



TRANSCRIPT

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Rep. Chaka Fattah (D-PA)

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**(HEAD-
LINES)**

MR. ROLAND MARTIN: At the top of our agenda this week, with the announcement that Justice John Paul Stevens is retiring, will we see a second African-American on the Supreme Court? Virginia governor Bob McDonnell declares April Confederate History Month, and he forgets to mention slavery. Will Republican National Chairman Michael Steele be able to survive recent controversies? Our “Washington Watch” newsmaker for this week: Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter and Congressman Chaka Fattah.

And our “Washington Watch” news panel: Art Fennell, host of “Art Fennel Reports” on the Comcast Network; Elmer Smith, columnist and editorial board member for the *Philadelphia Daily News*; and Jerry Mondesire, editor and publisher of *The Philadelphia Sunday Sun*. Plus, Politico.com’s Nia-Malika Henderson on the First Family’s choice of a church for Easter Sunday – all that and more today on “Washington Watch” from Philadelphia.

**(SEG-
MENT 1)**

MR. MARTIN: Welcome to this special edition of “Washington Watch” on location in Philadelphia. Since we are in The City of Brotherly Love, and sisterly affection – unless the opponents of the Eagles are in town – it is more than fitting that my first guest is Philadelphia mayor Michael Nutter. In addition to running the city for today, the Mayor is looking toward the future with this unique Greenworks Philadelphia

program.

Mayor Nutter, welcome to “Washington Watch.”

MAYOR MICHAEL NUTTER: Good seeing you, Roland. Thank you.

MR. MARTIN: A couple of months ago, I went to China with the National Urban League, and so we were visiting a number of different areas, and one of the things that we talked about there [was] what China is doing when it comes to the green economy. Is this country missing the boat by waiting and waiting and waiting and saying we’re not quite sure on how the rest of the world is viewing the changing economy when it comes to green jobs?

MAYOR NUTTER: Well, I can’t tell you about the whole country. What I *can* tell you is that there are now over a thousand mayors who have signed a climate protection support through the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Mayors all across America are doing things at the local level that will help ensure – whether it’s energy independence, whether it’s sustainability goals – we have our Greenworks Philadelphia Plan. We are ambitious enough to think that we can be the – the number one green city in the United States of America in a few years. And so whether it’s the materials that you use, new building standards, recycling, changing out all of your light bulbs to reduce your energy costs, these are real, serious issues. But they also have money components to them in terms of savings, and they also have jobs.

The new green economy is the growth sector of the United States, and it’s certainly working very, very well for us. We appreciate the economic recovery dollars –

often called “stimulus” – that we get from the federal government. That’s led to new job training programs for folks, installing solar panels, putting in new doors and windows, weatherizing people’s homes. So, it’s a winner for us, and the economic recovery is working –

MR. MARTIN: Well, we’re talking ab- –

MAYOR NUTTER: -- in Philly.

MR. MARTIN: -- we’re talking about a situation where – when you’re talking about wind turbines, when you’re talking about solar panels, even when you take it – take it – even when you’re talking about rail systems as well, we’re talking about large projects, billions of dollars. All of these steel mills that ‘ve been shut down. You have all of this labor –

MAYOR NUTTER: Yeah.

MR. MARTIN: -- used to doing stuff with their hands --

MAYOR NUTTER: Right.

MR. MARTIN: -- saying, “Look, I need a job.” Yet, it’s like there’s a struggle trying to get this transition –

MAYOR NUTTER: Yeah.

MR. MARTIN: -- to – to flip that switch. What does it take to get political leaders to say, “Look, this is real.”

MAYOR NUTTER: Yeah.

MR. MARTIN: “We can do something here”?

MAYOR NUTTER: Absolutely. Well, I mean President Obama has been talking about – I mean when he was a candidate, was talking about alternative energy sources. He talked about wind. He talked about solar and the like. I think the federal government, though, will still have to really lay it out to the rest of the country as to what this is about. I think having an infrastructure bank is very important. You know, it's amazing. The federal government basically has no capital budget for itself. Now, they actually *print* the money – [chuckles] – but, you know, can't take care of many of our bridges and roads and the like; and so it's often left to cities and states –

MR. MARTIN: Right.

MAYOR NUTTER: -- to do that. I think that rolling out a national initiative to say, "This is where the country's going to be in the next five, ten, 15, 20-some-odd" –

MR. MARTIN: Sort of like –

MAYOR NUTTER: -- "years" –

MR. MARTIN: -- President Kennedy with space?

MAYOR NUTTER: -- absolutely.

MR. MARTIN: Okay.

MAYOR NUTTER: I mean the President – I mean I'm not necessarily sure he knew at the time how it was going to happen, but I mean he just laid it out there and said, "By the end of the decade, we want to put a person on the Moon." And it happened. And so, you know, there's a wonderful story. When the President was down, I think, at Cape Canaveral, or, you know, the – the space center, [he] ran into a

guy who was literally a janitor sweeping the floor. He said, you know, “What” – “What do you do here?” And he said, “I’m working to put a man on the Moon.” I mean everyone was committed.

And so I think the President and the Congress have to lay out a plan that says, “This is where we’re going over the next ten, 15, 20 years, and we’re going to put the dollars behind it, make a commitment, provide incentives to business to do certain things, and certainly cities and states.”

MR. MARTIN: When you came into office, you made it perfectly clear that when it came to rebuilding communities, when it came to confronting violence, when it came to getting people to understand it’s not just about what the city is doing; it’s what you’re doing in your neighborhoods. On the pr- -- on the night of the election, President Obama talked about rebuilding this country –

MAYOR NUTTER: Right.

MR. MARTIN: -- brick by brick, str- -- house by house, street by street.

MAYOR NUTTER: Right.

MR. MARTIN: A couple [of] examples of what you’ve been able to do to be effective in Philadelphia [so] someone watching could say, “Man. I’m at home. I’m in my neighborhood. This is what I could even do where I sit.”

MAYOR NUTTER: Well, one of the things – you know, when – when I was a kid, every Saturday, everyone was out in the community, literally cleaning the block –

MR. MARTIN: Yeah.

MAYOR NUTTER: -- cleaning right in front of their house. Everybody – everyone takes care of their own piece of –

MR. MARTIN: I s- -- [crosstalk] –

MAYOR NUTTER: -- “piece of the rock.”

