

Welcome to Civil Discourse. This podcast will use government documents to illuminate the workings of the American government and offer context around the effects of government agencies in your everyday life. Now, your hosts, Nia Rodgers, Public Affairs Librarian and Dr. John Aughenbaugh, Political Science Professor.

Hey, Aughie.

Good morning, Nia.

I want to be in charge of the Space Force. I think that I would look fabulous in the new uniforms that they've come up with.

Oh, yeah.

I think that it would be awesome to run a space force. Don't you think I'd be great at it? What would the rank be in space? Do they use the Air Force ranks maybe, or they're going to use separate, different?

That's a really good question. I'm, again, as usual in these conversations that we have, I'm back a couple clicks. My mind is thinking about all the things that you have said on the podcast that you've wanted to be.

I know. I want to be everything.

Okay.

Basically, I wanted to be a dictator but not mean. I want to be a nice dictator.

So I just want to be very-

I don't know if there are any of those.

Okay. So our first episode, you wanted to be the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Which he's gotten some really good, interesting work right these days with the coronavirus and stuff.

Yes.

He's been out in front.

Yes.

Mr. Azar.

You've wanted to be the Secretary of Defense State because you said you wanted to be just like Madeleine Albright at one point.

Yes, because she's fabulous.

Okay.

Tell me who doesn't want to be like Madeleine Albright?

You've also indicated that you want to become a Supreme Court Justice. Though interestingly enough, you also mentioned you didn't actually want to rule on cases. You just wanted to be in one of those. Would you call it snappy, black robe? Okay.

With the lace thing around the top and the pearls? Oh, yeah.

Yeah. Right.

I can rock that look, baby. I can sleep at the State of the Union just as well as anybody else, I'm just saying.

Any of the other Supreme Court Justices. Oh, you also wanted to be president.

Well, yeah.

Okay. You did not indicate much enthusiasm for being in the leadership of either House of Congress.

Well, I wanted to be the senior senator, and then you said that's Kaine, and I didn't want to hurt Kaine's feelings.

No, that's Warner.

Oh, he is the junior senator.

Kaine is the junior senator.

So I guess I want to be the senior senator. I mean, not that I don't like Mark Warner too. I'm sure they're lovely people. But I don't want to be Speaker. Oh my gosh, what a terrible job. Although you get a gavel, which is kind of cool. It would be cool if you could actually hit people with a gavel, or throw it across the room. I thought you said that you wanted to be a dictator, but not being mean.

That would sort of suggest that you're being mean.

We'll I mean, hit them on their knuckles, not on their heads or anything.

Okay. Now, you're triggering me.

No, I don't want to be a nun. I don't want to be a nun teaching, especially a kid like you, which I imagine you just wore out the rulers with your knuckles.

I'm recalling, shall we say, various disciplinary sessions that I encountered in Catholic school. I'm not entirely sure I can go on now anyway.

I wanted to be all of the things. Actually, I want to understand all the things. A lot of it seems mysterious to me.

Thus your interests in today talking about-

The Space Force.

-the Space Force.

It seems kind of mysterious. I mean, it sounds cool. I have to admit, it does sound like a cool thing, like, "Oh, Space Force." It also sounds a little bit like a cartoon from Saturday morning. So I'm a little worried about that.

Yes. Some comedians have gone that route.

That it's like a cartoon?

Yes.

But I mean, it seems like it's a thing, right?

Okay. Well, I mean, let's just say hypothetically, we have a president like President Trump,-

Let's say we have one. Okay, that's good. That's a good start.

-and they want to propose this new agency, the Space Force. It may be the new military division in the Department of Defense, right?

Oh, yeah. I guess that would make it six, right, because we have five currently.

That's correct.

So that would make it even. That would be nice if you were having some sort of tug of war.

Well, numerologists would say you want even numbers of things. Okay.

Okay.

Yeah.

I don't know anything about numerology, and now I know even numbers are good.

I perused the literature, and that's about the extent of my knowledge.

Okay.

Okay. But at some point in time, no matter how fervently a president wants a new agency or a new unit to a department or an agency, they're going to have to get the United States Congress to create it, because Congress has the authority and Congress alone has the authority to create new agencies.

Congress alone.

Okay.

So the president cannot?

Well, the president can veto it, but the president can't just go ahead and issue an executive order and say, "Okay, voila, we have a space force." So to give you an example, post 911, you may recall that President 43 Bush number 2, created a director of Homeland Security who was Tom Ridge, but he could not create an agency. He actually had convinced Congress to create a Department of Homeland Security without Congress passing and authorizing a bill, which then the president gets to sign or veto. A president can't just go ahead and wake up tomorrow morning and say, voila, I want a new agency, and now I want money.

So when Nixon made the EPA, he had to get Congress to make the EPA,-

Yes.

-so he had to make the case,-

Yes.

-and he had to get people on his side.

Yes.

But all of that is irrelevant if Congress is like, "We don't need any clean water, clean air. It's all overrated. Go away."

Yes. Yep.

Okay. So what President Trump is doing now with the uniforms and the talking it up and all that stuff.

He's laying the groundwork.

He's trying to get people excited about it. So that they start saying to their Congress people, "Hey, when are we going to have that space force? My kid wants to go into this Space Force Academy. When is that going to happen?"

My podcast partner wants to go ahead and be the Secretary of the Space Force. Yes.

That would be so awesome. Oh, my goodness.

You mentioned the business card?

Oh, yeah.

That would be a great business card galaxy on the side of it or something.

Imagine the background on the card? That's what I'm saying.

That would be awesome. Okay.

Listeners, you should see-

Glee.

Yeah. The huge smile on Nia's face.

That would be so good.

Nia right now doesn't want to talk about separation of powers, the constitution, or any of that happened.

No. I just want the Space Force.

