



## **THE NHC GOP Podcast Transcript**

### **Season 3, Episode 17: Harry Knight – Talking Politics Some More**

**Reuel Sample:** You know, Harry, I don't want to be a historian 50 years from now trying to teach what has happened in the last four weeks in this country and in this state. It's been a madhouse. We're, of course, talking to Harry Knight, the executive director of the New Hanover County Republican Party, Once again, and we're talking politics. Welcome to the podcast, Harry.

**Harry Knight:** Thank you. Reuel. Thanks for having me.

**Reuel Sample:** Well, I enjoyed our podcast last time when we talked about politics in general. We're going to talk some more about politics. And because you're the executive director, we're going to really keep it local here in New Hanover County. And we're going to start off with one thing that is huge on everybody's mind, and that is the economy. And to lead us off in that, here's Mark Robinson.

**Mark Robinson:** Well, months ago in my travels, I stopped at a gas station. As I was leaving, a man walked out with a beard and he looked very stressed. He got in his car and I could see him holding an envelope. My heart dropped because years ago I held one just like it. It was bankruptcy papers. I could see the fear on his face, and it took me back to lying awake at night with that non worrying debating which bills weren't going to get paid. Unfortunately, many families today are having that same experience. Under Joe Biden, grocery prices have skyrocketed and gas has nearly doubled in North Carolina factories, just like the one I worked at are closing, leaving families feeling hopeless. But there is hope.

**Reuel Sample:** You know, Mark Robinson's right on the money on that. It's all about money. We've got less money now than we do. Did have did four years ago. There's no question about it, Harry.

**Harry Knight:** Yeah. And the example he gave, they're using the gas station and the gas pump is the perfect one because you will hear, um, you know, our candidates, local as well as statewide and national, tout gas prices. All gas prices have gone down over the last X number of months or whatever. Let's let's just be clear. Gas was give or take \$2 a gallon four years ago, two years, two and a half years ago or so, it was \$4 a gallon. And now over the last year and a half, we're down to \$3 and some change just because we're down, down to \$3 and some change, which is a reduction from the \$4, doesn't make it a cost. It doesn't make it a a price decrease from the starting point of \$2. It's still costing your everyday American citizen, you know, 50% more to fill up their car every day. And when you're driving back and forth to go to work, trust me.

**Reuel Sample:** I'm a Circle K member. And so I type in my information every time I go to fill up the pump and I fist bump. If I get a five cent reduction, that goes down from \$3.35 to \$3.30 or whatever, wherever I am. That is not normal. And it's not just on the consumer end when gas prices, when energy prices go up, that affects everything else.

**Harry Knight:** Yeah. That's right. Because industry runs on fuel, right. Industry runs on energy. So if your energy input costs go up, then the cost of making whatever that widget is and the manufacturers in order for them to make a profit and continue to stay in business, needs to charge more, which just puts increasing pressure on the consumer's pocketbooks. And that goes from everything for the farmers. Mhm. Fertilizer, fuels, seed, the works, all the work they have to do to plant crops, raise farm animals and then harvest crops and get those animals to market All of those costs are energy related, and when they double from four years ago, you're going to see it at the grocery store. It's economics. It's pure, plain, simple economics. There's nothing complicated about it.

**Reuel Sample:** And what kills me, Harry, is that four years ago we were energy independent. We could name our own prices. Now these cost increases are coming because the world is imposing their cost structure and their production schedule on us.

**Harry Knight:** Well. So what you say that's technically correct. I tend to look at it a little bit different, because you have all various sources of energy in the United States. At the end of the day, the energy required to run our country, we produced in our country, whether that was gas, oil, nuclear, even includes solar and wind. And that if you want coal or any other hydroelectric power and there's various mixes. So at the end of the day, we were self-sufficient, which is the key point. So if we are self-sufficient, turmoil in the Middle East, turmoil in Russia has negligible effect on our energy costs here in the United States. If we have to be a net importer of energy, which is what we've become, then any turmoil and any little sand patch somewhere not can have an immediate impact on our energy prices.

**Reuel Sample:** At the same time that we're going through all this, the Biden administration, Harris is on record wanting to ban fracking altogether. They want to ban new oil drilling. They want to put all this green energy into play. And I'm all in favor of green energy. I have I have solar panels in various places on my boat. But let's face it, is that you cannot replace an oil based economy with solar panels and windmills.