MR. MARTIN: -- I say it in speeches all the time.

MAYOR NUTTER: [Chuckles.] You know, your --

MR. MARTIN: “Just your” – “Just your part.”

MAYOR NUTTER: J- -- right. Just sweep *your* steps, your sidewalk. And if everyone does it, you’re going to have a clean community, so it’s not about cans and bottles and papers and stuff all over the place.

We’ve had the largest one-day, citywide cleanup in the history of the country two years ago, in 2008. We just did the Philly Citywide Cleanup.* We actually – Saturday, April 10th, will be our third. That is a community-building exercise. People get engaged. They get involved.

MR. MARTIN: And – and – but did it lead to other things? Did people all of a sudden say, “Wait a minute. We did *this*”?

MAYOR NUTTER: Right. Well, one, we’re ... on the third one now, but it’s really – people have said, “We need to make this a more sustainable activity. It’s not a one-time thing.” Obviously –

MR. MARTIN: Right.

MAYOR NUTTER: -- you know, you don’t brush your teeth one time.

MR. MARTIN: Right.

MAYOR NUTTER: [Chuckles.] You don't –

MR. MARTIN: I *hope* not.

MAYOR NUTTER: -- take a shower one –

MR. MARTIN: Right, absolutely.

MAYOR NUTTER: -- time. Right? So, you need to do it every day.

MR. MARTIN: Right.

MAYOR NUTTER: And so we talk about cleaning up the city in the same fashion, so it really has inspired community building in a way that is beyond what the initial point was. So, I think taking care of your community, clearly, is one thing.

Looking out for our young people. You know, we've had some challenges with parents and their kids, and what we've said is, "We can help you. Now, we're not going to raise your child for you. You had the children. You have to take care of them."

MR. MARTIN: Right.

MAYOR NUTTER: But making sure that our rec centers are open, our libraries are open, our swimming pools in the summertime, after-school programs – making that investment. Even in the worst economic climate, there are investments that you have to make to make sure that you're looking after your most vulnerable population, and that's certainly our children. So, we've kept those commitments.

MR. MARTIN: Before I get to – to home foreclosures, I[ve] got to ask you – I remember there was an initiative here. Wasn't there a gathering of some 10,000 Black

men that came together?

MAYOR NUTTER: Yeah.

MR. MARTIN: What's been the state of – what's the status of that? Was there – was there any follow-through, any follow-up? What happened?

MAYOR NUTTER: There were a series of e- -- events and activities in the – in the aftermath of that. You know, I – quite honestly, you don't hear a great deal about it. At the moment, I think it's become more localized, at a community –

MR. MARTIN: Okay.

MAYOR NUTTER: -- level, as opposed to, you know, 10,000 folks marching down the street all at one time. I think, again, many community-based organizations, civic leaders, block captains, community leaders were inspired by that work; but community building really does start as – as a very, very localized situation. And it *is* block to block. It's community leader to community leader. It's s- -- faith-based leaders as well, and we have a tremendous faith-based community here in Philadelphia that are doing many, many things that we can't even do as a city government.

MR. MARTIN: All right, Mayor Nutter. We certainly appreciate it. Thanks –

MAYOR NUTTER: Thank you.

MR. MARTIN: -- a lot. All right.

Folks, coming up after the break, Philadelphia congressman Chaka Fattah joins our discussion, and we explore how the federal government and city governments and citizens can work together to set and execute an urban agenda. And a little later on,

our journalist panel weighs in on the top stories making headlines this week. You know we're going to be talking about why Virginia's governor, Bob McDonnell, didn't think slavery was an important topic to cover in his proclamation of Confederate History Month in his state. You don't want to miss that.

[END OF SEGMENT.]

**(SEG-
MENT 2)**

MR. MARTIN: We're back now with Philadelphia mayor Michael Nutter, and Congressman Chaka Fattah joins us on the panel, a Democrat representing Philadelphia.

Gentlemen, welcome back.

Congressman, I want to start with you. In the previous discussion with the Mayor, we talked about a home foreclosure program here in the city of Philadelphia. You had a hand in crafting that whole deal. Elizabeth Warren, of the Congressional Oversight Panel, was on this show a few weeks ago, and she said that Black wealth – 50 percent of Black wealth could be wiped out as a result of home foreclosures, affecting the next two generations. What can be done on the *federal* level to confront the [problem] affecting any number of Americans, but clearly impacting African-Americans?

REP. CHAKA FATTAH: Well, I have embodied in the Wall Street reform bill a \$3 billion initiative, along with another billion added to our ... neighborhood stabilization efforts. This would take what has worked so well here in Philadelphia and in

Pennsylvania, helping unemployed people meet their mortgage obligations, modifying and forestalling foreclosures until people can get back on their feet. This is a program that I created when I was a young state legislator. It's worked for over 20 years in Pennsylvania, where we step in and help people over a difficult moment. So, this \$3 billion has passed the House. Sen. Dodd has included the language in the Senate bill, and we think that the Senate will act. The Administration's been very supportive. In fact, the Admin- -- the President has frontloaded over a billion and-a-half [dollars] now to housing authorities – housing agencies –

MR. MARTIN: Right.

REP. FATTAH: -- around the country to – to jumpstart this effort, even before the legislation passes.

MR. MARTIN: But, Mayor, you need to do that because – let's just be honest – the President's forecl- -- home foreclosure program has been a[n] absolute *failure*. Look. I mean you can be supportive of the President –

MAYOR. NUTTER: Right.

MR. MARTIN: -- but the data's very clear. Not many folks have been helped; and, in fact, it was frustrating to me. We had HUD secretary Sean Donovan, who said, "We're working with the banks." And I said, "Wait a minute. How do you give them billions, but you don't *mandate* modifications?"

MAYOR NUTTER: Right.

MR. MARTIN: And so as the mayor of a city, you have to – you see this a – a lot

because of property taxes. Folks are not living in the homes. All of a sudden, property taxes go down –

MAYOR NUTTER: Exactly.

MR. MARTIN: -- city services – and so on the federal – what should legislation look like to really help people when it comes to these homes?

