



## **THE NHC GOP Podcast Transcript**

### **Season 3, Episode 5: Consistent Values: Conversation with Kimberly Murphy – Republican Candidate for New Hanover County Commission**

**Reuel Sample:** Good evening and welcome to the NHC GOP Podcast. I'm Reuel Sample. I am happy to be joined by Doctor Kimberly Murphy, who is a fellow Navy veteran. So if she and I get into shipboard terms and talking about going to sea, please forgive us. Doctor Murphy, welcome to the podcast.

**Kimberly Murphy:** Thank you. Thank you for having me.

**Reuel Sample:** We are talking to primary candidates as they go into the election cycle. And you are running for school board of New Hanover County. And the big question that I want to get out of the way is you have been a lifelong Democrat. Why are you running as a Republican now?

**Kimberly Murphy:** Well, um, my family had been Democrat all of my childhood, and that is what I learned to do. It was a learned behavior. I switched over to the Republican Party for one reason. The Democratic Party didn't align with my Christian beliefs and values, and that has always been my foundation. And I think about what Ronald Reagan said years ago. One of his quotes he didn't lead the Democratic Party. The Democratic Party left him. And so whenever you go against the grain of your morals, your values and your belief system. You can't move forward in supporting something that that goes against that. Um, I'm a minister, and my father was an evangelist, and I came from a spiritual upbringing and a religious upbringing. Anything that goes against the Bible I cannot align with.

**Reuel Sample:** So it's it's really a question of you can't really separate your Christian self from your political self is that is that they've got to be in union and has found that union in the Republican Party.

**Kimberly Murphy:** I did. I found that union in a Republican Party. And it took me it took me back, like I said to Ronald Reagan, to George H.W. Bush, they had Christian values. And I mean, even today, I mean, the Reagan quotes, the things that he's done, it still raises up its head after all of these years. And he's passed along for, for years. Um, and as a Christian and I, I don't want to get too biblical, but only thing that you do for Christ will last. Um, and I believe that, you know, even if it means that I have to remove myself from things that I'm familiar with in order to do the right thing. That's what I'm going to do.

**Reuel Sample:** Let's get into some of your background and thank you for answering that. That's that's a that's a tough thing to ask to answer. But it's it's important for Republican voters to know. Let's get into your background in education. You've got a very, very impressive, uh, resume from your time in the Navy to getting degrees, graduate degrees, post-graduate degrees, and then working in education all of your adult life. Tell me about that.

**Kimberly Murphy:** Well, um, I didn't start out as your traditional college student. Um, when I was about a sophomore or so in high school my dad was diagnosed with leukemia, and when he was diagnosed, it changed the course of what I wanted to do. I wanted to go to Appalachian State. I wanted to do music. But when I found out that he was pretty much dying and didn't have much time to live, I chose not to go anywhere. I wanted to be there. So when all of my friends were going off to different A&T and North Carolina, Central and East Carolina, you know, I took another route. Um, and it wasn't until after he passed away and my mom said, you got to do something. You just you just can't sit here, you know, because I was trying to be her protector. I lost my dad, didn't want to lose her, so I was trying to be her protector. And I joined the Navy. And in the Navy, I did take classes. I was a psychology major. I did those things, and I worked. And, um, after I, you know, was released from the Navy, honorably discharged. That is when I decided I got to do something that's going to sustain me over a period of time. So it took me a while to decide what I wanted to do.

**Kimberly Murphy:** I was able to secure a job at the Superior Court judges office here in New Hanover County, and with Judge Hockenberry, Judge Cobb, and, uh, Judge Fullwood and I worked for them, and I was able to earn my degrees. Um, I learned a lot. And one day I'm like, I think I want to teach. I think I can do this because I was always very much involved in my son's education. Um, at his elementary school, he went to Alderman Elementary. And so when the teachers would call or they have a question or have a concern or PTA meetings or whatever, I was there, I say, I think I want to do this. And so I began to investigate on how I can become a teacher. And I went in through lateral entry. I had my four year degree. I went in as a business teacher, a career and technical education teacher, and I was hired by Doctor Sherry Broom at Ashley High School. And I stayed there, uh, for ten years. And, um, one of the principals who, uh, was there, uh, after she retired, he, um, asked me, why don't you just go back for your school administrators license? Why don't you do this? Why don't you do that? And I said I'd never thought about it.