Yes. Right.

Yeah. I just want a railroad Congress into giving me a space force about this Donald Trump, and I agree, which is pretty rare for me to say, but it's actually pretty rare for me to agree with most presidents.

Think about the hat wear.

Well, he would love the hat wear as well.

Yeah. But I mean, you know.

Oh my gosh, helmets with the things at the front. I could have one like The Mandalorian.

Yeah. Well, there you go.

Then I could get a Baby Yoda, and life would be complete.

Yeah. Again, listeners, it's really too bad you're not seeing the visual of this.

Baby Yoda.

Okay. So you wanted to ask a substantive question before I derailed us.

Probably not, but I'm going to go there anyway. So when the Congress created, I wasn't a member of Congress at the time. When the Congress created the Department of Homeland Security, it's sort of sucked in agencies.

Yes.

Agencies that had previously been independent. I'm thinking FEMA, which kind of got a little annoyed, I think, at being suddenly reporting to someone else, right? Because FEMA had even been in cabinet meetings and stuff. They weren't a Cabinet position, but they had been in those meetings when there were hurricanes or whatever they would call that person in.

Basically in terms of the federal bureaucracy, you have three types of, if you will, organizations. You have departments, and there's 15 of them, and they report, whoever is the Secretary of a particular department reports directly to the president.

They are in the presidential line of succession after the Speaker?

That's right.

Right? So after the Speaker it starts down,.

The secretaries of the departments comprise what we refer to as the cabinet. Though interestingly enough, they hardly ever meet as a cabinet. They sort of have been replaced by the White House staff as the main advisers to the president.

With this president?

No, with pretty much since the 1930s.

Oh, really? Okay. So all modern presidents the cabinets don't generally meet.

Yeah, pretty much.

Was there like once or twice a year they get together,-

Yeah, that's when you see them.

-and have pizza and beer, and have pictures made, "Look, that's all of them sitting around a table."

The picture part, yes. Okay. The pizza and beer, yeah. They don't do that.

It would be way more fun.

Yes. I would be enthusiastic about that kind of meeting. As my students...

I know how you feel about meetings.

Yeah. I was about to say as my students will know. If I come to class and I'm Mr. Cranky Pants, they're just like "You had a meeting today, didn't you?" I'm like, "Yes, I hate those things." Okay.

But you'd go if there a pizza and beer?

Oh, my goodness. Yeah.

Take note PolSci department, here's how you get your faculty be more excited about faculty meetings.

I would be even willing to write or take the minutes.

Whoa. Wow.

Yeah.

Okay. That's going all the way there.

Okay. so the other two basic bureaucratic organizations on our federal government are Independent Regulatory Commissions. An example would be the FDA, the Food and Drug Administration.

Or the Nuclear Regulatory Commission?

Yeah.

Okay.

The NRC, the Federal Communications Commission, Federal Election Commission.

SEC?

Yeah.

Okay. I see.

They're designed to go ahead and be independent, meaning that they have five commissioners, typically, and no President can appoint more than three of them. They serve staggered terms, and they're designed to be politically independent so they can go ahead and regulate key or essential industries, or activities in American society. So if you think about the Food and Drug Administration, you hope that their analysis of what is a safe drug is not clouded by politics.

Right.

Okay. Then you have sort of standalone agencies. Some of them are government businesses, US Postal Service.

I was going to say Post Office, our favorite.

But you mentioned FEMA, NASA is a standalone.

Really?

Yes, NASA is.

When I have my Space Force, I could acquire NASA.

Yes.

That was my evil laugh, by the way. In case you couldn't tell, because it's not super different from my regular laugh but-

I was about to say that.

- totally different.

I'm glad you characterized that for us because I wasn't entirely sure how to. You pointed out something really important in regards to the creation of a new government agency or department, and Homeland Security is a Cabinet Department. But what the Bush administration recommended to Congress, and there were some debate about this, was that the Department of Homeland Security would be comprised, in part, with agencies that used to be part of other departments or in the case of FEMA, a

standalone agency. As you pointed out, staffers at FEMA didn't want to be part of the Department of Homeland Security.

Well, I mean, the Director didn't either.

No. It's not that they necessarily disliked the Department of Homeland Security.

Right.

They liked being a standalone agency.

Right. Different funding, different hierarchy, and everything in the government is about hierarchy. How many layers do you have to go up in order to get permission to do something? That just added another layer before they could act on something.

That's the negative, if you will. But on the other hand, if you're a standalone agency-

You can't duck the problem if -

Yeah, nobody protects you.

Right. If you did it, you're gonna have to own it.

Yeah. Think about, for instance, post Hurricane Katrina, the director of FEMA, Michael Brown -
Brownie.

Yeah, okay, Brownie.

"Good job, Brownie."

Yes.

One of the few things George Bush probably wishes he hadn't ever said.

For two days, he gets grilled. On the other hand, almost all other criticism post Hurricane Katrina get directed to the Secretary of Homeland Security.

I think that was Michael Chertoff at the time.

Chertoff at the time, right?

He took a beating.

Oh, he took a beating.

He took more of a beating than Michael Brown.

Yeah. There are positives and negatives in regards to what your structure is as a federal bureaucratic organization. But let's just say, hypothetically, with the Space Force. Now, a few moments ago, you went ahead and mentioned, "Would the Space Force be the sixth unit in the Department of Defense?" Well, that would be one of the questions that Congress would have to answer.

Oh, so it could be an independent thing altogether.

Just like NASA.

Like the all the space things, we'll put all the space things together.

Yes.

We're going to create a Space Force, but it also has NASA, and it has all of the different projects that are-
Star wars, missile defense.

I'm liking this thing better and better as my power base.

But if you're trying to get a new agency created, those are the questions that delay the approval process.

Oh, because districts.

Yes.