MAYOR NUTTER: Well, first, I mean we're fortunate. Congressman Fattah is – happens also to be my congressman, but he's part of an incredible delegation that Philadelphia has in D.C. What we've tried to encourage at the local level is for the federal government to take a look at what we're doing here in Philadelphia as it relates to our mortgage Foreclosure Prevention Program. I think the President has obviously gotten into issues related to the banks and salaries and who makes what money and the like. I think that the next move really has to be forcing them to the table with homeowners, people who through no fault of their own have really ended up in a bad situation. Or – of course, we've had some pretty egregious activities with regard to predatory lending and all of that activity that's put some folks in a – in a bad spot.

So, whether it's using the model that we've developed here in Philadelphia, or -- and the President has really come down on them hard about how they spend their money. They need to get to a table and agree to interest modification or extending payments. The point is we need to keep people in their homes. Otherwise, you decimate neighborhoods.

REP. FATTAH: Roland, what – what I've said is, first of all, we've seen now the

first effort to actually write down the principals – principal amount owed when mortgages are underwater. And we've also, through the federal efforts, even though they haven't been as successful as we want, a million people *have* been helped. But there are millions more who need help, which is why we put this \$3 billion in.

In Philly, we have provided [\$]64 million so far in neighborhood stabilization funds, to help the Mayor go in and help strengthen these neighborhoods [and] deal with the problem of foreclosure.

So, the federal government's done a lot. The problem is it's overwhelmed by the problem. That is –

MR. MARTIN: [Crosstalk] –

REP. FATTAH: -- that even with efforts that have never happened before –

MAYOR NUTTER: Right.

REP. FATTAH: -- it's still not enough, because we've had millions of foreclosures.

MR. MARTIN: This issue, along with other cities – well, cities all across the country, are saying we need a true urban agenda in this country. Democrats [are] coming off of healthcare. Folks are saying, "What's next?" You talk about this particular bill –

REP. FATTAH: Right.

MR. MARTIN: -- but we're also seeing, though, that with the retirement of Justice John Paul Stevens, now all of a sudden, you know, that agenda gets pushed

back. And so now you're having to deal with a – a ... partisan situation here. Do you believe that his retirement will – will stall, if you will, the President's agenda, moving forward to November? Or, is it really an opportunity for the Democratic base to get fired up, because they have – haven't been too excited for the past year? How do – how do you see his retirement affecting the situation in Washington?

REP. FATTAH: Well, first of all, the President's going to put forth a nominee. I think that is going to galvanize the Democratic base. It's going to be a partisan fight, because everything we've been involved has been – you know, healthcare was a partisan fight. The – the stimulus was a partisan fight. And before *this* president, under Clinton, it was a partisan fight. When we did the economic plan, we got not one Republican –

MR. MARTIN: Right.

REP. FATTAH: -- vote – [not] one Republican vote in the House or Senate. So, partisanship is alive and well; has been before Obama, will be after Obama; but we still need to win, and we have to keep our issues on the front burner. I was with the Mayor this week in Washington. We had a group of mayors. I – we went over and met with the secretary of Energy on the urban agenda, dealing with energy efficiency. So, we have to keep our focus. The President has to do his job, which is we need to put a strong candidate forward for the Supreme Court.

MR. MARTIN: And, Mayor, how do you – what – what is –

MAYOR NUTTER: [Crosstalk] –

MR. MARTIN: -- your advice to say, "Look." I mean, "I'm a mayor of a city."

MAYOR NUTTER: -- right.

MR. MARTIN: "I know you guys want to," you know, "duke this thing out with the Supreme Court" --

MAYOR NUTTER: Right.

MR. MARTIN: -- "but we still have some other things that have" -- "that must be taken care of."

MAYOR NUTTER: Well, there's no question about it, but as the Congressman mentioned, whether it's with Secretary Chu on energy, whether it's Secretary Donovan at HUD, whether it's Secretary Duncan at Education, Vilsack at USDA -- I mean all of these cabinet officials, they still have work to do. And they're getting that job done on the ground. They come to Philadelphia on a regular basis. Secretary Sebelius was here earlier in the week, from HHS. So, the -- the Congress and the President and -- whether the Supreme Court -- there's an issue every other day. In the meantime, there are real Americans who have real problems in real cities in states all across the country, and they can't be distracted.

MR. MARTIN: Right.

MAYOR NUTTER: The folks walking down the street mostly today are not thinking about who the next Supreme Court justice is. They're thinking about, "How can I stay in my house?" "How are we going to get revitalization?" "*Can I get a job?*" So, I think -- [chuckles] -- other than worrying about the next Supreme Court justice having a

job, folks in the *neighborhood* want a job.

MR. MARTIN: Well, I make the point all the time: Congress *can* walk and chew gum at the same time. It's not that difficult.

REP. FATTAH: Hey, look –

MR. MARTIN: [Chuckles.]

REP. FATTAH: -- there's a lot – there's a lot of good news going on. We had Sebelius in the day before we went to Washington this week, [who] met with every hospital leader in our city, talking about the roll-out of the healthcare reform effort. So, things are getting done, and we need to –

MR. MARTIN: Just don't –

REP. FATTAH: -- tell that story –

MR. MARTIN: -- just don't –

REP. FATTAH: -- too.

MR. MARTIN: -- get bogged down when it comes to the Supreme Court nominee on the Senate side. [Laughs.]

REP. FATTAH: We have to fight, but we need to win on the Supreme Court, too.

MR. MARTIN: I gotcha.

MAYOR NUTTER: Absolutely.

MR. MARTIN: Congressman, I certainly appreciate it.

Mayor, thanks a bunch.

MAYOR NUTTER: Thank you.

MR. MARTIN: Folks, up next, the part in the program that's no holds barred: our journalist panel with Art Fennell, on the Comcast Network; Elmer Smith, columnist for the *Philadelphia Daily News*; and Jerry Mondesire of *The Philadelphia Sunday Sun* newspaper.

[END OF SEGMENT.]

**(SEG-
MENT 3)**

MR. MARTIN: After catching hell for weeks because of healthcare, the Democrats are probably breathing a sigh of relief this week now that the GOP is on the hot seat. From Republican National Committee chairman Michael Steele to Virginia governor Bob McDonnell, foot in mouth disease *quickly*. Here to talk about that and much more are Art Fennell, host of "Art Fennell Reports" on the Comcast Network; Elmer Smith, columnist and Editorial Board member for the *Philadelphia Daily News*; and Jerry Mondesire, editor and publisher of *The Philadelphia Sunday [Sun]* newspaper and president of the Philadelphia NAACP.