**Kimberly Murphy:** I mean, I was just happy. I was just happy doing what I did, and, uh, it just it just kind of went from there. And I am a first generation college graduate. Uh, my dad had a sixth grade, I believe, education. Um, and my mom, I think she had 11th grade, 10th or 11th grade education. So education was not pushed in my house. It's like you graduate, get a job if you graduate. Kudos. For you, you know, high five. But no one pushed college, so I had to do that on my own. Um, my mother did not see me. Uh, did not live to see me, um, to earn my undergraduate degree. She died about ten months before I earned that. And my dad died six months after I graduated high school. So at 26, I didn't have either parent. So I had to do something. I had to do something. I knew I couldn't go backwards. Yeah, I knew I didn't want to be in poverty. I knew that I didn't want to work in the fields like they did, I. I can't do manual labor, mess up your nails. It just mess it up. I can't do it. I got to find something else to do. And so that's that's what I did. And and that's my story.

**Kimberly Murphy:** And being in education now is different than what it was when I was hired at Ashland High School. It's very different now. Um. And I'm in it every single day. I'm still an educator. I mean, it'll be 20 years in March. Every morning. I'm at work by 6:15 a.m., and I leave whenever. Um, you know, if it's a basketball game or football game, I'm there. If it's talking with parents, meeting with parents, I'm there or talking with

the kid, or if somebody has a crisis, I'm there. And I know what it's like to be in the trenches every day.

**Reuel Sample:** More on all of that in just a second. There is no question that Bidenomics has hurt all of us, from increased food prices to increased gas prices to increased insurance rates. No matter what it is, when you go to open your wallet, it seems that that dollar has less and less value. We know that it is very tough to ask, but if you can spare it, we invite you to join the 15 for Freedom program. That's \$15 a month for 15 months will help us get Republicans elected here in New Hanover County for our county commission and our school board. It will help us get a Republican into the governor's seat and take back that white House. That's \$15 for 15 months. Please join us at [NewHanoverGOP.org/15](http://NewHanoverGOP.org/15).

**Kimberly Murphy:** I'm not an outsider looking inward. I'm on the inside looking out. Interesting. Because, yeah, people don't know what teachers go through each day. Um, what administrators encounter and some of the things that we have to, uh, deal with concerning our children. And we, we teach the whole child, we teach the abuse. The child is being abused, we teach, the child is homeless. We teach the child who hadn't seen his mother or, you know, for a year or two, don't know what a mom is. So we have to deal with all of that. So when you take into, um, consideration all of the things that we are, um, encountering each day. Um, education plays a vital role in where we go tomorrow. And when I got into education, I didn't think that deeply about it. I just thought I was just going to teach my business law class and teach my accounting class and show you how to do a spreadsheet, you know? But whoa. Whenever you step out of the classroom and you get to see the big picture, you get to see what the real issues are.

**Reuel Sample:** So let's talk about some of those issues. One of the things that you do on your website is in with, with a bold exclamation mark, is that all children can learn. And so what are what are what are the top 1 or 2 issues that you're going to face in order to to make that a reality? What's your let's start off with your number one, your number one priority.

**Kimberly Murphy:** With all students can learn. Sometimes we have populations of students. We have our, uh, special education students, we have our English language learners or our, uh, multi language learners, what they call them now, um, and

sometimes I think that we look at them and say, because of your situation, I can't give you this worksheet because you can't read or you're lacking in reading and mathematical skills, you can't participate in this. And I just think that when we are educating children, we're just not educating them on Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday, we're educating them back in 2014, 2015, we're we're we're filling in gaps. We're we're trying to catch up. They may have moved from one state to another state, one country to another country, and they may not have gotten all the tools that they need. So we spent a lot of time trying to catch up children who have fallen behind. And Covid didn't do us any favors because that put us a little bit further behind. Um, I know if I had to learn online as a high school student, that would not.

**Reuel Sample:** It would not have happened.

**Kimberly Murphy:** No, I would have. Been watching Phil Donahue. I'm telling you, I would have. Been making me a sandwich. You know, I would have heard you in my in my background. I would have seen you in my peripherals, but you would not have had my undivided attention. And so I just think that we need to focus on what the child needs right now. We can't recoup everything that they've lost. I mean, we just can't. We have to meet the child where they are in order for them to move toward graduation.

