



THE NHC GOP Podcast Transcript

Season 3, Episode 14: Conversation with the Chairman of the State Party

Reuel Sample: Welcome to the NHC GOP podcast I'm Reuel Sample. Our podcast is with Jason Simmons, the chairman of the North Carolina Republican Party. We talk about a wide range of issues, from the immigration reform needed at the national level and President Trump's growing popularity here in North Carolina because of these and other issues, to the economic crisis that we are facing in our great state and how we need to make sure we elect Republicans at all levels to address these concerns.

Reuel Sample: Mr. Chairman, Jason Simmons, welcome to the podcast.

Jason Simmons: Well, thank you, sir, for having me. A pleasure to be with you. And I always look forward to the conversations with you.

Reuel Sample: Looking forward to it. And before we get into any of the politics, I just found out today that you were an Army medic.

Jason Simmons: Yes, sir. I grew up an army brat. Uh, father was a career military, uh, as well as, uh, met my mom in the, uh, the military. And so grew up around the country and even time overseas. And, uh, shortly after high school, found myself standing before my dad, uh, armed, raised, uh, taking the oath. And so it was an honor to, to serve.

Reuel Sample: You know, you and I were in sort of the same boat. I was a Navy chaplain. And so we we we the, the chaplains and the docs were kind of held in regard. But, uh, then I found out that, uh, if in a firefight, who were they going to save first, the

chaplain or the doc? It was always the doc. And so that was a very humbling experience. But thank you for your service. What is easier being an Army medic or leading the GOP here in the state of North Carolina?

Jason Simmons: Uh, same mentality. Uh, you patch people up and you put them back to, to work. So, uh, it's the same mentality of making sure we get all of our good folks lined in the same direction and put them, uh, really, especially this cycle, a combined effort to make sure we're ready in November to to win. And so it's really a, uh, probably a very similar nature.

Reuel Sample: Uh, some polls were released. This is from Fox 8, and this is just from this morning. Is that here in North Carolina for the presidential race, Donald Trump is at 47.4% and President Joe Biden is at and I should say, President Donald Trump as well. President Donald Trump is at 47.4%. President Joe Biden is at 42.2%. Those are some big jumps.

Jason Simmons: It is. And it's consistent with the polling that we've seen for really the last several weeks where, um, President Trump's message continues to resonate and especially as we've seen with Joe Biden these several years now, uh, he's out of touch with society and his policies continue to be dangerous and destructive. And you saw day one of his administration canceling the Keystone pipeline. And then you see skyrocketing prices on fuel and everything else that then corresponds. You go to fill up your car with a tank of gas. You're paying more. You go to fill up your cart at a grocery store, you're paying more. And those are a direct result of Joe Biden's policies. And so as such, people know where and why they are paying more. And that's because of Joe Biden. And so now when you start asking people in the polls who's to blame? It's Joe Biden, it's Joe Biden's economy. Uh, Bidennomics, um, has only proven one thing you're going to pay more and you're going to suffer. Families are hurting across our state. The average family is paying more than \$1,000 a month now for the same goods and services that they paid for four years ago, so it's very easy answer. Are you better off today than you were four years ago? And it's a resounding no. And that's reflective in the polls.

Reuel Sample: I wonder if those polls are actually low. Uh, Donald Trump usually underperforms in polls because and we saw that in 2016. Do you think more people will

go to the polls for saying, well, I'm voting Joe Biden, and they're actually going to vote Republican because they look at their their wallets. And it's just there's nothing there anymore.

Jason Simmons: I think that's very fair. But I also think that it's fair to say you've got a lot of folks out there who voted for Joe Biden in 20 who now have buyer's remorse. And they're, you know, especially amongst their, their elitist friends, uh, their, their left leaning friends and the extreme left, uh, they're afraid to say anything. Family members, uh, that, uh, you know, would vote for President Trump. Um, yeah. They're, um, disappointed. Frustrated with what they've gotten in, uh, President Biden. And so, yeah, I think you're also going to have a number of folks that, um, are going to continue to say, hey, I'd vote for Biden, but, uh, we actually know the reality is, um, that buyer's remorse of what they've gotten, uh, they're going in a different direction.