Gentlemen, I'm certainly glad that you are here. Let's – I – I[ve] ... got to start right with this whole Confederate –

[CHUCKLING.]

MR. MARTIN: -- History Month deal. Virginia governor Bob McDonnell comes out, makes this proclamation, doesn't even mention slavery.

MR. ART FENNELL: Right.

MR. MARTIN: Is he *nuts*, or *what*? I mean *anyone* with common sense knows

you can't talk about the Civil War –

[CHUCKLING.]

MR. MARTIN: -- and Confederates and not mention slavery.

MR. FENNEL: The – the – Roland, I'll tell you. Now, I come from the South. You know, I was born and raised in South Carolina. This Confederacy issue doesn't go away. It – even if –

MR. MARTIN: 'Cause they –

MR. FENNEL: -- even if it's –

MR. MARTIN: -- think they –

MR. FENNEL: -- not talked –

MR. MARTIN: -- won!

MR. FENNEL: -- about – yeah.

[CHUCKLING.]

MR. FENNEL: A- -- and – and they want – they want to revive that culture. And – and it's a *culture* for them, even though they – they ... don't openly embrace it as they once did – but you still see plenty of Confederate flags around. And so here was an opportunity from Governor McDonnell to say, "Hey, look. Let's reinstate this yet again." And I don't know who gives – gives him his counsel, but it was a *bad idea*.

MR. JERRY MONDESIRE: Shel- --

MR. MARTIN: He – he even said --

MR. MONDESIRE: -- Shelby Foote --

MR. MARTIN: -- it wasn't significant e- -- it wasn't significant enough to mention.

MR. MONDESIRE: -- Shelby Foote said it best in Ken Burns' famous documentary, which has been shown on PBS any number of times, and we've all seen it at least twice. He says the Sou- -- many southerners are still reliving the Civil War every day of their lives. They still think it's Shiloh, or Manassas, or Fredericksburg. And that's the tragedy. And Arthur's right.

MR. FENNEL: But not Appomattox courthouse.

MR. MONDESIRE: Oh, they never want to remember Gettysburg --

MR. FENNEL: [Chuckles.]

MR. MONDESIRE: -- Appomattox, or the places where they got defeated.

MR. MARTIN: And -- and I'm not trying to remember people looking like us in chains.

MR. FENNEL: Exactly.

MR. MARTIN: I mean I kinda can't forget that.

MR. ELMER SMITH: But, you know, history by omission is kind of Republicans in the South. Remember, a president went and opened his campaign at Philadelphia, Mississippi, and forgot to mention Sch[w]erner, ... Goodman and Cheney.

MR. MARTIN: Ronald Reagan.

MR. SMITH: Yeah, so I mean this is nothing for them. What I love about them is the argument that the Civil War is really about states' rights --
[CHUCKLING.]

MR. SMITH: -- and every time I hear that -- every time I hear it, I want to remind these folks that, "You didn't have a problem with states' right when the Fugitive Slave Act came along. I mean you" -- "you didn't mind going into other states and grabbing people's property and bringing it back."

MR. MARTIN: Right, right.

MR. SMITH: "So, all of a sudden, states' rights is a huge issue with you when it suits your purpose."

MR. MARTIN: It really speaks to a larger issue, because the two previous Democratic governors in Virginia would not issue the proclamation.

MR. SMITH: Right.

MR. MARTIN: The two previous *Republican* governors did. And so it -- the Republicans are always saying, "We don't want to be branded as racists," but whenever these kind[s] of situations happen, they play *right* into it. So, are they really speaking to that White base? Or, are they really saying, "Let's really own our history"? What are they doing?

MR. FENNEL: I -- I think it's a combination of both, personally. I -- I think that they want to honor their history, because they see their history as pretty much a history of the Whites and the Confederacy -- and, again, that's their *culture*. It's *deep-rooted* --

MR. MARTIN: And -- and -- but --

MR. FENNEL: -- with them.

MR. MARTIN: -- and the proclamation said, "All Virginians."

MR. FENNEL: [Chuckles.] Right.

MR. MARTIN: I got a *whole* lot of e-mails from folks –

[LAUGHTER.]

MR. MARTIN: -- who were saying, “I’m not really down with this whole thing here.”

MR. FENNEL: Yeah, yeah. I used to live in Virginia, and – and, believe me, this conversation would come up around the coffee table and dinner table, or whatever the case may be. And, believe me, it’s still talked about.

MR. SMITH: Yeah, but they – they argue that what they’re doing this for is to promote tourism. How many Black tourists are going to come to Virginia to – in the face of this kind of an insult? So, really, this is code. I mean this is wink, wink. It’s all about making sure that they are in line with the right people. It’s a setup for things, going forward.

MR. MARTIN: Here’s what – Jerry, here’s what I think the NAACP should do, or any other organization.

MR. MONDESIRE: Go ahead.

MR. MARTIN: I believe what they should do is they should actually go get some brave souls and have a true *s/lave* reenactment.

MR. MONDESIRE: So, we go down there – [chuckles] – and –

MR. MARTIN: They – they –

MR. MONDESIRE: -- sit on the block –

MR. MARTIN: -- they --

MR. MONDESIRE: -- huh?

MR. MARTIN: -- they should have some loincloths on.

MR. MONDESIRE: [Laughs.]

MR. MARTIN: Put chains -- put shackles on them --

MR. MONDESIRE: Right.

MR. MARTIN: -- and walk them around the state capitol and say, "Governor McDonnell, this is the part that you forgot about."

[CHUCKLING.]

MR. SMITH: That's right.

MR. MARTIN: So, while we're having the tourism here, and they're taking pictures --

MR. MONDESIRE: [Laughs.]

MR. MARTIN: -- they can have a photo. They can say, "Come take a photo with a slave" --

OFF CAMERA: That's right. "Here's Kunta."

MR. MARTIN: -- to remind people -- I mean -- and, again, some folks are kind of like, "I can't believe you went there." But, no. The point there is if you want to forget that aspect, fine. If you want to celebrate that period, oh, we will show you the *other* part, and let's see if you'll wince when you actually see that.

MR. MONDESIRE: Well, our chairman emeritus Julian Bond teaches in -- at the

U – at UVA. I'll make sure I make that suggestion to him myself –

MR. MARTIN: *Do that.*

MR. MONDESIRE: -- myself. [Chuckles.]