Because all of those people represent people who work in those districts who say, "Oh heck, no, I don't want to be part of," or, "Heck, yeah, wade in there, and put us in something so that we can be either more powerful." But the nice thing about a new department is that it has a honeymoon period.

Sure, it does.

For a while it gets a lot of money thrown at it. It gets a lot of people thrown at it. It gets a lot of leeway. It gets to make mistakes. It gets to do stuff, and then after a while it starts getting hammered.

Yeah, it gets treated like every other
beauracatic organization.

Exactly. Right now, I mean, the blush is completely worn off of the Department of Homeland Security.

Oh, yeah.

That happened probably, what, five years in, six years in, something like.

Yeah.

Then all of a sudden, nobody loves you anymore, and you have to get in there and fight for the money just like everybody else.

That's right.

But for a brief period of time, it's a pretty marvelous thing to be.

Yeah. So at most, President Trump could create a Director of the United States Space Force.

But he could do that tomorrow?

He could do that tomorrow. He could issue an executive-

Who would pay that person's salary?

Well, at that point, more than likely, the White House would reallocate, transfer funds from existing line items that don't have restrictions on it. Remember in our budget discussion, I know so much of the Federal Government's budget are in specific line items. But unless Congress puts a restriction on how you can spend the money, you can reallocate the money.

Right, which is what's happening with the Department of Defense and the wall.

That's right.

The southern border wall.

That's right.

Its money is just being moved around-

Sure.

To pay for it, because-

That's right. Because Congress did not place restrictions on it, so the executive branch, they are the experts, remember. We have a modern administrative state that's predicated on Congress, creating these broad, if you will, policies, new agencies, and then basically saying to the agencies, "You hire experts, and we will give you discretion to solve the problem." See, this cuts both ways, right?

Right.

This isn't a Democratic or Republican, if you will, issue. They will criticize when they are out of power, or they don't like a particular policy or program. But both political parties, both ends of the ideological spectrum are like, "Oh, I'm not entirely sure. I like all that discretion being allocated to the executive branch." Oh, you did when, you're President was in charge. When you don't like a particular President, you're like, "Oh, hey, we've got to rein that in. That's a bad practice," "Doesn't this violate separation of powers?" I'm like, "Well, the modern administrative state is basically predicated on Congress saying, 'hey, our constituents have said, this is a problem, this is our solution.' Now we're going to leave it to the executive branch to execute the law, to find the solutions." What President Trump convinces Congress that, "Hey, the next world war is going to be in space, and we need to be prepared for it."

Probably not the worst idea of the world.

Let's say he convinces Congress, probably a little difficult since we have a divided Congress.

Or let's say that NASA figures out that thing that they'd been hearing every 16 days is a warning.

Yes.

"We're coming to kick your butt."

That's right.

"We're coming to kick your butt," whatever. If they figured that out, all of a sudden, the Space Force would look, totally, like a legit thing. I mean, that's what happened with Homeland Security, was the precipitating event of 9/11 caused the government to say, and Congress to agree, "We need a better strategy for how to deal with-

Yes.

- these types of issues."

It galvanized, if you will, conversations that have been occurring in Washington DC. Some scholars point back as far as the Reagan administration, at least, post-Cold War.

Oh yeah, cause a bombing in Beirut under Reagan.

Okay.

The embassies and all that stuff also happened there.

In a post-Cold War. Plenty of intelligence during the Clinton Administration to suggest, we're are going to have another world war. We're going to have to fight terrorists. But 911 galvanized all of that underlying conversation, all that noise. Now we have a Department of Homeland Security. But then the question becomes, what responsibility do you give it? Do you take existing units from other agencies or departments in the case of FEMA, a stand alone? Do you put it into this new bureaucratic structure? Those are the kinds of questions. Then you got funding. As you pointed out historically, what scholars have concluded is, when we create a new agency, usually Congress can't throw enough money at the agency, right?

Right.

But then after a period of time, typically 5-8 years, the bloom has come off. Well, that looks like a really dead and dying flower, while you guys are going to have to fight just like every other agency to get money.

Well, and that's also about the length of time that it takes to make enemies.

Yes.

That's really part of it. That's about the length of time that it takes to annoy the crap out of some pretty powerful people who say, you know what, I'm really thinking being nice to you.

Well, I mean think about it.

Because when you first enter it, like any situation, you're first hired in that job.

Yes.

Everybody gives you the benefit of the doubt. You haven't made any waves, you haven't made any enemies, you haven't done anything. By five years in, you've pissed at least one or two people in your workplace or your boss or somebody, and now you're starting to have to really-

It's like new college job.

-change how you interact.

It's just like an academic department hires a new faculty member. Usually the first couple of years, they get the classes that they want to teach. We try to make sure that if they're [inaudible]

Glad to be there. It was a good hire, and everybody fits and that's all good.

Yeah. After a couple years later.

Guess what you're teaching.

You're teaching, right?

You're teaching it at 9:00 o'clock at night or whatever.

Yeah, 8:00 o'clock in the morning. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday you enjoy that. The students don't want to be there, you don't want to be there, and then you start with thinking, who did I upset? Okay? Then you're like,

I guess I'm not the new kid on the block anymore.

Yeah.

Nobody's going ahead and say, wow, are they special? No, you're pretty much just like everybody else now.

Well, but the good thing is though that eventually what also happens is that you start to make what I think of as at least in the Congress, if this is not the Political Science Department or any department on campus because none of us are this powerful. But in the Congress, you start to make powerful friends, defenders of your particular agency who pretty much will go to bat for you because they believe in the cause, or because there's some attachment. There are hawks, and they're all about defense, or John Glenn was all about NASA because he had a vested interest in there.

Sure.

Those kinds of things. So you also kind of swing, you have that middle period of nobody adores you, and now everything is starting to fall apart. But then you start to build connections and relationships.

