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The Axe Files - Ep. 187: Gov. Terry McAuliffe

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[00:00:06] And now from the University of Chicago Institute of Politics and CNN The Axe Files with your host David Axelrod.

Axelrod: [00:00:15] He wrote an autobiography called 'What a Party'. And nothing describes Governor Terry McAuliffe of Virginia better than that phrase To him life has been a party and he has been at the center of it from the time he was a kid to today the most a ebullient character in American politics. And in the middle of some of the most controversial issues of the day as well he came to the Institute of Politics the other day and we talked about all of that.

Axelrod: [00:00:48] Governor Terry McAuliffe. Really great to see you again and to have you at the Institute of Politics. And you know getting ready for this conversation I reviewed your biography and I was reminded of just just what a hustler you are from the earliest days. You started your own business when you were like in high school.

McAuliffe: [00:01:18] Fourteen. You know I needed to start a business of going to have to earn money if I was going to go to college. So I started McAuliffe driveway maintenance at the age of 14 started selling driveways in my neighborhood in Syracuse New York and then 15 David I had to go big. I started doing parking lots but nor do parking lot. You need a truck because you got to buy the tire in big 50 gallon barrels. You know I'm 15 years old. I remember I called up my Uncle Billy Byrne own Byrne Dairy this in Syracuse up in Syracuse New York. So what happens in Syria. The weather so bad. I mean you understand that in Chicago.

Axelrod: [00:01:51] Yes.

McAuliffe: [00:01:52] But the driveways if you don't put their sealer coat on it what will happen is water will get in it will freeze expand and ruin your driveway your parking lot. So you got to...

Axelrod: [00:02:00] So where did you learn it did you sell your own driveway first. Is that what happened.

McAuliffe: [00:02:05] I'll tell you I was walking home. I'd been caddying I caddied to a young man two golf bags up and down hills for five hours and was paid \$8. And I said I've thrown my life away to start my own business. Literally walking home I saw a guy I put in that hot tar on and I said you know what. They'll hire a young kid to do it. I went home I convinced my mother she took me down to K-Mart. I bought a couple of five gallon barrels and a little brush swept the driveway and then I sealed our driveway. And I said oh man this is easy. So then I went home literally typed up a letter and hand it out all over my neighborhood. I had 10 jobs my first week and I used to go around the neighborhood with a wagon a little red flier wagon with my two barrels in it my brushes it and I'd go around do the jobs it was very lucrative business. And then I said I got to go big I got to start doing parking lots but couldn't use the five gallon barrels you had to get the big 50 gallon. And then I would go out to Agway and they put a big hose.

Axelrod: [00:03:00] So you're 14 or 15. Like who drives the truck.

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McAuliffe: [00:03:03] Well that's a great story so 15. I said I got to get this big truck. So my Uncle Billy said yeah Terry we got some out in Cicero New York an old graveyard of old dairy trucks. He said we'll go out some days ago Uncle Billy I need it today he said we're not going today but he had told me where the lot was. So I drove out with my buddy Joey heard it. You know I was good at fixing things up. It brought a battery in spark plugs and gas and Lily went out to Cicero found the burned dairy graveyard for trucks or had to be 20 or 30 there David and I found one. I want a beautiful huge old dairy truck and I worked out it for our two hours and now to this day Dave and I get up in the cab. I'm 15 years old. Put the key in this gigantic truck and when that engine turned. I'm telling you I still get goosebumps. Say it was rather exciting days of my life. I drove it home. [crosstalk] I drove the truck home to my house on Interstate 81 pass the state police New York State Police.

Axelrod: [00:04:05] But did you have a license to drive.

McAuliffe: [00:04:07] Just going tell you that I have a license plate and no license. But I was an entrepreneur. I'm hitting the horn waving at the cops they're waving back at me. Got home repainted the truck up and I was in business and then went out and got my learner's permit but I you know I was an entrepreneur what I say is how should I say that a very respectful way.