MR. MARTIN: Now, I – I want to go to the next subject, RNC Chairman Michael Steele. Boy, it's been a rough couple of weeks for Chairman Steele.

[CHUCKLING.]

MR. MARTIN: Love him a lot. What is interesting is you have strategists who are saying, "This" – "This guy needs to go," but top Republicans – Newt Gingrich, Rudy Giuliani – they're saying, "Leave the guy there." They're saying, "Wait a minute. We won Virginia. We won New Jersey. We won Massachusetts. The guy's raising money." They've out-raised Democrats 7 out of t- -- 12 months.

What's the big deal here? What do you think is really at play here? And, of course, they really went after him when he said that he thinks there's a short – a small margin of error 'cause he's Black. What's at play here?

MR. FENNEL: I – I – personally, I think that the – the leadership in the Republican Party are starting to realize, or – or make a reassessment now of the value that he brought to that equation when they instated him in the first place. You know, i- - - if – if you follow military terms, there is a "torpedo in the water." In this case, it was the Democratic movement of the Obama Administration. You launch- -- launch a countermeasure, which is supposed to *deflect* a torpedo. Well, Steele was the countermeasure, but the countermeasure didn't do what it was supposed to do. And so

I think now –

MR. MARTIN: Yeah, but – but wha- --

MR. FENNEL: -- the realization –

MR. MARTIN: -- what *is* that, though?

MR. FENNEL: -- he w- -- and I – I think that Richard [sic] Steele – and a lot – I’ve talked to a lot of people about this. They really believe – *Michael* Steele. They really believe that he was supposed to be the counter to President Obama.

MR. MARTIN: Well, but he – but, look – but, yeah, he’s been doing – he’s been doing a lot of that in terms of [being] on television, really going after this president. So, it’s not like he has not been a vocal critic –

MR. SMITH: Yeah.

MR. MARTIN: -- of the Administration.

MR. SMITH: He *has* been a – a vocal critic; but, you know, the thing is that, going back to his – his “bro” days and all of the things that he tried to do to sort of position himself – ‘cause I agree with you. As – as the – as “the other Black,” which – which really plays, you know, in – in Republican circles; they’re sort of interchangeable. You know, “You lose Thurgood Marshall. We’ll give you Clarence Thomas.” I mean, it’s just “the other Black.”

MR. MARTIN: People have been saying the *real* deal is they hate the fact that he has the reins and the control in the party. Remember early on when he became chairman, they tried to change the rules and say, “For you to spend X amount of

dollars, you need to get approval from” -- “from the board.”

MR. FENNEL: Right.

MR. MARTIN: And so there’s a feeling that they have been trying to control him, and so the internal struggle has been he’s saying, “No. If I’m chairman, I’m going to be”

–

MR. FENNEL: But are you –

MR. MARTIN: -- “the *chairman*.”

MR. FENNEL: -- but are you also saying, though, that he *is* raising the money and bringing in the votes, as –

MR. MARTIN: He *has*.

[CROSSTALK.]

MR. FENNEL: -- as they want him –

MR. MARTIN: He *has*.

MR. FENNEL: -- to do, so –

MR. MARTIN: He *has*.

MR. FENNEL: -- so it’s a –

MR. MARTIN: And – and I don’t mind, of course, the crazy comments, ‘cause he made one on *this* show when it came to White Republicans, you know, being scared of him ‘cause he’s Black, and that sort of helped us out.

So, Chairman Steele, thanks a bunch.

[CHUCKLING.]

MR. MARTIN: But – you know, it helped out with the branding of the show.

But – but the reality is he has been raising the money, but there's a – there's a *power* struggle here. And he's saying, "If I have the power, I'm using it."

MR. SMITH: Well, but, see, the thing is he *has* raised – but you mentioned – "American Crossroads," I think, is the name of the fund that – that they're putting together, raising \$50 million off to the side. So, to some extent, they're undermining him bec- -- undermining him, because as you say, his – his real authority has to do with how much money he can raise and how many people get elected. You could question how much he had to do with Massachusetts, but in any case, it's those two things. If these people are going to undermine him by raising \$50 million through American Crossroads, that makes him shakier.

MR. MARTIN: Ten seconds.

MR. FENNEL: I also – that's about the intangible, though. He *is* the figurehead of the party now, for – for all intent[s] and –

MR. MARTIN: But the party --

MR. FENNEL: -- purposes.

MR. MARTIN: -- doesn't *have* a figurehead, though. Tha- – that's – that's also, I think, part of the issue – that you have all these different voices: congressional Republicans. You've got Sarah Palin. You've got Gingrich. And so, really, it's – there's a struggle who's the true leader in the absence of one s- -- one person truly stepping up.

MR. MONDESIRE: You forgot Rush Limbaugh.

MR. MARTIN: Well, yeah, yeah, yeah.

[CHUCKLING.]

MR. MARTIN: Then, of course, you've got crazy man Glenn ... Beck as well, so

—

MR. FENNEL: Yeah.

MR. MARTIN: -- that's one of the deals there.

MR. FENNEL: Yeah.

MR. MARTIN: All right, gentlemen. We're -- we're out of time. I certainly --

OFF CAMERA: Thank you very much.

MR. MARTIN: -- appreciate it. Art, Elmer, Jerry, thanks a bunch.

Folks, you can join in on this discussion by logging on to TVOneOnline.com and leaving your comments there. We love to hear from you.

You heard the talk. It's time now for action. When we come back, we'll talk with the Rev. Al Sharpton about his upcoming National Action Network convention in New York and what he hopes to accomplish. And later, President Barack Obama talks openly about the role Jesus Christ plays in his life. We'll discuss faith and the presidency with two Philadelphia pastors.

[END OF SEGMENT.]

**(SEG-
MENT 4)**

MR. MARTIN: Next week, the Rev. Al Sharpton will be hosting a call-to-action

event in New York. The four-day conference will include national, state and local leaders, as well as prominent African-American organizational leaders and celebrities. The purpose: identify the issues affecting our community and formulate a plan of action to combat them. Joining me now to talk about the National Action Network's annual convention is the organization's founder, the Rev. Al Sharpton.

MR. MARTIN: Welcome to the show.

REV. AL SHARPTON: Thank you, Roland.