Yeah, I mean, because it means.

So if the Space Force, when you first created it's great, and then somebody who serves in the Space Force then goes to Congress.

Or I mean, think about it in these terms. They can believe in your purpose or mission, right?

Right.

There might be a base or a regional headquarters for that agency in a particular state or a particular district.

He brought 5,000 jobs to my area.

I'm going to go ahead and protect those jobs.

You make relationships.

Which is why there are a military bases all over the United States.

Sure.

Part of it is for defense, but part of it is also that's a really smart way to spread your effect on various Congress people.

Sure. Yeah.

Is just say, oh, but if you start closing bases, whose district are you going to sacrifice?

Yeah. I mean, when you and I did the podcast episode about the budget, I went and talk to you about how there are two states in the country that have the highest percentage of their state gross domestic product accounted for by federal government spending.

Virginia.

California. For the longest time, Virginia had Republican senators. California's had Democratic senators for years. But the one thing they could both agree on, these disparate senators was-

Defense spending.

-defense spending could not be cut. I mean, Senator Ted Kennedy, the liberal lion in the US Senate for decades from Massachusetts. There are a couple important military bases, naval operations in Massachusetts. It was just bizarre listening to the liberal lion say, we can't cut the Department of the Navy.

Right. In this case, going from lion to house cat.

Yeah. Okay. But then agencies.

But that's what he's supposed to do, is supposed to represent the people of Massachusetts, protect their jobs, bring money. I mean, that's part of what all of that is for, is Congress is to protect.

That's representation.

Right.

Agencies then develop relationships with important industries, interest groups, important stakeholders.

So the Space Force is probably going to do a similar thing that the Air Force did when it's going to be connected to Boeing, and all of those guys.

McDonald Douglas.

All those guys who do all of those plane type building.

Just thinking out loud here, think about the connections the space force would have with some of your larger, more potent technology firms.

Oh, when Elon Musk would salivate over a Space, if he's right thinking because it's in the same thing that he's trying to do.

Yeah.

That is to get more people in space, to get more active in space. NASA would also, I think, take great joy in the idea of more people in space, more activity in space. Let's see what we can do about cleaning up all the crap that is currently up there. I mean, part of what space force is going to be is garbage disposal-

Sure.

-because they're not going to be able to get up there without doing that first.

But then think about colleges and universities.

Oh yeah, the aerospace engineering programs.

STEM. I mean, we create a Space Force. We're going to need to go ahead and educate.

People who will be working in there.

Okay. The federal government would have a vested interest and making sure that colleges, universities were one teaching a whole bunch of students on the needs of the space force so that they are ready to go ahead and be good federal government bureaucrats.

Well, and from the humanities point of view, diplomacy and political science are going to play into it because space, unlike anything else based on earth, is everybody.

Sure.

So you're going to have to make relationships with other nations.

Yeah, who owns space.

Right, along the lines of what the International Space Station had to do. It had to be a multi-nation creation because it just wasn't going to work without that.

Yeah, where are a nation-state jurisdictions in space.

Exactly. In space, right.

The expression brave new world. Well, yeah, this is definitely going to go ahead and apply if all nation-states begin to view space as the next frontier of international relations. I mean, I could just see my colleague Chris Saladino, teaching international diplomacy in space.

Which you'd have to have.

You would have to have. So there are spin-offs here to where once you create a federal government agency, the old joke among public administration and policy scholars is federal government agencies don't die. They just morph and evolve into something else, right?

Yeah.

So again, a few moments ago at the beginning of this podcast, I was talking about the post office. One of the things that you and I talked about in that podcast episode about the post office, about the history and evolution of it is, you would kind of sort of think today, particularly with the younger generations, we would not need a post office. But the post office today is just as essential to the nation's economy in certain age groups as it was when it was first created. I mean, think about.

Amazon couldn't survive without post office.

Think about for instance, something like the Social Security Administration that was authorized at its inception for three years, 1935 through 1938.

It's carried on a little bit there?

Yeah.

Although with the new budget?

Maybe not. But at one point, the United States Supreme Court ruled on its constitutionality. The Supreme Court got to go ahead and killed it, but it did not. Now we are three generations into the Social Security Administration. Each change involved including survivor benefits program, a disabilities benefits program. There are millions of Americans that rely on the Social Security Administration who aren't old. That's how agencies go ahead and develop stakeholders.

They start saying there's this other group that's falling between the cracks, what can we do?

Yes.

Turns out your agency is probably best to handle that.

Sure.

So you end up being the agency that does something.

Yeah. I mean, our first podcast episode that we recorded was about the nomination of a new Secretary for Health and Human Services. Prior to the Secretary Azar who is still there. But prior to the passage of the Affordable Care Act, Health and Human Services was one of those really small departments. Not non-essential, but most Americans would not go ahead and say, "Oh, Health and Human Services, hey, they do bang up work." when most Americans couldn't even pick it out. But post Affordable Care Act, health and human services played a huge role in the execution of that law. So all of a sudden we need to have somebody.

Blamed incredibly when the role went sideways. Again, you were talking about getting beaten up?

Yes.

Oh, it's fine. This is a mistake. Mistakes were made.

Okay. But for that agency or for that department to not have a permanent secretary would be catastrophic over an extended period of time. So of course you need to nominate somebody to be the Secretary of Health and Human Services. As you pointed out, it's even more important when you have a global health issue like the Coronavirus, where there are a number of agencies that are part of the broad umbrella of Health and Human Services who are now being asked by members of Congress, you better protect Americans.

Yeah, what are you doing in CDC to keep us all from dying.

That's right. Okay.

CDC is like, "Oh, it turns out our kits may not be working as well as we thought." But they're going to take some heat for that, but he's going to take some heat for that.

