a pig, killing a police officer. And by the way, the third precinct was in fact assaulted by one of the Boogaloo boys he'd been arrested for that. And so these folks are not pro law enforcement, they're pro whoever they support at the moment. And if you have somebody that is in political power, that is very, uh, charismatic, or at least speaks to a group of people, uh, in a way that they embrace, they can very easily take those people and turn them, uh, to, to a more violent ideology, you know, essentially radicalize them.

**Dr. Kevin Parsneau:** I was just going to say, I mean, um, among that, uh, there's a, there's a few real key key moments in addition to a lot of the things that president Trump said about stopping this unfair thing and the destruction of the Republic or whatever. Um, but there's that moment where he, he basically says something along the lines of, did you hear what happened to Mitt Romney? I hope he enjoyed his flight, or I want her, if he enjoyed his flight, which was clearly the part where he was confronted by people who were, you know, trying to intimidate Mitt Romney, uh, you know, the previous, uh, an earlier Republican nominee for president a governor, a Senator, right. Um, and the, and the fact that he's not up there saying that's beyond the pale, don't do that, but rather joking about it or suggesting that that's appropriate behavior for people who oppose him is, uh, is a really bad moment along the lines of the type of, especially around the type of person that, uh, Carl is talking about here. Um, and then again, I, I mean, when you have this, like, okay, you could say some, some people who, who weren't pro violent were in the crowd wanting to peacefully demonstrate, but you know, you see pictures of the guy in the camp, Auschwitz shirt and the guy in the one that says, uh, 6 million wasn't enough or whatever that is about killing Jews. Like, why are they able to peacefully walk in this crowd if there isn't, if there isn't an explicit support for violence, right. Sure. That's, that's the worrying thing. And I think that hits along the lines of what Carl was talking about.

**Dr. Carl Lafata:** Well, and it's interesting, you bring that up because, you know, Adorno looked at prejudice as being the same thing as fascist or as he referred to as anti-democratic. And one of the quotes that I, uh, that I pulled from him said, one of the most clearly anti-democratic forms of so-so ideology is prejudice. And so you've got a group of people that are clearly prejudice. I mean, if you drew a Venn diagram of, you know, the people that attended that insurrection and rally and the people that really don't like Jews or blacks or Hispanics and immigrants, you're probably going to not see much division between those groups. Um, and so, you know, when you're looking at people that are willing to, uh, aggress on behalf of an authority figure, they will do so even more gleefully, if that authority, if they believe whether the person overtly says it, or they simply imply that they dislike the same groups as there see that the thing about authoritarian personalities is they have to have a vet. There has to be an outgroup. If they can coalesce into an in-group and see us, then them is, you know, something that they can get together behind, they can rally on. And more importantly, they can blame any failures, anything that goes wrong in their world, they can blame that on the outgroup. Um, and they also blame, you know, negative traits that even they possess on that individual. So, and they'll project that on the individual make, what's called the fundamental attribution error. And they'll say, well, that person is less than maybe they're not as rich, or maybe they're not as successful, or maybe they're not as athletic because of their kind is that way. And so really what these people are looking for is a way to feel bigger, better, smarter, more successful. And if they have a charismatic leader who tells them, it's not your fault, it's the fault of immigrants. It's not your fault that you're not successful. It's they took away the manufacturing jobs. It's not your fault. We're going to make things great. Again, they're going to latch onto that because a couple of reasons, you know, it, it promises future, it promises future good things. And the other thing it does is it absolves them of the responsibility for any of the things that have gone wrong in their lives that were clearly their own fault.

**Dr. Nelson:** So building upon that, let's talk a little bit about how things might move forward. So we obviously know president Trump, even though he promised to go with the supporters and personally accompany them up to the Capitol. Instead, he went with secret service back to the white house where he was nice and warm and safe and watched everything. But, um, we're hearing talks about impeachment and sedition and inciting a riot. And could, uh, let's talk about what could happen with president Trump when he leaves office about he could get charged with these things and what they are. So, um, who wants to pick up on what tradition is and why, uh, president Trump could be charged with that.