**Reuel Sample:** What is the biggest challenge that's facing our children here in New Hanover County is that is that every child is different, of course. But what what are the big things that are hindering education here in New Hanover County that we can either get away with or do away with or address properly? What are those things that you're that you're seeing?

**Kimberly Murphy:** I think it is just not New Hanover County. We have a shortage. We have a shortage on not just certified, which is our teachers, but we have a shortage also on our classified, which is our support. And whenever you have a child who has special needs, for example, and they don't have an exceptional children's teacher in that classroom, and you're pulling that teacher and you're pulling that teacher, they're not getting that specialized instruction that they're supposed to have according to their individual educational plan, which is their IEP or their 504s. Um, our classified staff, which are our custodians, our bus drivers, our secretaries and things like that. We're having problems getting kids to school. And I remember getting a text message or a

phone call or something that last year that, hey, the busses for my grandchild. The busses wouldn't run, you know, like on the regular schedule because X, Y, Z came up. Fortunately, he don't ride a bus, you know, we take him to school. But for parents who have to leave out to go to work.

**Kimberly Murphy:** And they're thinking that their child is on the bus and their child is still on the side of the road, you know, in cold weather or it's dark or it's raining. That's stressful. And I think across the board we need to figure out a way to um. You know, invite people to become a part of the New Hanover County school system and keep them there. We have to find ways to do it. We have to be creative in how we retain people and how we keep people, um, wanting to to be in the school system. Now, I will say this, that bus drivers, although they, they just drive, you know, they might drive 2 or 3 miles here, 2 or 3 miles there, or pick up a cluster of kids here or there. They have the most stressful job because they have to bring the children to school safely and take them home safely. And sometimes the behavior is not cohesive to what we need, you know, in order to get those those kids where they belong safely. So they have the hardest job because they're the first point of contact that the children see, and they're the last person that they see in the afternoons. So as a Board, I feel like we need to put some parameters, some things in place to make people want to be a part of, uh, the school system and want to be a part of driving busses and working in the cafeteria and being our custodial staff. I could not live without my custodial staff. I'm telling you, I'm I drop crumbs, um, I, I forget and leave water somewhere and and the ice doesn't melt it, and they come right behind me and make sure that everything is okay. I think we just need to do a better job of taking care of our people, and our people will do a better job at taking care of us.

**Reuel Sample:** If you think about it, is that a a a kid's time at school doesn't necessarily start from the moment they go through the the doors of the school. It starts when they step on that school bus. And if they don't have a clean classroom, they're not going to learn. And if they're if if they don't have good food, they're not they're not going to learn. So all this support staff that you're talking about is essential to it's it's just as essential to education as having good teachers.

**Speaker3:** It is absolutely.

**Reuel Sample:** One of the the ongoing questions is the role of parents. And we talked about Covid real quickly is that I think one of the silver lining of Covid is parents started seeing what their kids were being taught in education. At the same time, teachers are saying, listen, we've got a job to do. And and somehow we've got to work together. How do we how do we walk this tightrope of parental rights, teacher responsibility, and getting kids at that point where they're ready to face the world?

**Kimberly Murphy:** Well, Covid was an eye opener, um, to a lot of parents and to educators such as myself. I believe that parents should be involved with their child's education from the time they step into pre-K or whatever, all the way to 12th grade. It shouldn't take a pandemic. For parents to say, hey, I didn't realize my child, you know, wasn't being taught that or I didn't realize the curriculum was like that. You should be involved the entire time. To understand what your child is learning. I think parent voice is needed. I think it can be strong if it's consistent. You have to be consistent with it. You just can't pick out one topic and say, hey, I don't like strawberries. I like all these fruits over here. So I'm just going to stay on strawberries and we're just going to talk about strawberries. So if you're going to do it, do the whole thing, eat the whole scroll. Um, because curriculum at kindergarten is different than curriculum at fifth grade. It's different. And now we have so many apps and electronic devices, there is no way that a parent can't be involved. It's it's not like it was when I was in school. You had to wait for the little report cards to come out. And, you know, we would try to change our grades.