That's right.

Because that rolls upwards.

Yes. So Donald Trump wants a Space Force.

See, I'm not sure that he and I want space forces for the same reason. I think he wants a Space Force because he thinks it's cool.

It's part of his legacy. Presidents want legacies.

He wants to do something that 50 years from now people will say,

"Oh, that happened under President Trump."

You want to do it because you want to be in those cool uniforms.

But also because maybe Donald Trump and I share this, I don't know it because he's never said it publicly. But I have a big R romantic view of space, like spaces is this magical place for me. Part of that is because I am the Star Wars generation. I saw Star Wars in the theater when it first came out, and it altered the way I see movies, it was different and it was huge. It was just a huge, but it was still this, and by romantic I mean Byronic romance, this poetic romance, which is how I perceived space. But there's another practical part of me, the homeland security part of me that says also, I don't want there to be weapons in space. There needs to be an organization that discourages.

Do we have an arms agreement on on space weapon?

Exactly, that discourages things where it can get really out of hand really quickly. So I have both of those parts of me. I wonder if he's a little more in the practical realm of being more security oriented and slightly probably less romantically oriented in it.

Yeah, I mean, you and I are of a generation where space exploration made sense because that was the next thing to explore.

It was a good thing in and of itself. Like it was intrinsically good.

There were very few discussions among policymakers that spending billions of dollars on space exploration meant that we weren't spending money on needy people, which is part of the dialogue today. Is if we're doing x, why aren't we helping out y? We're of the generation where of course you're going to explore the unknown because that's what we do as human beings. I think at least in terms of American political culture, I'm not entirely sure all generations still possess that, that wonderment, that, "Yes, this is the next thing we should do." I think there's more of the pragmatic and there's more of the why would we spend money on a Space Force when we have this huge gap between the rich and the poor.

Homeless crisis, we have a lot of things to try to fix.

Okay. To try to fix that's right.

I agree with that. We do have lots of things, but it doesn't mean we can't do, we can do both.

Well, I mean it's like the difficulty when you're raising a child. On one hand, you want to encourage the child to be curious, to be fascinated by the world around them. On the other hand, you want to inculcate very pragmatic lessons so that they can actually navigate the world that they either currently

live in or we'll live in. That's a balancing between the ideal versus the pragmatic. I mean on one hand, I want to go ahead and teach my daughter, "Yes dream all the time. Dream big."

You may in fact be an Oscar winning actress one day.

Sure.

But you should probably get an education just in case that doesn't work. Because millions of women try to be Oscar winning actresses, and each year one of them or two of them get picked.

I remember the nuns of my youth when they weren't destroying their rulers by cracking my knuckles.

Which you deserved.

No. Of course I deserved. I was terrible. For those of you who know me, if you wonder.

Note to the chair of the poly side department, perhaps you just need to get out of rule occasionally.

But they would ask us questions like what do you want to be when you grow up? Kids get asked that question and I was forever putting down I want to be the starting catcher of the New York Yankees. I mean, well into middle school. The nuns never went ahead and said, "That's never going to happen." But what the nuns always did say to me and my classmates was, " Okay, but just in case, don't you think you ought to be able to diagram a sentence? Don't you think you ought to be able to go ahead and do basic addition and subtraction."

You should be able to balance your checkbook so that when you're the starting catcher for the Yankees you can manage your money.

That's right.

No, seriously. How many athletes are taught how to manage their money?

There are not.

Which is why you see, I bought a car for my mom and my girlfriend and my dad and I don't have any money. Because I chose to do those things in perhaps orders that wouldn't have been good.

If you think about that in terms of public policy, that's one of the tensions. Because if I was a member of Congress and a President came to Congress and said, "In my budget, I want money to do a detailed study of something. I'm going to want Congress in the next five years to create a Space Force". One of the questions I would have is, okay in part, why? I mean, these are basic public losses.

Why do we need a Space Force?

Yeah.

What do you perceive its function as, it's mission?

Yeah, I mean and who's going to conduct a study? How are we going to measure costs versus benefits, because some benefits are intangible. So if we're exploring.

Magic is hard to quantify.

That's part of the difficulty in trying to evaluate new public policy is some of the benefits are one intangible. But moreover, even they may not materialize for 10, 15, 20 years. So a lot of practical knowledge actually came from the US space program.

Oh yeah, and lots of gadgets, lots of cool stuff that works on Earth, they discovered by doing it in space or building it for space. Those black boxes that you get in planes that comes out of NASA, at least because it's the whole idea of what can we do that's practically indestructible. So we will have a record of what happened.

Yeah. Good or bad.

Exactly. Not to mention pens that right upside-down. Hello, and as director, I will be signing everything upside down just so you know. Why is she laying on her desk upside down to sign that, because she can.

All the media organizations will be so upset with your press conferences because their travel budgets will go up exponentially. Just to go ahead and cover your press conferences, all of which will be in space.

In OGee. Find something to hang onto, we're going to have a press conference. There's some real benefit to that, don't you think? Nobody will look back as everybody's hair will just be standing straight on end.

They'll have to create a new minor at minimum in mass comm departments, just to go ahead and record it on space force. Journalism in space, like Pigs in Space from the Muppets.

Right.

Remember?

Yes.

Pigs in Space.

There'll be dot dot.

I'm Miss Piggy. This is it. I'm Miss Piggy.

Of course. I mean, diva-like. Yeah.

Right. Okay.

Yeah.

I'm trying to figure out what Muppet character I would be, but nevertheless.

I can see eventually how awesome it would be, instead of going to the zoo for the 15th time when you're a kid. If you are unfortunate enough to grow up in the same part of the United States for your entire childhood, you will go to the same things. Year after year you go to the zoo, you go to the Capitol Building, you got it right?

Yeah.