MR. MARTIN: All right, then. Let's – let's jump right into it. First of all, there's going to be a T- – you know, live broadcast here on TV One, of this town hall forum. A lot of folks on the panel. I will be hosting it. Tom Joyner as well. [The] most important thing – and we've talked about this here – [is] we're not interested in a conversation. This is about finding what people are going to do –

REV. SHARPTON: That's right.

MR. MARTIN: -- to take idea and get to the end result.

REV. SHARPTON: Well, let me – let me just be candid with your audience. When we came up with the idea to have the leaders of various civil rights organizations – Marc Morial of the Urban League, Ben Jealous; Congressman Clyburn, Majority Whip – and – and said, "Let's all sit down," but not go through sound bites, but really have a timetable to lay out what we're going to do and when we're going to do it -- and I asked you would you moderate. And you said, "Listen, I'm not going" –

MR. MARTIN: [Chuckles.]

REV. SHARPTON: -- “to spare y’all, and I want to see y’all leave there so we can have a timeline that we’ll judge y’all by, or get somebody else to do it. I’m tired of y’all playing to the cheap seats.”

So, that’s why we asked you to do it – which is why I’m not moderating it. I’m taking a seat with the other leaders. And you’ve got to *press* us, ‘cause I think this is a time Black America needs to not only press the President – which they should do – but press the leadership, the actors. *Everybody* needs to be accountable. This one size fits all is *over*. I think that I’ve got to state, “This is what National Action Network’s going to do in these areas, when.” [The] NAACP; Urban League; Black Caucus; and experts come in. And I don’t think any Amer- -- Black America’s prosecuting attorney is Roland Martin, so we –

MR. MARTIN: [Chuckles.]

REV. SHARPTON: -- we intend to be able to live up to that. But I think if we don’t set a bar, we never reach it in terms of achieving something for our people.

MR. MARTIN: We just talked with Mayor Nutter of Philadelphia –

REV. SHARPTON: Who will also be there, by the way.

MR. MARTIN: -- a- -- and one of the things that he talked about [is] how they have been able to effect change here, [which] is that they have – they focused on neighborhoods. They focused on individuals – where they are. His whole deal is when it comes to cleanup, clean up just the piece right in front of your house, just like Nehemiah rebuilding the walls –

REV. SHARPTON: Right.

MR. MARTIN: -- of Jerusalem.

REV. SHARPTON: Right.

MR. MARTIN: And so with that, do you believe that part of the problem today is that we have the meeting part down – what I call “meet, talk, disperse” -- but not meet, mobilize, act? The *mobilizing* part is really what is missing to move people and to keep them involved and *sustain* their involvement.

REV. SHARPTON: Mobilizing toward a real, achievable agenda, I think, is what's missing. I think the generations leading up to now did what [they] could do, and *should* do: meet, try to galvanize. But now that you have access to more power and influence – mayors, two Black governors, a Black in the White House – the – the – if we're having the same type of meeting, then we don't understand that we're in a different environment. It's like when Nelson Mandela won the South African presidency – [the] ANC won the election – he said, “Now we've got to prove we can govern.” And I think that we are – now, the 21st century civil rights challenge is equality. That's about implementation and governing, and I think that the conversation we will have, live on TV One, with you as the moderator next Saturday, is going to change how these conversations are *had* now. It's not just new commitments and new players, but it's also a new *model* – or we should not have *any* kind of conversations, unless at the end of the conversation we can say, “These people committed to do this. Now let's follow up and see if this happens.”

MR. MARTIN: In the interview I did with you for *Ebony* magazine, their “Power” issue, one of the things that you talked about was the fact that if we go – if we look at four years – let’s say the President only has one term, or let’s say he has *two* terms. If we look at those four years, or those eight years, and did not make any movement on those critical issues that affect Black America, what the heck did we *do*?

REV. SHARPTON: Nothing. It was symbolic. And – and it – and it will mean as much.

I remember when I was a kid – you know, I grew up with Rev. Jesse Jackson. I was youth director under him in New York. So, I was a kid. He said, “I’m going to take you and your mother to see Jackie Robinson” -- Jackie Robinson’s house. And I went. When we left, they were all excited. My mother had met Jackie Robinson and J- -- Jesse Jackson, and they said, “Well, *you* seem pretty cool.” I said, “It was all right.” They said, “What do you mean ‘all right’?” Because to me, I was no- -- I never *knew* when Blacks couldn’t play baseball, so Jackie Robinson being the first [Major League] baseball player – Black – meant more to *them* – my mother and Rev. Jackson – than me, ‘cause by the time I got of age, Hank Aaron, Willie Mays – *everybody* was playing.

MR. MARTIN: Larry Doby -- all kind[s] of players.

REV. SHARPTON: If we don’t do anything now, in 20, 25 years, Barack Obama, the first Black president, won’t *mean* anything to our grandchildren – unless it changes fundamentally the conditions of America *and* Blacks in America – or me, or any contemporary civil rights leader today. Won’t *mean* anything.

And what I'm saying is we can't get so caught up on tomorrow's paper that we don't look at history. If we don't change where we're going historically, we're just doing symbolic gestures that will mean nothing in the long span of time.

MR. MARTIN: I asked the President when I interviewed him for our "Living the Dream" special that aired on TV One, when it comes to being challenged by African-Americans on a particular agenda – and here's what I – and – and with Justice John Paul Stevens retiring [from] the Supreme Court, when he had his first appointment – it's interesting watching all of these lists. There were *no* African-Americans on the list. They were saying, "Well, is he going to appoint a woman to replace Sandra Day O'C- " – "Sandra O'Connor?" Okay, great. Not a *single* African-American woman, and I t- -- I say to Black organization leaders, "How could you not say *anything*?" I know he's Black; but, to me, you still can put forward names and say –

REV. SHARPTON: Right.

MR. MARTIN: -- "Wait a minute. *Our* people must be considered for the job, too."

REV. SHARPTON: And we should, and – and, ironically, with the announcement coming this weekend, we're going to deal with that and come out of the convention with a list of names that we would recommend – and, I would hope, a united list that all the civil rights groups should propose to the President. I think it is our job to press the President toward what Blacks need, toward what civil rights need. I think it's unrealistic to expect *him* to press *us* on that. He has to respond to us, just like labor,

just like women, just like others. I think when others are asking him to do to lead the movement, he must *respond* to the movement. And we intend to build that movement.