**Harry Knight:** You can't replace baseload energy requirements with temporary power sources. And that's what most of your green energy, or what most people consider to be green energy sources. Solar, wind, um, those kinds of things. They're only produced under certain conditions. They're not produced 24 over seven. They depend on weather. We don't have battery storage capacity and other things to actually make them efficient. Today, when you talk about base load, it can be, uh, let's call it fossil fuels, all inclusive hydro. Everybody tends to forget about hydro. Hydro is an absolutely stable, useful source. They can Niagara Falls, think of the Hoover Dam and then you have nuclear. Those power sources operate. They are your base load. And if you remember last year, year before last, you know, they seem to continue to have a little bit of a problem. Texas got into some serious trouble because they had some energy mixes that that didn't work. And when their temporary power sources went away and you didn't have sufficient baseload power available, guess what you get.

**Reuel Sample:** You get blackouts and brownouts and rolling stuff.

**Harry Knight:** That's right. So so even if you want to add all of these green energy things to your power grid, you know, as long as they're cost efficient and the consumer

is willing to pay for them, that's fine. That does not change your base load calculation. You can't add one megawatt of solar and say, I'm going to take away one megawatt of coal. It the math does not work that way. You have a certain base load requirement for minimums like hospitals, transportation, you know, that kind of stuff that you have to cover. And you cannot use a temporary source.

**Reuel Sample:** That's what actually comes down to local politics, because we can't we can't obviously here in North Carolina change ownership with OPEC or whatever. But here in North Carolina is that we can make sure that money spent is not going into mandatory projects. That that don't work is that we can make sure that our Republican legislature is spending money on increasing infrastructure, which includes increasing increasing power infrastructure and gas infrastructure and oil infrastructure and natural gas and all of that. That's where it comes down to.

**Harry Knight:** Yeah, it's making sure that your tax dollars, whether it be most of the stuff you just talked about, was, was state level and federal level tax dollars, but that there's some local level associated with some of that as well. So for example, we have a major nuclear power plant here near us called Brunswick. There's there's certain things you can do from an engineering perspective, fuel design, all kinds of stuff where you can do incremental increases in power and lifetime associated with the Brunswick Nuclear Power Plant, state and local dollars fund, the real estate commission that does all the analysis and approval of those kinds of things. So we need to make sure that our energy dollars that are associated with that kind of stuff are being used to promote those kinds of energy increases. Not necessarily. I don't know, pick a topic. We recently, about six months ago, had a group that wanted to change some zoning requirements for commercial property and force builders to put in the infrastructure, which just means the pipes, not the wires and other stuff to allow for electric vehicle charging when there is basically zero demand for that. In some of these things, they were going to force developers to put in material that doesn't have an identified use. What's that do that drives up your rent, that drives up your costs. That's the kind of thing we need to make sure that we don't do with, you know, state and local dollars.

**Reuel Sample:** We've been talking about energy a lot, but in this day and age, that energy is tied to so many things. This dependance or lack of independence in energy is a big part of the inflation bill that all of us are paying every time we're going to, uh, every

time we're going to the grocery store, every time we're going out, everything revolves around independence and energy and proper use of energy.

**Harry Knight:** Yeah. Energy is your life like we talked about in the beginning. It's one of your major input cycles into almost any product. It takes energy, whether it's you're growing it, making it or selling it. It takes energy in some form to make to put that product on the shelves. Energy cost goes up, your prices go up. Well, the.

**Reuel Sample:** Other big things that it's going on is the immigration debate. Here's Dana Scalise.

**Reuel Sample:** Creating, you know, they call it a welcome school. But it really is a refugee school. What?

**Dane Scalise:** Yeah. And it's not just for children. It's a refugee facility for families Reuel. They even house families in this facility. Okay. So we're talking about people of all ages from wherever. And people may assume that it's just coming from south of the border in the sense that it's people who are of Hispanic origin. Not true. It could be, but it could be people that are coming from all over the world. We know that there is an unchecked crisis that is happening at the southern border right now. Yes, the Biden administration is totally derelict in its duty to protect our border and is allowing literal millions of people to pour across the border with no checks. And they're trying to go somewhere. What I'm saying is not New Hanover County. No. Absolutely not. And it's it's a sensible position. I'm confident that the public agrees with me on this.

**Reuel Sample:** Just to put that that clip in context. That was with Dane Scalise about a year ago when we were talking about changing the Moseley School into a refugee center for immigrants, probably illegal immigrants, but immigrants. How? However you want to name it, that was ultimately defeated. But it was was an idea put forth by Democrats to fundamentally change our county.