[00:04:24] [crosstalk]

Axelrod: [00:04:28] Tell me about your folks your dad was sort of partly involved in politics

McAuliffe: [00:04:35] He was the treasurer of the Dagget County Democratic Party for years. Loved politics, always active in. You know started me going door to door literally probably David seven or eight years old I started canvassing at a very young age for boys in the family mother you know housewife. She for a while she worked in a flower store as a clerk. And you know I was just a great upbringing Irish Catholic upbringing in Syracuse New York but you know I'm in a beautiful place to be from it's tough winters as you know up there but just a just a great upbringing. Three older brothers I'm the baby of four brothers but always was an entrepreneur started the business and then I took the money from the driveway business and bought a big gigantic snow power blower and which I would get up at 4:00 in the morning. And as you know just like here in Chicago I get up at 4:00 and I do 20 driveways and I take that snowblower literally around my neighborhoods and clear. You had to clear it or you couldn't get out of your driveway in the morning.

Axelrod: [00:05:33] My I read somewhere that you made your your mom and sue your home phone like McAuliffe driveway sealing company or something.

McAuliffe: [00:05:41] Every summer she would answer the phone at her house McAuliffe driveway maintenance.

Axelrod: [00:05:44] How did she feel about that.

McAuliffe: [00:05:46] She loved it and you know sometimes I'd take her out out of the road with me. She loved it but literally all over Syracuse this gigantic truck and I repainted it house paint brown paint with yellow letters member it was just a McAuliffe driveway maintenance commercial residential ceiling needed repair for seven eight to five away. It was my phone

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number and we painted it. My buddy friend of mine helped me paint it up one day and I was in business and did it for years. And did you hire other people to head a bunch of people working for me. Yeah it was a great time. Everybody worked for me you know especially with the parking lots and you know back then the statute of limitations is gone you know once we were done you know we'd sit around and the bonus might get a six pack of beer or something. I was probably I was more 17 or 18 but it was fine. It was a great experience so you know I sold the company every day I got out there bringing the business in. I worked on the company but a very good experience as a very young man learning how to run a business.

Axelrod: [00:06:41] Yeah. Meanwhile you got elected class president right. And then I read that you that you made a promise that was very compelling about the keg parties at the end of each week.

McAuliffe: [00:06:54] Very good research.

Axelrod: [00:06:55] Which is a winning winning platform. I'm I'm I'm a trained professional and I'm here to tell you that's a winning platform and I'll stay in a high school election.

McAuliffe: [00:07:04] Not only winning platform. But let me tell you because I think that pledge today I still hold the record for the most votes ever received by a student council president at Bishop London high school.

Axelrod: [00:07:13] How did the people who ran the high school feel about your promise.

McAuliffe: [00:07:19] They probably weren't all too excited but I won and I honored that commitment.

Axelrod: [00:07:24] Did you. And then you went off to college so this did this and the ceiling because some of that and sometimes when I get out of the college I finally went to Catholic University and yet.

McAuliffe: [00:07:35] And that's why I first met Tom Donilon.

Axelrod: [00:07:37] Yeah. Tom Donilon who became the national security adviser for President Obama served in the State Department under President Clinton really a great guy.

McAuliffe: [00:07:46] Yeah. So he and I have been great friends in college he was a year older than me and he and he is going to work for Hamilton Jordan in the Carter White House. So after I got to school I was accepted and going to Georgetown Law School. I'd been there about a week or two. Well we were in a group house 14 guys a lot of fun you know keg in the bathtub and all and it was a good time and dad said hey you want to work on the campaign. And it actually had a scholarship a law school and I said you know what I can always go to law school. I love politics. I love president. So I left law school called my mother she broke into tears throwing my career away but I ended up going to work in the Carter campaign and David one thing after another I'm 22 23 years old.

Axelrod: [00:08:27] And you become finance chairman.

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McAuliffe: [00:08:30] The youngest in the history of our country. I'd end up raising more money when I didn't know anything. Literally send me into a city and say raise three hundred grand and live away go to the phone books so all of that and back then people forget this President Carter this is the re-elect.

Axelrod: [00:08:43] Yeah.

McAuliffe: [00:08:44] Did not campaign in the election people young people they would find it almost hard to believe but due to the Iranian hostage crisis he had what you call the Rose Garden strategy never campaigned for president his wife and Walter Mondale and others and Neil Goldsman all these other the cabinet did it all he did.