MR. MARTIN: Well, again, I think – I think that is what – what’s most vital, and even he recognizes that, but everybody has a role to play. And if folks who don’t stay in their lane, that’s how you have crash[es] and have accidents.

REV. SHARPTON: [Chuckles.] That’s exactly right. That’s why I’m going to stay in my lane and let you be the toll booth –

MR. MARTIN: [Chuckles.]

REV. SHARPTON: -- monitor next Saturday. [Chuckles.]

MR. MARTIN: All right. Well, I’m looking forward to it. It’s gonna be –

REV. SHARPTON: I look forward –

MR. MARTIN: -- a great conversation.

REV. SHARPTON: -- to that. Thank you for doing it.

MR. MARTIN: Not a problem.

And, folks, again, tune in to TV One next Saturday at 11 a.m., when Tom Joyner and yours truly will bring you *two hours* of live coverage of the National Action Network’s forum, and it’s all about committing to action to advance the African-American community. But let me be clear. Not just the people onstage, but you at home – you have a job as well.

["CALL ‘EM OUT” FOLLOWS.]

MR. MARTIN: Tiger Woods returns to golf this week, hoping to win his fifth

green jacket at the Masters in Augusta, Georgia. He held a news conference on Monday, where he talked to various journalists, answered their questions on a wide variety of areas, including, of course, all the stories surrounding the sexcapades featuring him and, allegedly, some – what – 15, 16 other women.

What was *stunning* was when Augusta chairman Billy Payne held *his* news conference on Wednesday, where he had the *audacity* to castigate Tiger for his various problems. *Wait* a minute. Is this the same club that's sexist? The same club that denies woman an opportunity to even be *members* of the club? Is this the same club that for years would not admit any African-Americans because, frankly, they didn't want Black members?

He was a pathetic individual to stand there and to diss Tiger and to say he wasn't a proper role model, and how he must represent our children and families. No. How do *you* look your wife and your daughters in the eye and say, "Hey, honey, I love you; but you can't be a member at the club"?

Billy Payne and Augusta National, I'm calling you out.

[END OF SEGMENT.]

**(SEG-
MENT 5)**

[VIDEO CLIP.]

PRES. BARACK OBAMA: Today, I'm particularly blessed to welcome you, my brothers and sisters in Christ.... I wanted to join you for a brief moment today to continue the Easter celebration of our risen savior and reflect on the work to

which His promise calls all of us.

[END OF CLIP.]

MR. MARTIN: President Barack Obama is a man of faith, so it's no surprise he turned to examples from his Christian faith during a White House prayer breakfast on Tuesday. Many, however, are still talking about his candidness to boldly profess his faith in Christ. Here to talk about that and much more are two members of the Philadelphia clergy, Bishop Audrey Bronson of the Sanctuary Church of the Open Door and the Rev. Herbert Lusk, Pastor of Greater Exodus Baptist Church.

Bishop Bronson, Rev. Lusk, welcome to "Washington Watch."

REV. HERBERT LUSK: Thank you.

BISHOP AUDREY BRONSON: [Crosstalk.]

MR. MARTIN: Let's – first of all, it's very interesting that the President was speaking at this prayer breakfast [and] really talked at length about his faith. What is more so, I think than any other time since he's been President. So, what did you make of – of his comments this week, really, you know, laying bare his – his feelings and beliefs?

BISHOP BRONSON: Well, I liked it very much. One thing I liked about it [is] he did not make it an allegory. You know, he didn't say that it meant something else, or symbolize it; he just told the facts as we Christian people do. A man from Nazareth came and was crucified, and after he was crucified, he was resurrected. They went to the grave. He wasn't there. And so he did not try to allegorize it. He just said it like it

was. That's what I liked about it.

MR. MARTIN: Rev. Lusk, we – we've had previous presidents talk openly about their faith; but, frankly, not a lot of Democrats, if you will. So, what did you make of the President with – with his particular comments to the pastors who were assembled in the White House?

REV. LUSK: Roland, you may or may not know that I served President Bush for –

MR. MARTIN: Oh, no. I – yeah.

REV. LUSK: -- probably seven years, eight years of his candidacy, and I – I was extremely pleased to hear our president talk about his faith in – in a candid and open way. I was – it literally brought some tears to my eyes, just knowing – I mean I wanted to know what he felt. I mean he'd been through a number of things. We had the Chicago preacher. We had these other incidents, but I wanted to hear him speak. And he spoke in such a clear and powerful way.

MR. MARTIN: For the folks at home, I want to play a bit of that – what he had to say at the prayer breakfast.

[VIDEO CLIP.]

PRES. OBAMA: I can't tell any of you about Easter that you don't already know.

[CHUCKLING.]

PRES. OBAMA: But what I can do is tell you what draws me to this holy day and what lesson I take from Christ's sacrifice and what inspires me about the story of

the Resurrection for --.... We believe that redemption can be delivered by faith in Jesus Christ, and the possibility of redemption can make straight the crookedness of a character, make whole the incompleteness of the soul. Redemption makes life, however fleeting, here on earth resound with eternal hope.

[END OF VIDEO CLIP.]

MR. MARTIN: Although he talked about his faith, other people have been saying, "Wait a minute. This is a president who needs to find him a church home. He had a church home in Chicago, Trinity, of course; and we know what happened during the campaign with Rev. Jeremi- -- Jeremiah Wright -- that whole controversy. And so what do you make of the President -- clearly, at this prayer breakfast talking about his faith. Would you advise him that he needs a stable church home for him, his wife and his children there in the nation's capital?"

REV. LUSK: I -- I kind of would love to see him in a church home, myself, personally; however, he has to make that determination based upon what's best for [him] and his family and what's best for our country. And I'm going to trust that his judgment is going to be sound as it relates to that. I know that there's a tremendous amount of confusion associated with a president being a member of a church, not only on the President's family, but also on the church itself.

MR. MARTIN: He -- also, the story came out where he talked about that he -- he received daily devotionals and prayers from different pastors who he has prayed with

around the country during the campaign. How critical is it, even for a person like him, the President of the United States, to have another pastor – or several – to counsel him on issues of faith when he’s making decisions?

BISHOP BRONSON: Well, it’s in the Christian faith, and I think that’s very important to him, because he seems – he’s very inclusive. He’s a type of inclusive man, and I think he wants to get that inclusiveness, you know, coming to him to help him make his decisions. But I can see that many of his decisions that he has made [have] included his faith, I mean, and come directly from his faith.