**Harry Knight:** Right. And let's just be clear, Dane's 100% correct in his statement and how he described that at the end of the day, that was a liberal leaning effort to take away a school from some of our disadvantaged students in New Hanover County, New Hanover County, citizens and their students that needed this school and provided

advantages to them for their education. They were going to take that away and then give it to non-citizens using New Hanover County and North Carolina state citizens funding. It's absolute crap. This was Dane got that complete. And then the and then what really got everybody's tempers up and going is it was done for the most part behind closed doors. Nobody knew it was even happening until all of a sudden an announcement came out that they're closing the Moseley School. And then a little background checking figured out that, wait a minute, you're closing the Moseley school, and then you're going to open up this thing? Oh, we're not having any of that.

**Reuel Sample:** The author of this whole thing, Doctor Foust, has been fired from the New Hanover County School Board. It is an indicator of just exactly what Democrats want to do here in New Hanover County is that we've got to remember, is that we've got Democrats in control of Wilmington. And I wouldn't be surprised if they try to pass a sanctuary city law. His, uh, Governor Cooper, what, two years ago vetoed a, a a a bill that would require, uh, sheriffs to report to Ice. And so, uh, we have to understand that illegal immigration, unchecked immigration, illegal immigration in New Hanover County will fundamentally change the makeup of our county for the worst.

**Harry Knight:** Yeah, and that's it's more of a federal issue than a state issue. But the problem is, is failure of the federal government. When they show up on our doorstep, it's now us that's responsible and our dollars that's taken care of that, rather than our dollars taking care of our citizens and our children. So it lands squarely into our lap, whether we like, because.

**Reuel Sample:** Of the failed policies of the border, every state is now a border state.

**Harry Knight:** That's exactly correct.

**Reuel Sample:** Now, one of the things that you and I have talked about in the past, and I'll have to tell our listening audience and our watching audience, this is actually take two of a failed video that that didn't upload. Uh, in our modern technology. But one of the things I wanted to share is that last time we talked, we talked about your totem of being the adult in the room. That's where Republicans need to be. How should Republicans be the adult in the room in terms of immigration, in terms of these other policies that are coming down our way.

**Harry Knight:** Well, as we started this podcast, you know, I'm focused more on local politics and local elections and obviously supporting the statewide candidates in the top of the ticket candidates. So, like we had just previously said, you know, we don't have much to do locally and statewide, associated the illegal immigration problem, but the adult in the room process associated with that would be just like exactly what DAne just did. You find out about it, you make sure it's well known, and then you make responsible decisions associated with it being the adult in the room. And you've heard my speech on that probably more times than you than you would care to. But at the end of the day, it's good old fashioned common sense. Be reasonable. Right? What would the reasonable, responsible working person do and understand? That's the adult in the room and we need a lot more of that.

**Reuel Sample:** Dane Scalise is running for county commission along with John Hinitt and Bill Rivenbark.

**Harry Knight:** Yeah, Bill. So it's Bill, Shawn and Dane. Dane is running replacing Deb Hayes, who we unfortunately lost in the middle of her term due to a medical condition. Bill was elected last cycle, so he's running for reelection. And then we have John attempting to unseat a Democrat.

**Reuel Sample:** So let's move on to schools a little bit. I wanted to share this outtake from a school board meeting, not here in New Hanover County, but up in Wake County. And our counties are a little bit similar in just how mixed we are right now in our schools. We are fighting a culture war of parents being out of the loop of what their kids are learning. Take a listen to this.

**Woman from Wake County:** This book It Feels Good to Be Yourself, which is which has an oxymoronic title based on its content, can be found in 26 elementary schools. It is geared towards K-2, and as Macmillan publisher says, it basically is geared to what ages four through eight. It introduces four different characters with different gender identities. It makes it seem as if gender is an imaginary concept that can be changed on a whim. When the truth is gender is factual. You're either a boy or a girl. And gender identity. What you see yourself as, that's imaginary. Well, let me read you a couple of things. First, character is Ruthie. She's a transgender girl. That means when she was

born, everyone thought she was a boy until she grew a little older. Old enough to tell everyone that she's actually a girl. Where does it stop at this tender age, our children should be learning their ABCs and one two threes. Who authorized this? Who told you that you are God? Who gave you permission to tell our children who they are and who they're supposed to be? This is intentional and evil at its core. Get back to what you were elected to do and formally educate our children, not indoctrinate them with left wing ideologies under the guise of providing a safe and welcoming space. Hear us clearly. We will not surrender our children. Leave our children alone.