Reuel Sample: Gallup released a poll this week that the number one issue among Americans is immigration. It's it's a staggering 37.8%, and it is the longest concern since the Iraq War or something like that, is that it's an ongoing issue. How is that translated to the concerns of North Carolinians here? Should we be concerned about immigration, and how does that translate?

Jason Simmons: We should. Uh, you look at what's happening across our state. You know, you had an individual in Gates County that was apprehended, that was on the terror watch list. Uh, you've got camps across the state, uh, especially in Greensboro, that have been opened up to be able to support migrants that have come across the border. The the crisis that we're seeing at our southern border is a direct result, again, of Biden's policies. President Trump in 2016 was ridiculed. He came down the escalator. Uh, he announces his presidency and he, you know, put on the table immigration and especially migrant crossing its illegal immigrants as a top issue. And people ridiculed him. Today, Democrats are now starting to talk about, hey, we need a wall. We need to put protect our country. Um, yet you still have Joe Biden very resistant to being able to put in place common sense policies that help restrict and prevent border crossing of illegal nature. And as you've seen in the migrant crime across our country and across our state, it's impacting it's having devastating impacts on families and communities. And then the fentanyl crisis to boot. Fentanyl across those southern border coming from China has devastated and killed too many of our friends, our

families, our neighbors because of Joe Biden's policies that have allowed that open border to occur. And as such, you know, as you pointed out, again, a top issue for many people, many people, when they come into the polls this October, November, they're going to be voting for two issues, primarily border and the economy, and two direct results of the Biden policies that have impacted families across our state. And they know where those results have come from, Joe Biden and his failed policies.

Reuel Sample: And we don't have any senators on the on the ballot this year. But we do have down here in district seven, David Rouzer running, and he has been solid on on these issues, hasn't he?

Jason Simmons: Oh, very much so. As you look at Representative Rouzer, uh, solid track record of success in representing North Carolina and especially the great people of the southeast portion of our state. Um, I would talk about the counties, but as much as we've had redistricting over the past decade, um, that that shift of counties has, has usually been pretty significant. But, um, you know, you look at those counties that he's represented of southeast, um, North Carolina, he's been a strong voice and an advocate in Washington, DC, and especially on the border, especially for agriculture. Um, he is really looked at as the subject matter expert up in DC on the congressional side of anything agriculture. So anytime there's ag bills that are coming forward, uh, he is in the room advocating especially for North Carolina farmers.

Reuel Sample: One of the things that conservatives get riled up about is that there there's always this idea in Washington, DC of compromise, and it's hard to get conservative things done in this present House. Why is that a problem?

Jason Simmons: Uh. Can you hear me Reuel?

Reuel Sample: Yeah, I can hear you. I can hear you. That's fine. Yeah, yeah. Yep.

Jason Simmons: Small pause on my end. Yeah. So I think I got the essence of your question. Yeah. Compromise ends up becoming a dirty word in politics anymore. Um, and unfortunately, you know, in order to govern, you have to have compromise at a certain level, especially when we have such divided government and especially close margins within the House and or the Senate in order to be able to achieve even

something like a budget, we have to have some level of compromise in order to keep the government functioning and essential services being provided. And so, you know, in the case of Representative Rouzer, you know, he's had tough votes. Uh, and I know, you know, many of our members of our federal delegation, uh, wish that they could get more out of the Congress. But when you have a Senate that's being held by the Democrats and a very close, uh, House and a president, uh, that is a Democrat, you've got to find ways to be able to have compromise in order to achieve success. And there's a number of things in the latest budget that we're able to point to that there are opportunities for. Increasing the opportunities for Republican victories on that, you know, so and especially on the on the defense spend, you know, where we've got, you know, whether it's Camp Lejeune or we've got Fort Bragg and then the veterans populations to go along with those. There were significant items out of that budget that were very helpful to North Carolina and in the country.