Certain things. Can you imagine being able to take kids into a Zero G environment and say, "This is what space looks like and here, turnaround that's what the Earth looks like." Turns out it's a sphere. Argument over, let's move on and.

Field trips in outer-space.

Wouldn't that be great?

I mean, your parents would have to sign off obviously because it's potentially deadly.

Yeah, you imagine the.

But so is going to the zoo. I've seen kids do stuff at zoos that I think. I bet your parents didn't sign off for that?

You imagine the waiver forms.

It'd be very long.

Be like.

Be multiple pages.

Eighteen pages, right? Hey, I mean, your.

But parents would line up to be the.

Chaperone.

Chaperones.

Yeah.

They'd be like, "No, my kid can't go without me." It'd be great.

By the way, I'm not entirely sure that that's a good justification for creating the Space Force program, but as a parent of a seven year old.

See, would not be great for you? My kid can't go without me.

Yeah. I'm thinking that, now I might be supportive of this. No more trips to the children's museum. To hell with that.

My mom was a stay at home mom until I was a little bit older, and so early on she went to the zoo and she went to the Capitol Building, and she went to the children's museum, and she went to the art museum, where they would always have art things for kids and all that stuff. I think if I had said to my mom, "How'd you like to go to the space?" my mom would have been in. I mean, I think she would have said, "Where do we sign? Let's go."

You had multiple siblings, and I have two, an older sister and a younger sister, and we're within five years of one another. So my mom.

Would have gone to space.

She would've been like, "Thank God we're not going to that museum again." I mean, because she was just like, "I can't do this anymore." But if they would've said to her, "Hey, Mrs. Aughenbaugh, we need you to be a chaperone so we can go to the Space Force station," she would be like, "Yes, please." I mean, because she was a huge fan of President Kennedy. He's the one who started the trend.

Star Trek and Star Wars, and.

Yes.

Lost in Space, even Danger, Will Robinson.

I mean like all of that.

Battlestar Galactica.

Right.

Yes.

Babylon 5, all of it plays into our.

Fascination.

Yes.

Yes. Yeah.

Without there and what's out there and what happens when we go out there.

Please forgive me listeners, I'm not a huge science fiction fan, but all the shows and movies you just mentioned I saw, and even I, who again, I'm not a huge fan of science fiction, I would have been really like, "This is so much better than that damn museum we went to over and over again," or the state park, I was just like, "Man, I've seen some of these frogs so often. I'm pretty much."

I've named them.

I've named them. I know their family members. I know who spawned whom here.

I'm done.

I'm done. I cannot take another canoe trip. I'm sorry. Because I keep on falling into that damn river.

No. Let's move on.

Yeah.

Okay.

Of course, I guess the equivalent to falling in the river in space is being pushed out of a lock or something.

That's again why you had the waiver.

Yeah, and I don't think Space is nearly as dangerous as movies make it out to be because NASA has protocols for everything.

Yes.

Everything. You need to have your lady time in space. We have a plan for that. You need go to bathroom. We have a plan for that. you need to eat but you need to eat, I don't know. Or Tang which came directly out of NASA. We can give you vitamins in space so that you don't get scurvy. There's a plan for everything which is comforting to me. My brother works at NASA. He's an aerospace engineer and he shakes things up for a living. He works in their vibration testing lab, and he would not say that he

shakes things up for a living. That's me dumbing down his job because I don't understand engineering. But he talked to me one time about going to look at one of the shuttles while it was on the pad.

Man, that would be so cool.

In Florida, and he said he had never felt so small. He said, you have no idea how huge it is and how far up it goes. He said, you look up into the sky, and it disappears out of view because it's so big. We don't take into account how big they are. But what was also interesting for me to listen to about that, my brother is a very practical pragmatic.

He's an engineer.

He's an engineer. He writes in those capital letters, like how they are write in capital letters.

Yes.

I mean, he doesn't have a script. I don't know that he ever signed his name with it like a scripted vert. He just prints his name. He's that guy and even he, when he was talking about it, you could hear the wonder in his voice, and this is a person who's been doing this for 30-some years.

Sure.

So I really think that there's something romantic about it that attracts people like me. As I mentioned, I'm not entirely sure that's what it keep attracts Donald Trump, but I also think that Donald Trump is a showman, and there's very little that is showier than space. Space is awfully showy.

This would be on prime time TV.

There would be bands, there would be media coverage.

Can you imagine the parade? The parade would be amazing. I'm just saying.

But I mean, I don't think you should discount. In this day in age, it's easy to be critical of Donald Trump, or any president. But don't discount the fact that presidents have egos, some larger than others, and they want to be known for something when they're no longer in office. They may want to do good. They may want to make America great again, or whatever the case may be. But they're concerned about their legacy, particularly if they serve two terms. They want to be known for something good. One of the legacies, for instance, of President Kennedy, was that he spurred the United States federal government into exploring space. We will have a man on the moon by the end of the decade.

Decade. It's right.

Although I think he said decayed. Because he's from.

Massachusetts.

Massachusetts, and so he said it a little differently.

The Massachusetts accent.

But he meant it, and it happened.

Yeah, and.

He meant it, but then Johnson carried the legacy and then.

Nixon.

Nixon carried the legacy.

I mean, people carried that onward to do other things.

Reagan. They carried those legacies forward.

So that's the other thing is the person after Trump, if Trump does get a Space Force.

Convinces Congress to authorize it, yeah.

Then it will also be the next president, I assume will carry it on.

Yeah. Because again, that's a huge commitment. You convince Congress to go and do it. I mean no member of Congress wants to go ahead and say, "I voted to create that agency, but now I think they do shit work." No, I think nobody says that.

But presidents can, could go to Congress and kill an agency if they wanted to. You remember in the member a 1000 years ago, in the election where Donald Trump became the front runner, but before that there were about 400 people on the Republican side?