**Reuel Sample:** Hide it from the parents.

**Kimberly Murphy:** Everything is just like up in your face right now. And so I think it's important that parents do understand what their children is learning, so they'll know how to implement it when they get home. Yeah. And sometimes parents don't know how to help. They don't know what to do because they haven't been informed or the information has not been, you know, been clear to them. You have to be purposeful in reaching out to people who don't reach out to you. Now you have some parents who will come out to PTA meetings. You got parents that come out to open house, you got parents that will come out to all of these things, uh, career night and all of this avid night. Whatever you have. And you got some that will only come out if it's basketball and their child is playing. So you have to figure out how to reach every category of

parents, because I believe every parent wants to be involved. It's just show them how to be involved.

**Reuel Sample:** Yeah.

**Kimberly Murphy:** So what they need to do, show them where to go, what to sign up for, introduce them to this app, introduce them to this program, see what they like to do if they cook okay. Let them bake some cookies. Let them parents want to be involved, but we just have to figure out a way to get them involved based on where they are. Every parent is not a parent that can go out and, you know, purchase a whole lot for everybody. Everybody don't have that kind of money. You know, everybody's just not their privilege. But show them what they can do where they are.

**Reuel Sample:** Maybe you should amend your statement. All children can learn and so can their parents.

**Kimberly Murphy:** And so can their parents.

**Reuel Sample:** So you have been out on the campaign trail now, uh, for. Oh, you announced a couple months ago. What are you hearing out as you talk to people?

**Kimberly Murphy:** They want to know who I am. They just don't don't know me. Now, in Wilmington, um, people know me from singing and playing the piano and things like that. They know me for doing those things. I've never been in any type of political arena. And from what I'm hearing, you know, people want to know why now? Why? Why are you doing it now? And Maya Angelou says, when you know better, you do better.

**Reuel Sample:** Wow.

**Kimberly Murphy:** And so I can't sit back, especially as an educator. Putting a child myself through New Hanover County School system, a graduate of Harvard High School, got a grandson in elementary school. I can't sit by and just with blindfolds on and say, I don't see stuff happening. I can't do that. So there is no time like the present. And whenever you see an issue that needs to be resolved or needs to be fixed. You're just as guilty if you don't fix it. If you just turn your head and somebody falls and hurt



themselves, you're just as guilty. I read a book years ago when I was, I think, in my master's program. It was called *The Bully and The Bystander*. And it talked about children being bullied. And it talked about people just standing around seeing it and not saying anything, and they was just as guilty as the person who was beaten up on the kid because they saw it and did nothing about it. So, you know, win, lose or draw, I am going to fight for children and I will do that for the rest of my life, because that's what I've been doing since 2004. And, um, you know, there's no time like the present.

**Reuel Sample:** And the folks who are listening to this podcast, you're not privy to the conversations that we had before the show, but from what I have learned is that when Doctor Murphy wants to do something, whether it is enrolling in the Navy, whether it is going to school, just get out of her way because, uh, this because, uh, she just move on over. So, uh, how can folks get a hold of you?

**Kimberly Murphy:** Well, I have my website, [MurphyforNCSboe.com](http://MurphyforNCSboe.com), and my phone number. They can call me. I get phone calls anyway. (910) 726-5394 and I will answer questions. Um, whatever you want to ask me, I'll just be transparent. I don't have to stutter over it because I don't have to rehearse it. This is who I am. This is who I am all of the time.

**Reuel Sample:** I'll give you the last word in, uh, in in a minute or so. Tell us about Doctor Kimberly Murphy and why you are one of the best choices for Board of Education.

**Kimberly Murphy:** I'm one of the best choices for New Hanover County Schools Board of Education, because I have taught in the system for ten years, and I spent one year as a dean of students. I am a current educator. I'm not retired. I have not resigned. I'm in the trenches each and every day, and I know what parents are facing because I had children who have gone through this system. I understand the community and how the community reflects and looks at, um, educators, and I'm a part of the educational system. So each and every day I am in there with the teachers, I'm with the support staff, and I am working hard every single day. I have not given up the fight 20 years, be 20 years in March, and I don't see any retirement in my future.

**Reuel Sample:** Doctor Kimberly McDuffie Murphy, one of the five Republicans running for school board. Early voting starts February 15th. You you can you can go out February 14th for Valentine's Day. But February 15th early voting starts. And then the day of decision is March 5th. And so we encourage all Republicans, uh, to get to know all of our Board of Education candidates and to make the best choices going forward. Doctor Murphy, thanks for joining us on the podcast.

**Kimberly Murphy:** Thank you.