**Reuel Sample:** I do not want to get in her way.

**Harry Knight:** No, but at the end of the day, she's right. I mean, she's obviously fired up. She's obviously emotional about it. She probably has a younger child in the school, and if I did, I'd be pissed too. But somewhere. And I'd be damned if I can come up with a timeline, but somewhere from 40 years, give or take. Up to now, we have slowly evolved to where we somehow think schools are a replacement for parents, and we're trying to provide all of this stuff for kids that parents ought to be providing. The schools are there to give a sound basic education. That's it. Period. Some schools that have more resources and have the ability because of where they may be associated, it might be able to provide some extras to do extra stuff for kids. But at the end of the day, schools are not your parents and we should stop thinking that schools are your parents and I. And I'll give you a personal example. I grew up on a farm in West Virginia. My entire county had two high schools, and this was a farming community. The whole county, that's what the the main income was the high school that I went to. By the time I graduated it, a senior, I'd had algebra, I'd had chemistry two and I'd had physics. And we also had this is 1981 when I graduated. Computers were just starting to come out. I actually had a computer science class. Now think about that West Virginia farming community. Two schools in the entire county. And we were able to fund schools that could do that. Now, imagine if we put the resources of New Hanover County to work the way our parents and administrators of those schools in the late 70s, early 80s put their resources to work what you could accomplish.

**Harry Knight:** We have enormous amount of resources compared to what they had there 50 years ago. I got a better education in freaken West Virginia on a farm than you get at a New Hanover County today. That's. Yeah, we need that. We need we got we



just got to get back to the basics. I mean, an elementary school, it's reading, writing, arithmetic, you know, some history, some music lessons. I mean, there's some other basic stuff that that needs to go into there, and that's it. That's all. That's all I want to hear about. In elementary school, the building blocks, intermediate school, grades four or grades five, six, seven and eight, because ninth grade was actually junior high school where I came from. Here we call a ninth grade as part of high school. But at any rate, now you got to start getting into biology, actual biology. You got to get into actual history. You got to get into astrology. You've got some other stuff that goes in there that are just real world impacts, that are still the building blocks of a sound education. And then you get into high school and now you've got young adults, and you can start some debates about what should or shouldn't be included in there, because a certain population that graduates from high school is going to go right out into the working world, and they should know some things. A certain population of that group is going to go out and go on to higher education. And either of those cases, all of those kids and young adults need a sound basic education, need their foundation to go on and have a successful life. I don't think we're providing that sound basic foundation because we're injecting too much other stuff and not enough of the actual things.

**Reuel Sample:** What I find fascinating from that video is that the person who is speaking? If if you just listen to the video and and did not see the video, it was middle aged black woman in Wake County. Generally is that that is not a demographic that Republicans seem to get. But she is sharing a concern that crosses all party lines, all racial lines, all socioeconomic lines. They are concerned about the education of their children, and they are seeing these things in schools that frighten them.

**Harry Knight:** That's right. You don't you know, that's exactly right when it comes to kids, especially your kids. The parents don't care and I don't care. And I promise you, they don't. Republican. Democrat. Independent. Purple hair with green polka dots from Mark. They care about their kids at the end of the day. So, you know, that's been a very winning issue nationwide, not just here in New Hanover County, but nationwide is, you know, getting our schools back to basics associated with that, because at the end of the day, it doesn't matter what political affiliations you have or how you think about other things, you care about your kids and you want them to have a sound, basic education. End of story. There's no other debate.

**Reuel Sample:** We have three Republicans running for three empty school boards. Let's hear from one of them. This is Natosha Tew.

**Natosha Tew:** I want to end woke education. Our children do not need to judge someone by the color of their skin. We need to judge someone by the content of their character. I want to bring critical thinking back to our schoolhouses and our classrooms. What happened to common sense? It's not common anymore. Let's bring that back. Um, I want that we need to enforce parents rights. Although there has been a put out for North Carolina, as in New Hanover County, and if a lot of parents would go check to see if their schools are there is a policy actually updated to reflect those changes, and is there any teeth behind it? Are there consequences or is it just more more talk? Because if it's that people people don't learn. You need to have consequences to alter behavior. And I want to bring I want to bring America first education back to our kids. I want them to have constitutional literacy. I want our kids just to be able to do basic math. Right now, New Hanover County students, not 60% of our students, are not proficient at math one. Almost half of them can't read. How are we expected? How are they expected to succeed in life if they can't read?

**Reuel Sample:** 60% not proficient in math, one and over half of them are close to half of them can't read. Harry.

**Harry Knight:** Yeah, I'm going to avoid being a broken record, but I would just turn around and and give you the same speech I just gave you five minutes ago about the building block basics. Natosha is 110% correct on that philosophy. Absolutely.

**Reuel Sample:** On that ticket with Natasha is Nikki Bascom and David Perry. Natasha and Nikki are new at the political fight. David Perry has run for office before, but all three of them are really hitting home with this. This kind of message. Back to the basics and getting parents involved in the schools.