Yeah. Perry said he wanted to get rid of three agencies.

Then he couldn't remember which ones, which is fine because he's in charge of one of the ones he wanted to get rid off.

Yeah. Energy.

Can you just do that?

Can you just say, and I'm washing my hands of Energy? That's it. We're not having it anymore.

You got to get Congress to pass a law that disbands an agency.

So presidents can't just.

No.

They can talk the talk, but they have to have Congress in hand to walk that walk.

Yeah, and again, this is an example of separate but shared powers or what gets taught in high school, checks and balances. I hate that phrase by the way, but nevertheless.

Mental note use that often.

Yeah. Right. Okay.

I'm kidding.

I just ignore. That's all right. I know what buttons to push with you and I had you fired up last week.

But what caucus it is, right?

Earlier today. Okay. I will do nothing. Yeah, I'll watch out.

It's like with your family members, particularly your siblings. You spend enough time with them, after awhile, you're just like, "Oh."

I know exactly how to get your goat. Is that your goat you've got behind you here? Let me jab that a little bit.

Yeah, right? But I mean, this is an example of separate but shared powers, right? On one hand, it would be extremely efficient if a president could just say tomorrow, "I don't think this agency does anything worthwhile, meaningful, and in my budget that I've just submitted to Congress," which by the way, Donald Trump submitted his budget earlier this week.

I know we're going to talk about this soon, right?

Yes, we are, okay?

As I joked with my students, Donald Trump continued on with the presidential tradition of submitting his budget late. It was a week late. It's supposed to be the first Monday of February, he submitted at the second.

Although that's less late than a lot of other presidents.

Well, hey, that's fine, and you can go in and say, well, yeah, the impeachment in State of the Union blah, blah, blah, right?

Blah, blah, blah, you didn't turn it on time so you can only get as much as a B on it.

We can't get in [inaudible] this anymore.

This is John Aughenbaugh channeling his inner cranky professor. Blah, blah, blah, what's your excuse, right?

Wouldn't it be cool if you said to the president, for every day you're late, we shave off a million dollars or a billion dollars or whatever instead of grades?

I would love that.

That would be on time, they'd be on time or early after that. If you said, okay, but this is what's going to happen. But we discussed this and people can go back and listen to the budgeting episodes if they want. We discussed the fact that it's really a starting point. His budget is more like, here's my first foray into this discussion, and then Congress comes back and says, here's our first foray and then it goes back and forth.

Yeah, it's the start of a conversation.

He can't just take that out of it, he couldn't just take out the Department of Defense. We're not going to have defense anymore. We feel pretty well defended. What's Canada going to do? What's Mexico going to do? Leave us alone.

We have two buffers. We have Canada to the north, we have Mexico to the south.

Exactly.

What do we get to worry about?

We got two oceans on either side of us.

Yeah, don't mess with us. We'll see you coming and we can work it out if we need to.

So a president can submit a budget and basically if you will, slash in agency's budget, but then Congress can just go ahead and say, "Yeah, hey, thanks for sharing and we're going to return its funding to its previous levels." So a president has to convince Congress.

Right now, not so warm and fuzzy with Congress because even though, and I know we were going to talk about impeachment at some point, the Space Force is obsessing me here lately. Even though he was not

found guilty in the trial in the Senate, it's not like there was a whole warm fuzzy up with Donald Trump in the Senate going on. So it's unlikely that if he came in and said, I want to slash the Department of Energy, that people would get behind him.

No, because you basically know that the House of Representatives controlled by the opposition party is going to say no to the request. He more than likely would lose a handful of even Republican senators. So even though the Republicans have a majority in the senate, that won't go anywhere, okay? We just know this, right?

Right.

I'm old enough to remember when Ronald Reagan was running for president in 1980 against Jimmy Carter, and he said he wanted to get rid of two federal government agencies, and he could actually remember what those were. I'm sorry, it was easy.

Yeah, low-hanging fruit.

Low hanging fruit. It's like that ball in T ball. It's right there on the T and I got to bat my hand, right? Reagan said he wanted to get rid of the federal Department of Education and the Department of Energy, right?

Why does everybody pick on Energy?

I think because in part, the Department of Energy at least for the private sector, seems to be redundant, right? It's not like the nation has lacked for energy sources. Frequently, it's a matter of which energy sources are going to be subsidized, promoted, etc.

Could I just say that it is a little rich for the governor of California to be saying, I'm going get rid of the Department of Energy, considering what's going on?

Governor of Texas?

No, Ronald Reagan. You said Ronald Reagan, right?

Yeah.

I'm just saying that now California is having enormous problems with PG&E right? It's having enormous problems with its energy infrastructure.

Yeah. Okay, I'm going to play devil's advocate now. Reagan would go ahead and say, the reason why the primary energy company in California is filing for bankruptcy is because the onerous California state regulations that have been on that company for decades. You see how those arguments can be spun both ways?

Yeah, now I can see that.

Now, the Department of Education one was rooted in the idea that all 50 states have Departments of Education.

Right, that that should be a state matter.

It was redundant to go ahead and create it in the first place.

I disagree, however, I see the point.

So do I.

But I do see the point that education is also a local issue in the sense that, I'm just going to say, if you're going to run, listeners, for any position locally, run for your local school board. More power there than there is in just about any other part of government that's accessible to you that's accessible to run for.

Yeah. If you want to get involved in politics, start at the local level and specifically school boards. They have such a huge impact. You're talking about policy affecting in some cases, thousands of kids.

For multiple generations potentially.

You're talking about property tax issues, debates between school boards.

Zoning, criminal justices. The whole, they just deal with everything. If you really want to muck in.