MR. MARTIN: ‘Cause on healthcare, he had had the patience of Job.

BISHOP BRONSON: That’s right.

[CHUCKLING.]

BISHOP BRONSON: That’s right. He had – he *had* to. It came directly from his faith.

MR. MARTIN: Final comment.

REV. LUSK: I just wanted to just say that it’s very important to – to – for everyone here to know that the President’s really followed the biblical –

BISHOP BRONSON: Yes, he has.

REV. LUSK: -- precedent. In scripture, it’s very clear that the presidents and other elected officials are servants, and they have been called of God. And so when he talks to another minister and getting counsel from another minister, he’s following in the biblical Christian tradition.

MR. MARTIN: Rev. Lusk, Bishop Bronson –

BISHOP BRONSON: Yes, he is.

MR. MARTIN: -- we certainly appreciate it. Thanks a bunch.

BISHOP BRONSON: Thank you. Thank you for having us.

MR. MARTIN: [Unintelligible] – I always tell them – Republican, Democrat –
keep play- -- keep praying for the President.

BISHOP BRONSON: Oh, yeah.

REV. LUSK: All right. [Chuckles.]

MR. MARTIN: All right.

Of course, right now we're going to talk to Nia-Malika Henderson of Politico.com.
Nia, how ya doin'?

MS. NIA-MALIKA HENDERSON: I'm doing well. How are you?

MR. MARTIN: Of course, the President of the United States goes to church.
You know, we talked about this issue a few months ago in terms of the President
looking for a church home, spending more time really going to chapel there at Camp
David. This was a huge deal for him to not only go to church in Washington, D.C., but
go to *Southeast* D.C.

MS. HENDERSON: It ... was a huge deal, and I mean you saw the reaction of
the parishioners there. What had happened basically a week ago was that four
teenagers were shot and killed, allegedly by another teenager, and so the pastor really
talked about the – the ... presence of the President being a healing presidency [sic] —

presence for that community. A- -- and so I mean the President initially talked about wanting to join a church as a way to bridge official Washington to, kind of, unofficial or forgotten Washington; and that's certainly what he was able to do on Sunday.

I thi- -- I think the question probably for a lot of folks in Southeast D.C. is will they see the President more. If it's not a church, then maybe just in their neighborhood.

MR. MARTIN: Now, you talked about the comments the pastor made, but obviously the President didn't speak in the particular service. I read one report in *The Washington Post* that, really, he never even turned around to acknowledge parishioners; he was there to worship. Yet, in *The Washington Post*, Eugene Robinson, as well as Courtland Malloy, sort of took some shots at the President as re- -- as related to that shooting and really speaking to the particular issue. Talk about that a bit.

MS. HENDERSON: Yeah, it's true. I mean the -- the President -- I mean while he was obviously there, it -- I th- -- I think maybe he didn't necessarily make a real connection with the people there. They had lined up for service at 3 a.m., anticipating his presence. The -- the pastor really acknowledged his president [sic] -- the President, called the -- the President and called him the "greatest president ever."

MR. MARTIN: Also said he's the most debonair president.

MS. HENDERSON: [Chuckles.] Right. Said, you know, how beautiful his wife was. So, I mean his -- his presence was very much felt there, but in terms of making a connection to the community, a connection to this real tragedy that occurred there, I -- I don't think it was necessarily clear that he was able to do that. And, again, I think, folks

– you know, this is a president who came in with high hopes, especially from the Black community; and, again, with this idea that he was going to be able to bridge the gap between unofficial and – and official Washington. And, again, I think folks are waiting to see if he's going to be able to do that.

MR. MARTIN: And, of course, folks were at this particular church, taking pictures with their cell phones and things along those lines, and the President has often said about not wanting to be disruptive. And the reality is this here: even though he's the President of the United States, worship is a personal experience; and so the space, I believe, has to be given for the President and his family to enjoy church, just like anyone else, and not be a spectacle. So, that's just my feelings there.

Also, Nia, I[ve] got to congratulate you. You're leaving Politico and going to *The Washington Post*.

MS. HENDERSON: Yes, I am. My last day's – my last day's next week here at Politico. Joining *The Post* at the end of this month and very much, you know, grateful, obviously, for my opportunity here and going to really take some of the things that I've been able to do at Politico over there. And I hope we can continue this relationship –

MR. MARTIN: Of *course*.

MS. HENDERSON: -- and I can still be on this show.

MR. MARTIN: Yeah, of *course*. And now that you'll be getting more money, you can pay for lunch when I'm in D.C.

MS. HENDERSON: [Laughs.]

MR. MARTIN: All right. Nia, thanks a bunch. We appreciate it.

MS. HENDERSON: Take care.

MR. MARTIN: Folks, we'll be right back.

[END OF SEGMENT.]

**(SEG-
MENT 6)**

MR. MARTIN: It's time now for our feedback segment with my HP Touch Smart computer. This first e-mail is from Stimulus, who thinks minorities aren't receiving federal stimulus contracts because we don't have the expertise to compete for them. What he says: "Blacks are asleep. Our communities, churches and organizers should have programs to train blacks to participate in a capitalistic society."

Switching gears, this next comment from B. Knight is in response to our special Hollywood "Washington Watch" edition, and our discussion dealt with artistic freedom and creating movies like the movie – widely acclaimed movie "Precious." "There's uproar in the black community about the way African Americans are portrayed in mainstream media. I understand the argument, but I do not agree with it. Storytelling is an art form. The bottom line is 'Precious' was a great story of triumph over insurmountable circumstances, with universal themes of incest and abuse. This is not a race thing. This is a HUMAN story."

Great comment there.

This last e-mail is from Nollywood about Blacks producing their own projects in Tinseltown. Nollywood writes, "Black wealth in the entertainment industry is limited.

Instead of criticizing rappers, we should teach them to be investors. If rappers produced movies and tv shows, we would have more Black executives in Hollywood.”

Folks, we love to hear from you, so keep your comments coming. If you want to speak out, log on to TVOneOnline.com and leave your comments there.

Well, that’s it for our special edition of TV One’s “Washington Watch” from Philadelphia. We’ve had a great time. I’m Roland Martin. Goodbye, and have a blessed week.

[END.]