Reuel Sample: Mike Johnson speaker Mike Johnson gave an interview to the Daily Wire over the weekend, and he was saying it is a one vote majority that he's going to be dealing with for the next couple of months in Congress. So the answer to all that is that we have to get Republicans elected is that you might not agree with the everything about a Republican, but we need the numbers.

Jason Simmons: Yeah, I you know, again, when you look at compromise, I'd rather have 80% of something than 100% of nothing. Uh, and so, you know, as we get into the election cycle, you know, for some, there may be some tough choices that they're going to have to make when it comes to being able to, to align themselves with the Republican Party. But as you look at the Republican priorities, it's again, lowering taxes, increasing our economic growth and prosperity and especially peace through strength, increasing our military expenditures to be able to defend our country, especially with what we're seeing across the world, where you have Russia and Ukraine, you have Iran attacking Israel directly. Now, uh, don't think we would have ever seen that in our lifetime. You know, where you have a state government in Iran attacking one of our most critical partners and allies in the Middle East and then China, with all of its eyes, not just to increasing its superiority and strength in its region, but global and especially, you know, with its strategic eye towards Taiwan. You know, we on the Republican side end up really, at this point being the last defense, not just for our country, but for our world in making sure we get President Trump and a Republican Congress elected. Um,

and then, you know, we've got obvious state races here to continue to make sure that we have the tremendous growth that we've seen on our economy, especially with the Republican legislature.

Reuel Sample: Well, let's switch over to the state, is that we've got a really, really, really tight race coming up. According to that same poll released by Fox eight, is that Mark Robinson is at 41.8%. Uh, Josh Stein is at 41.4%. That's a 0.4 difference. Whereas we're looking with Donald Trump, we're looking at 5% difference. Yeah. Why is there such a why is there such a disconnect between those two polls?

Jason Simmons: Sure. So North Carolina has had a long history of, at the federal level, voting one way and at the state level, voting another way. And so it's not been uncommon for this natural occurrence to to play itself out. And especially as we've seen on the spending disparity, where Stein has had, you know, tremendous strength in that area, Robinson will continue to be able to get his message out. And especially as we look at what he's pushing and what he's continuing to advocate for, I mean, you've got an individual in Mark Robinson who's really been a champion of the people. You know, he's been a champion for lower taxes, he's been a champion for our families and really advocating for the fundamental unit of our society, the families and bolstering opportunities, especially as you look at his own career, um, you know, being an individual that came up through a blue collar background. So being able to continue to advocate for career and vocational training, um, you see what's playing out on our college campuses today? Um, these are individuals who, in many cases, um, on the college campuses are very troubling. Uh, what we're seeing playing out where you're chanting Death to America on our college campuses and, you know, especially, you know, death to Israel. And it just it's very troublesome. And so as you look at what, you know, Robinson is continuing to advocate, you know, working and for our families and not just for what Stein continues to represent, that coastal elites, special interest groups, you know, that's where, you know, Robinson will continue to, to differentiate himself, um, working for the people, working for our families and not those special interest groups.

Reuel Sample: 37.6% of North Carolinians say that the economy is their number one issue. We talked about that before a little bit, but what specific things are we worried about here in North Carolina? We've got Republican majority that is protecting those

those those low taxes that we continue to to put forth. But what other things are we worried about here in North Carolina?

Jason Simmons: Yeah. As you talked through, you see what the Republican majorities have done over the past dozen years. They've continued to reduce the tax bracket and making sure that our our liabilities, our expenses, the burden that taxes have on families is continuing to be reduced. And then the same thing with businesses continuing to lower that. And as they've done so, they've prospered on the economic growth for business and for business climate, where for the past two years you've seen CNBC ranked North Carolina as the number one place to do business, despite what, uh, you know, Governor Cooper may want to take credit for, that has been, you know, initiatives and efforts led by the Republican majorities in the legislature. You saw Cooper veto budget after budget, uh, for the better part of his, uh, administration and then turns around and takes credit for those things that he lambasted. Yeah. So from from an economic perspective, North Carolina fares much better than the rest of the country.