**Dr. Carl Lafata :** I can talk about the actual legal aspects of it. Um, what people have been talking about is essentially sedition seditious, conspiracy, that's the federal statute. And, uh, if you, if you want to get super technical and I know everybody does, it's 18 us code subsection two, three, two, three eight four, a seditious conspiracy. And this says if two or more persons in any state or territory in any place, subject to the jurisdiction of the U S conspired to overthrow put down or destroy by force the government or to levy war against them, or to oppose by force the authority thereof or force, or by force to prevent hinder or delay the execution of any law. And then it talks about seizing property and things of that nature, but this is the key thing they can charge him with this can seditious conspiracy, because they can make the argument that through his words and actions, not just on the last Wednesday, but in the days, the weeks, the years leading up to that, you know, he encouraged people to do these things and more specifically on Wednesday to prevent them from doing their constant constitutionally mandated duty on that day. And so, you know, he, he runs the risk of, uh, depending on how aggressive the prosecution wants to be of at the very least seditious conspiracy, if not, uh, some of the other sections that fall under that, that us code. Okay.

**Dr. Nelson:** So Dr. Parsneau, I'm going to turn to you. Um, so there's talks of possibly impeaching him. And in fact, I believe it's under debate right now. Why, why you impeach him, he's going to be gone in a week, uh, why go through the process?

**Dr. Kevin Parsneau:** Well, I think practically speaking, they're not going to get him out of office. I mean, part of the argument has been that every day he holds off as even if you remove him on the 19th or the 18th, as opposed to the 20th is one last day that he can encourage something else like this to happen. Um, my understanding is, is Senate majority leader McConnell. Isn't willing to schedule an actual removal until after Joe Biden is already, um, sworn in. So you're not going to do that. I think there's a side of it that is symbolic, that acts like this can't go without a house impeachment and a vote on removal. Um, so I think, I mean, interestingly enough, for someone who's been the speaker of the house for two impeachments, um, Nancy Pelosi seems remarkably hesitant to go for impeachment, except when she feels like she's in a corner. I mean, he could have tried for impeachment on various other things until there was the phone call recording to the Ukraine. And until there was this right. Um, so that, that said, there's the symbolic aspect, the feeling that we can't have a Republic, if we let something like this go without formal sanction from Congress, um, now what will happen? There is some discussion that the Senate then has, uh, has a trial where he might be convicted, which would normally result in removal from office, but there's some other penalties that the, the Senate can do if they find him guilty, like removing his ability to run for office in the future. Um, I'm, I haven't thought a whole lot about whether that, what, what affects all of that might be because a lot of this is very murky, right? We've never actually had an impeachment with the removal from office in this sort of a thing. Um, but also I still would have to think of there, it needs to take a two thirds of the Senate, which means even with Democrats holding a narrow majority in the Senate, you know, 50 50 with the Vice-President's vote, you'd still have to find 17 Republicans. And that's, if no Democrats like Joe Manchin decide not to go that way, um, who would affirm guilt? And I look at lists of senators and I can't come up with 10 names, much less 17. So I don't think that part is going to happen, but I still think like there's a symbolic issue, um, to it. Um, and then on the other half, I, I, I mean, maybe this isn't something that a political mechanism like impeachment or a Senate removal or something where, right. A lot of those people in Congress either got elected based on running as an ally or an enemy of Donald Trump. Maybe it's not something that an institution like that can, but it might be something that federal courts can handle along. Um, and I don't know if there's prosecutors looking into this, what will happen, but, um, that might be a better mechanism, which is an interesting thing in America. And this is a bigger theoretical question that we do in political sciences. How many things when we really want the job done, we just take it out of the hands of elected officials and hand it over to a neutral, supposedly objective group of bureaucrats to execute because politically we just don't have the will to do somethings

**Dr. Nelson:** Well. That's actually a brilliant segue into some closing thoughts here. So I'm going to throw a couple ideas and then I'm going to talk, turn it over to Dr. [inaudible]. But obviously this group of them, the ones that a storm, the Capitol are still gonna be here, right? And, uh, president Trump who will now become former president, Trump will still be there and he'll find a platform he's just will be subject to criminal prosecution and being out of the office. But how do we move forward? Because these groups are still going to be here. So Dr. Levada, I'm going to turn it over to you here.