**Harry Knight:** And that's because that's the message that parents want. It's the parent. That's the message that parents are giving. You don't have to sell that message to parents. Parents are trying to freaking. I mean, have you seen those school board meetings? I mean, the one thing that actually happened good out of Covid, as much as nonsense as occurred out of all of that, is that ripped the veil back on what happened in

schools, not just here, but nationwide. With all that remote learning and shutting down the schools and doing all that stuff, and parents got to look behind that curtain and went, what the H is this? And we want no part of it. So that's part of the turmoil that you're seeing is, you know, it took 40 years probably to get here and you're trying to course correct it in 4 to 8 years.

**Reuel Sample:** And other candidates running, running for several other positions, but it all comes down to New Hanover County. The New Hanover County GOP getting things done, and the only way we can do that is through time, talents and treasure, quite frankly, money. So let's talk about the money aspect first. Why is it so important that people give to the local GOP here?

**Harry Knight:** Well, there's two basic reasons. One is to keep our organization alive. It's, you know, like bread, water, food. We have our own office. It's off of College Road, right close to where the old dicks used to be. And that many shops there. You have rent, you have utilities and all the things that are associated with that. So you need some funding just to keep your office open. And then the other is to support all of our various candidates. Um, radio ads, TV ads, fliers, door knocking, phone calls, data gathering, the amount of data associated with elections behind the scenes and the systems that operate that I'm an engineer and I'm that data is just absolutely the mountain of data is just crazy. I mean, there's statisticians in there. I'm like, you people are crazy with the amount of data that that they're running associated with that. So then you've got all those various expenses you can donate to the New Hanover County GOP directly to help with all of that. And the general message, because our job is to get all of our local candidates and our statewide candidates on top of the ticket members elected, we treat all of them the same because they're all GOP. You can go to our organization website, [New Hanover gop.org](http://NewHanovergop.org) and on there you'll find the donate button. You can donate to the building fund. You can do that reoccurring or one time if you'd like. Or you can do individual donations for any amount that you choose and it all adds up. It all counts.

**Harry Knight:** If you can afford to give \$2, \$2 is greatly appreciated. If you can afford to give more, that's appreciated as well. And then the individual candidates, obviously they're all running their own races. You can go, you know, Google their names or whatever, or go to our candidate page if you want to see who all of our candidates are,

click on the candidate page and up will come links to every one of our local candidates, including our statewide candidates. And you can go to their individual candidates. And if you choose to want to help one of them, then you can do the same thing. You can donate to them individually. Now, one of the things that I found, since I'm relatively new to this position is for some reason people think, and maybe it was like this years ago. It's not now that if you give to the county GOP that money doesn't stay in New Hanover County, it somehow goes back up to the state and then they allocate it back down to us. I'm here to tell you that is absolutely untrue. Every dollar you donate to us here in New Hanover County will get spent in New Hanover County. So not only are you helping us get conservative candidates elected into office, when you donate, you're also helping local businesses, whether that be a print shop, whether that be an information data gathering shop, whether that be a sign company, whether that be a shipping company of some sort, all of that money gets spent here.

**Reuel Sample:** I will also add to that that we have no paid staff. You are not paid as the executive director. The the officers are not paid. I'm not paid, which you and I have to talk about is that none of that, none of us are paid. So we are always looking for volunteers because the volunteers who put in their time and their talents are really a force multiplier of that, of that money.

**Harry Knight:** Yeah, absolutely. And we have any number of different volunteer opportunities depending on what you might like to do. Different people like to do different things. As we get closer to the actual elections, we're going to need poll watchers, observers and people to hand out fliers and material at the early voting locations. And then on on Election Day, we need volunteers to go do door knocking. We need volunteers as well to come into the office and make phone calls and do surveys and ask people for stuff. And we have a wonderful volunteer coordinator, Beth Frye. Great person, and everybody loves her. And you can do so if you're interested in volunteering and see what kind of opportunities there are. Again, go to our web page, click on the volunteer page and up it will come. It's a simple form. Fill that out with your contact information and Beth will call you personally. She calls every single one of us absolutely amazing.

**Reuel Sample:** Well, Harry Knight, the executive director of the New Hanover County GOP, I'll give you the final word.

**Harry Knight:** Be the adult in the room. If you're a Republican candidate or you are looking for to help the New Hanover County GOP. Just remember to be the adult. It's really that simple.

**Reuel Sample:** Harry. Thanks again. Look forward to another conversation with you here on the podcast.

**Harry Knight:** Thank you Reuel. Have a good evening.