Jason Simmons: What families continue to be concerned about is what we're seeing play out on the national scene. Cost of everything again being dramatically higher. And it's having those trickle down impacts where, again, as I talked about on the earlier. \$1,000 a month. You're paying more today for the same services, same goods that you paid for four years ago. Families cannot continue to absorb that. Their wages haven't gone up at that level, but their expenses have gone up during that. And so as families are seeing that, as they're internalizing that and they're making very tough decisions, uh, delaying purchases, making choices between, uh, you know, this bill and that bill. Uh, and so families continue to have great angst and concerns about what they're seeing at the national level with Joe Biden and his Bidenomics. Um, but we've been grateful and thankful for what we've seen play out with the Republican majorities in the legislature to, at best, help offset some of those impacts. But think about, again, what we were doing four years ago under President Trump and a Republican majorities in the legislature and the economic growth, success, prosperity that we were experiencing. Again, uh, you go back to the old saying where you better off four years ago than you were today. And the answer, especially for the economy, is a resounding no.

Reuel Sample: You know, we get used to some things. We get used to some high prices, but I will I will never get used to it. I don't think anybody else will get used to

paying close to four bucks a gallon for. It's probably higher up your way. Uh, four bucks a gallon. Uh, three bucks for, uh, eggs, if you can find them. Uh, just the basics that are out of this world. I don't think anybody is ever going to be get used to that. They're always going to find something wrong with that.

Jason Simmons: You're very fair. Uh, incorrect. You look at again the expenses of everything. Again. I said it on the beginning. You fill up your tank, you're paying more than you were four years ago and fill up your cart with groceries. Every item, not one single item. Can you find that your cost, uh, paying less than you were four years ago? Um, and the sticker shock on many of these items, uh, you know, if you have not had the pleasure of going grocery shopping because your significant other is doing it, I would encourage you to go do it. Uh, it's an exercise in frustration in many instances.

Reuel Sample: I had a podcast in conversation with Ted Davis, uh, several times, and he his eyes almost lit up as he talked about overriding those vetoes from from the governor. It was it was it was it was gleeful. We've got three people down here that are running again. We've got, uh, Senator Mike Lee and, uh, Representative Ted Davis and Charlie Miller. Tell me more about, uh, tell me more about those folks.

Jason Simmons: You've got a wonderful representative, uh, in each one of them, you know, you look at what they do and what they bring to Raleigh, a wealth of experience and a voice that's strong and really widely respected. Uh, Mike Lee on the Senate side, fantastic, principled individual. Um, and so, Wilmington, North Carolina, uh, you're very blessed. Uh, and so and especially on your house members as well, you know, Ted Davis strong, uh, you know, you guys, um, outpunch, uh, you know, your weight in Raleigh with your representatives, uh, and so, you know, be grateful. And, uh, they, they need your vote, uh, down there. Uh, so as we look forward to to reelecting them and getting them up to Raleigh, um, all the better.

Reuel Sample: What are the big challenges that you're facing here in North Carolina as the state GOP chair? What what what are what's big on your plate as as the chair of the party ramping up for probably one of the most expensive, uh, elections ever. But what are what are your challenges?

Jason Simmons: Well, I think you just put it out there. You look at, uh, what we're facing, especially on the, uh, the dark money that's coming in from the Democratic side. You know, whether it's the announcement of Planned Parenthood, uh, just this week where they're going to dump \$10 million into this state to promote abortions. Um, I don't know about you, but we stand as a party for the right to life and the right to make sure that we protect the integrity of life, not just on on the front end, but also through the duration. And you look at what the General Assembly has done most recently, and it's making sure that we give mothers, children choices and putting them in a position to succeed, uh, not just during their pregnancy, but, you know, especially if they, uh, go to, to term and to be able to have opportunities for that child. Um, you know, we're grateful for that. You look at, you know, especially what the Democrats would, would put forward on that and why, uh, Planned Parenthood would want to dump \$10 million into this state. It's to promote a very destructive nature. Uh, it's, you know, abortion on demand anytime. During a pregnancy up until delivery. It's troublesome, but then the more troubling piece of that is using taxpayer dollars to fund those abortions. Um, you know, again, as a party, we always stand on the right to life and making sure that we protect the sanctity of life.