Anyways, back to my example, Reagan comes into office, he wins, right? He went ahead and suggested to Congress that we cut two agencies. Congress was just like, hey, thanks for sharing. Didn't go anywhere.

How nice for you, Mr. President.

Yeah, right.

Have some jelly beans, we'll get back to you in a little bit.

Now, if an agency was totally outdated, do you think they would? Have they ever gotten rid of one? I mean, off the top of your head.

Off the top of my head, I can't recall. I remember reading scholarly works that talked about Federal agencies that eventually got replaced but some of their functions got folded into other agencies.

Right. Dissolved through attrition.

Okay. Now, I got one. In fact, interestingly enough, it was the first independent regulatory commission this country ever had. The ICC, the Interstate Commerce Commission no longer exists.

Well, but the Department of Transportation probably does all of that stuff.

It does the stuff anyways. Then a bunch of other stuff.

Yeah, because the ICC was created to regulate, in particular, railroads and the Department of Transportation definitely regulates railroads.

Okay. So agencies don't really die, they just drift into another agency?

Morph, evolve, yes.

Okay. They've become something else.

So for those of you who are fearful.

So don't feel bad for agencies.

Yeah.

If you want to stay in.

Yeah.

If you have a soft heart and you're like, "Oh, poor agency."

How many institutions?

It's probably going to be fine.

Yeah, right. Institutions are so like dumped [inaudible].

Agencies are fine.

So for those of you who are fearful that our President Trump will just unilaterally create a Space Force, whatever good reasons you have to be fearful.

Or bad reasons.

Recognize it's not going to happen unless the president can convince Congress. For those of you who want the Space Force tomorrow so you can become the secretary of the Space Force, it's not going to happen tomorrow because the President has to convince the Congress.

Well, and then I assume it has to move a congressional pace, which is I believe glacial in nature.

Yes. See our podcast on how a bill becomes a law.

Right. So even if everybody tomorrow said, "Space Force, Space Force," it still would take.

Yeah. We have pep rallies.

It still would take a long time.

Kids are writing letters to the members of Congress.

Congress even starts to vote but then it has to go all the way through, and then the Senate, yeah, we had a whole discussion about how that's-

It goes to the committees.

It's going to take forever.

Maybe subcommittee? Yeah.

So I'm not getting this anytime soon?

No.

But we do know that it can happen easily within a presidency?

Sure.

So it's not as if it couldn't happen over the next if Donald Trump is re-elected four years or if he can bring about the zeitgeist for it.

There is a theory that was put out by public policy scholar, John Kingdon. The layperson's title for it is the garbage can theory of public policymaking, and basically, he goes in and says, "At any time with a public policy issue, there are three garbage cans. You have an ideas garbage can, you have an entrepreneur's garbage can, and then you have a political leadership garbage can. Those cans will come together with a new policy, a significant policy change when there's a window of opportunity." So when I'm teaching public policy, I give the example of how the Great Depression led to many of the new deal programs. The policy entrepreneur was progressives who for years had said the government needed to take a more active role in the economy. There were various, if you will, ideas floating around for how to do it and the leadership came from FDR, but the window of opportunity is what you need, according to John Kingdon. Otherwise, you're just going to have incremental policy change, very small changes. So

let's just say tomorrow. Please forgive me, this is a first cut nation-state that pops into my head. Let's say tomorrow the Russian government decides that it wants to take control of space.

Probably one of the only other nations in the world who could do it.

The Trump administration says, okay, we need a Space Force to fight the Russians and Russian intentions in space. Could that be the window of opportunity? Maybe. Otherwise, it will be as you just described, slow glacial change. The 911 attacks.

I see.

A window of opportunity.

If aliens attacked us.

Yes.

It would go quickly.

Yeah, it will go quickly.

Because after 911, we get the USA Patriot Act like that. It was fast.

Yes, within a couple of months.

For a huge bill. Several thousand notes. It's 1,000 pages?

It's something like that, several hundred pages.

Several hundred pages, right?

Yeah.

Or think about the space race.

Once the Russians.

Sputnik.

Sputnik, all of a sudden, present.

We panicked.

Yeah. How can we fall behind the Soviets?

Yeah. This can't be allowed to happen.

This cannot be allowed to happen. We're fighting a cold war against the Soviet Union and they already got a manned aircraft.

Sorry, I know we need to wrap up but I want to tell you something. My father once described to me Sputnik going over the United States and he said, "You could hear it beeping ominously in Russian," which he was laughing but he was trying to say how that was reacted to in the United States.

How was it perceived, yeah.

We reacted as this is an immediate threat. This thing is terrible. He said, "It was probably put together with gum and duct tape." Do you know what I mean? Like it probably was barely holding its own, but it was enough to scare us. So I hear what you're saying on that with that moment brings about a change that's much faster than would have come otherwise.

Yeah. Because otherwise, most public policy, particularly in democracies, is slow and incremental.

Which is good because that allows for there to be adjustments, and you don't make maybe such rash decisions.

Yeah. Most of the time that is good.

Sometimes it's not. Civil rights, it's not good.

It's not good.

I take your point. There's times when that's not good.

But it's very reflective of not only some structural barriers to rapid change, but it also reflects the fact that the American political culture historically is not been all that keen for grand-sweeping policy change. Maybe that'll be different in this millennium, but at least for the roughly first 225 years of the nation's existence, that's not been the norm. The norm has been incremental policy change.

So I know we're going to wrap up, but will you write a letter for me for recommendation for me being in charge of this?

Sure. My goodness. Yes.

Okay.

Yeah, I'd be happy to.

Both substantively, but also your just incredible enthusiasm. This is in many ways an undefined leadership position.

Yeah. It'll be exciting to see where it goes.

Yeah.

I say that honestly with hope in my heart that something that we have some forward movement in our space program because I'm a romantic and I think it's wonderful. So thank you.

You are welcome.

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