**Dr. Carl Lafata :** Okay. Sure. And that actually, um, just can make a point on what, uh, Dr. Personnel said. Um, you know, when I was talking about the U S code, I was referring to, to criminal prosecution, his article of impeachment, I think had only one charge, which is incitement of insurrection. And I believe, uh, that, that Dr. Parson was right. It's largely symbolic. Our country tends to have a large, uh, uh, tolerance for things like this corruption and misbehavior and office and things of that nature. And then all of a sudden something goes beyond the pale, even for the most diehard, uh, supporters. And then we, we do something more. But, uh, I think you're right also in that it may not be enough to, to get that two thirds vote. People are still willing for whatever reason to, to, uh, not, not voice disapproval in that regard. Now we're going to have a group of people, 72 million people that voted for Donald Trump. We have a, you know, it's going to be literally hundreds of people that are going to be charged with various crimes. And, you know, if they go to prison when they get out of prison, um, or if they're on probation, whatever it is, uh, they're still going to have support, uh, or support of Donald Trump. They're going to have supportive that ideology. They're always going to believe we're not, we're not going to do anything or be able to do what needing to reeducate those folks. Um, but what we can do, I think is to set an example for the rest of the United States to set the example for other countries, especially those countries, to whom we preach democracy. And the rule of law is to, you know, do things at the federal level, as it pertains to criminal prosecution in a firm fair and consistent manner. Not to look as though we're being overly punitive, or we are going specifically after, you know, a particular group of people, you know, against strict adherence to the law. The law must be obeyed and used in a fashion. And if we do that, I think that the vast majority of American people will look at the application of federal law as being again from fair and consistent. And the people that engaged in criminal acts got what they deserved. And however, they behave on the way back, you know, when they get out, that's going to be on them. And hopefully law enforcement mechanism will be able to handle a very swiftly any future criminal actions.

**Dr. Nelson:** Great. Dr. Parsneau, how about your closing thoughts?

**Dr. Kevin Parsneau:** I hope that, uh, Carl, um, my, my, my closing thoughts would be, I mean, it's going to be, it would have been difficult even without these events for our country to come together with the political polarization. I think even if you just took two, two completely anonymous Democrats and Republicans running for president, we still have divisions in this country. Um, but I think I, I think something along the lines of people coming to grips with the seriousness of these events and how this polarization has driven us to this part. And I, and I'm going to say polarization and misrepresentation and a lot of things by president Trump that was swallowed and, and enabled my, you know, a large number of Republicans in Congress. Um, now the question is whether in the future, people are going to say, this was unacceptable. You can go back to believing in, you know, pro-life, uh, free markets, lower taxes, whatever, but you have to accept that this is unacceptable. And the people who did it went too far. Um, if we can get back to that debate where we're debating, not whether elections are fair, and whether this person who got the most votes and electoral college votes is president, but whether this policy or that policy is right, um, we can, we can be okay. And one of the thing I think about this is, it, it, it might dip, it's going to depend heavily on what Donald Trump does and what happens to Donald Trump, because I mean, Dr. Lafonda has been talking about authoritarian, uh, third terrorism and for these real extreme elements. Um, I think one problem when you're the true leader, when you're the true, uh, strong man that authoritarians look up to, when you start to look weak, I think they turn on you pretty quickly. And I think not being president, um, facing charges, having this, even having to say stuff like, okay, we're going to step back now, boys and not do this. I'm sorry, or whatever, whatever you might. I mean, Donald Trump knows what happens if he starts to look weak. Some of these people are going to turn on him too. And I don't mean violently. I just mean they're not going to support him. They're going to say, well, you know, that guy just turned out to be as bad as all the other ones. I think that might be a step necessary to address this. And I thought your way to put it in

**Dr. Carl Lafata :** What you're saying, Kevin actually, uh, kind of ties in what we said earlier. What, you know, especially the point I was making is the, the authority. Then if we go back to the way, things kind of were is the authority that, uh, that we are talking about that we're debating that we are, uh, uh, that is the, the topic of our discussion is the party or the policy or the government. It's not, it's no longer Donald Trump, Donald, Trump's not the authority. The Republican party is the authority. And I think that is motivating Mitch McConnell, uh, and his, uh, desire to see in his words, uh, you know, Donald Trump purge from the party, because then that way would get the focus back on the Republican policies that they have, uh, you know, try to, uh, embrace over the course of decades, as opposed to, again, there's this cult of personality that it has become, you know, can, can republicanism free itself from Trumpism is the ultimate question.

**Dr. Nelson:** All right, well, thank you gentlemen. I know we have so much more we could talk about, but here is hoping that we get back to actually debating instead of threatening people's lives to continue forward in a democracy. Um, and that would do seem that from fair, consistent, uh, management and actions at the federal level. So, uh, thank you, Dr. Pasnaeu. Thank you, Dr. Lafata and obviously we are recording this before the inauguration, so hopefully we have a actual peaceful transfer of power during the inauguration. And if not, you'll be hearing from us quickly after that, too. So thank you. Thank you.

**[music]**

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