Reuel Sample: Yes, yes. So, uh, as we as we go forward on, on all of the this issue is that there are some folks who are, who are a single issue, but there's but if we're going to make any kind of change in that issue or other social issues that are coming up, we need to Republicans. We need Republicans in the legislature, in the House, but we also need to get them elected. And that takes finances. And so over the next couple couple months, you at the state, as well as we here in the North Carolina and New Hanover County, are going to be asking for people's support. And I think what most people don't understand is that there are three different levels. The Republican Party, you've got the national National Republican Party, you've got the North Carolina, and then you've got New Hanover County. And in terms of finances, those all three are not connected at all. Is that correct?

Jason Simmons: That's fair. Um, you look at from the national perspective, you know, the RNC now with Chairman Whatley, our former state party chair here in North Carolina, at the helm, as well as, uh, Lara Trump. Uh, Wrights ville owned. Uh, you know, so having two great North Carolinians at the helm there. Uh, you know, we've got great partners, but their focus tends to be, you know, again, on the national side,

making sure that they're positioning themselves to support the candidates on that level. You know, from the state party side, you know, we're working again with our Council of State, as well as all of our statewide candidates in assisting, you know, up and down the ballot. But a lot of our activities and efforts are focused, again, making sure that we're positioning our statewide candidates and especially on on the judicial side, where we've been very successful with our Judicial Victory Fund, making sure that we're funding the activities and operations to support our judicial, statewide judicial candidates at the state Supreme Court level, as well as court of appeals, and going 14-zero over the last two cycles to be able to flip the Supreme Court, which has allowed us to get voter ID in place and a lot of other opportunities and priorities at the county level. These are essential, um, operations where the county are really the backbone of our party, working with our precincts, working to make sure that the volunteers are being recruited, trained and deployed to help get out the vote and protect the vote.

Jason Simmons: And as we look at what the county is responsible for, it's making sure, especially at the the protect the vote side of it, working to get those individuals recruited and trained to be pulled. Judges, poll workers, poll observers, poll greeters, you know, a variety of responsibilities just to be able to protect the integrity of the ballot. And then when we talk about getting out the vote, it's all of those important tasks of making the phone calls, knocking on the doors, getting the yard signs ready, all of you know, getting the brochures, the handouts, the palm cards, all of the things that most people don't think about when it comes to the mechanics and the logistics of elections and supporting our candidates, that happens at the most local level of our county parties, and grateful for all of our county chairs and the leadership that they provide and their teams across our state. You know, our state has about 2600 precincts across our 100 counties. And so making sure those 2600 precincts are ready and staffed and trained again, that heavy load, that heavy responsibility rests at our county levels. And so they need the support, the efforts, uh, not just in in the manpower and the hours of our volunteers and their talents and their service, but also in the financial resources to make sure, again, we're funding the operations of the party from the logistical side to make sure that our candidates are ready and prepared from getting out the vote and protecting the vote.

Reuel Sample: You're going to be coming down to visit us in our fair county here in, uh, in just over a week. You're going to be speaking at our gala, aren't you?

Jason Simmons: I'm looking forward to joining, uh, every time we've come down to New Hanover, uh, that you guys roll out the red carpet. So I'm looking forward to being with, uh, the good folks in New Hanover and celebrating, uh, at the Lincoln-Reagan day dinner and the gala. Sounds like it'll be a fun night. So we'll look forward to celebrating Republicans. And really, the kickoff to the election in New Hanover.

Reuel Sample: Mister Chairman Jason Simmons, and uh Doc there in the Army. Thank you for all your leadership. We wish for your continued good success. Uh, you're doing great. And and everything under your leadership is going well. So, uh, thank you for being here. And I look forward to more conversations and a good Republican win in November.

Jason Simmons: Well my pleasure. It's always great to be with you. You take care and have a good day.