Axelrod: [00:09:01] It's fair to say he wasn't a particularly eager fundraiser either.

McAuliffe: [00:09:04] No I think it was not the easy but we ended up doing what we need to do and what a great experience for me as a young kid I ended up going to David like because I hadn't really been out of Syracuse hardly at all. Ended up going to 40 states little they would drop me in a city and say you're in Orlando Florida raised three hundred grand. Rosalynn Carter will be there in three weeks and I would just have to go hustle it up. I loved it.

Axelrod: [00:09:27] Yeah. Why what is it that you loved about it. Always a lot of people don't like calling people and asking them for money.

McAuliffe: [00:09:34] It's a fair point. You know as I say I started a business at a young age. You know I never take rejection personally. I always say you know you can hate me hate my candidate. Just say no. And but you know I do believe as a young kid who is successful at a very young age and then I you know I was our youngest bank chairman in the history of our country I mean I was a real star a lot of companies.

Axelrod: [00:09:59] Politics helped in that right. I mean those connections that you made through.

McAuliffe: [00:10:02] Connections always help the ability every day to be out talking to people will always give you more confidence and you're talking to people who have resources who are successful so those contacts are pretty beneficial but even more important the context is a very important point. I would. It is what it is your brain is wired the way it is. You know I've meet the richest wealthiest people in the country out raising money and you could get in to see anybody who worked for the United States I would always thing myself of that person can do it. I sure as heck can do it. So you know it was almost a motivator like why did I do it. Twenty eight years old go out and start a bank. You remain. I met all these people. So the best benefit I had was exposed me to things that I never David would ever have been exposed to honestly sit back at home which I loved up in Syracuse New York. But it opened my eyes to new ideas new businesses and it gave me the impetus to say Well Jack if he can do it I can do it too.

Axelrod: [00:10:54] I'm going to. I just want to. Well let's move forward with your story because I have questions about the Democratic Party today and fundraising but you know you you went on and you were associated with. You worked for Walter Mondale and yet in 84 raising money for him you got associate with Tony Coelho who ran the Democratic Congressional Campaign

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Committee Congressman Yeah. Legendary the head of the D triple C Dick Gephardt who became the Democratic leader in and ran for president twice and.

McAuliffe: [00:11:30] Served as his finance chair back when he ran for president.

Axelrod: [00:11:34] In 88.

McAuliffe: [00:11:34] In 88. And you know one of the nicest guys you'd ever meet in American politics.

Axelrod: [00:11:39] Yeah you are very devoted to him.

McAuliffe: [00:11:41] Loved him just a great guy. Tony was a great you know I listen. You're not going to work for someone I wasn't paid for any of this. I did this as a volunteer. I don't take you know I do this. This is my

Axelrod: [00:11:52] You started a lobbying firm in Washington and it couldn't have hurt to have relationships with these people.

McAuliffe: [00:11:58] Well once I started to work for Dick it was a law firm that actually walked away from, all that time I was not in the firm at all. I'd left there before that. But you know you don't do it. I mean my money and the money that I've been successful at was from business and you know I've built 6000 homes I owned a major homebuilding company and shopping center part Munis I mean I love the ag business I've never lobbied a day in my life. It just is the whole idea. You're out there meeting people that's you know part of life and life's experiences.

Axelrod: [00:12:29] And then in 92 you worked for Tom Harkin when he was running for president. That struck me as interesting because you are known as Bill Clinton's guy. I mean everybody knows how close that relationship is. But he you were not working for Bill Clinton when he first ran for president in 1992.

McAuliffe: [00:12:52] No and I had met with President Clinton back then but I'm a very loyal guy. And Dick was thinking to run it again if [crosstalk]

Axelrod: [00:13:01] The interesting thing about that election is a lot of people took a pass on it because at the time you had to make a decision. George H.W. Bush had just had just led the first Iraq war. That's right. And was viewed as approval rating was like in the 80s and a lot of Democrats Mario Cuomo Gephardt and others took a pass.

McAuliffe: [00:13:22] That's right. But remember the interest story Mario Cuomo had a plane right up and I'll be ready to fly to Hampshire and just just didn't do it. Yeah. And I knew Tom Harkin for a long time great Irish-Catholic. I love Tom Harkin every birthday I get a package a bottle of Irish whiskey from Tom Harkin I mean that's just the kettle. I love Tom Harkin. So for me it's personal. As I say I don't get paid to do this volunteer work. You've got to be passionate about your candidate. And I think friendship is the most important thing. And I told President Clinton back the enemy this and one thing he always understood is friendships relationships. But as soon as Tom folded then I went out and then cheered a huge event for the President

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Clinton then back in Little Rock. But you know I've had a lot of great relationships. To me it's personal friendship.

Axelrod: [00:14:07] Tell me about how that relationship developed though because you you it really evolved over that period from the time you you you helped him there through the real like when you actually led his fundraising operation.

McAuliffe: [00:14:23] Yeah. Well I'd first met the president and Hillary back in I think it was 1981 right after the election or 1980 when it was over. There was a meeting of governors. He was just defeated as you know from being governor of Arkansas. And I was now in charge of fundraising for the DNC then and it's a little known fact that he came up to the meeting and asked for a private meeting with me and Hillary why he was going to run for chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

Axelrod: [00:14:51] Really?

McAuliffe: [00:14:52] People don't know that you know who else. You know Nancy Pelosi George Mitchell There's a whole lot of folks who actually saw President Clinton at that time was a defeated candidate and wanted to run for DNC chair back then anyone know about the finances and that's when we first met.

Axelrod: [00:15:07] Which is DNC chairs. It used to be a more attractive job when the president of another party was in the White House.

McAuliffe: [00:15:15] The only time to have.

Axelrod: [00:15:17] The fulcrum of that. Well let me ask you this. And you you you've done that job and you've been a. Loved it. This this is a period where you would expect that to be the case but the DNC and all the party organizations are having a hard time raising money. Candidates are raising money like up the wazoo. It's a record year for Democratic candidates running. And for that amount of money they're raising. Why aren't people I know the law changed is one reason but but what is it that's keeping people from contributing to the party and what does it say about the party organization.

McAuliffe: [00:15:57] Yeah and I got to say this should be a record year for fundraising for the party no question. When I became chair it was after the horrible debacle of Florida and Gore who actually won the election. We didn't get the prize. And so we went in and I took over the party and it was a you know I loved being chair of the party. It was at a time you know Republican had the White House so you get to be out there every single day get your points out there. But for me it was about building the party for the 21st century. You know I had to build the headquarters David said to get us out of a horrible debt build a new national headquarters. We didn't have a vote. Believe it or not I had to go out to all 50 state chairs and say I will pay for all of this. We built the first data file for the Democratic National Committee you're not going to believe it. In 2002 we didn't have one. Fifty states had it but we brought all that we built all the new technology. I got our party out of the debt for the first time in modern history. And actually when I handed the party the reins over to Howard Dean no debt for the first time ever in the party millions of dollars in the bank a spanking new headquarters with all the technology in the first voter file. So for me it was building to get there. Party People always you know what would

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the party roll in all that. I mean as you know David it's the infrastructure. They run the guts of the party. They're not you know people ask me all the time. Who's the leader of the party that am. I'll tell you the leaders the party is it's the grassroots of in our party. They're the ones.

Axelrod: [00:17:18] Well understood I get that question all the time too. You know absent a presidential candidate there's no one person who's going to be the leader of a party and I know some people want President Obama to take up that role and so on. But that's not really the role that former presidents play even in the Trump era. That's not the role that former presidents play. People have to step up and ultimately a candidate will emerge.

McAuliffe: [00:17:42] That's right. Look at the grassroots they're been driving the debate. The town hall meetings you see you know they're flushing members of Congress out who are refusing to have town hall meetings. They've led the revolt on health care and so forth so you know you're right we have a nominee of the party but the part the DNC runs infrastructure runs the guts from the primaries. I change the primary calendar the first guy in modern history to change it. You know I wanted the party be a little bit more reflective I love Iowa New Hampshire but you know it's not reflective of the demographics of our party so I brought Michigan up as you know I brought South Carolina. I brought Arizona up. I brought New Mexico up for the first time to really represent So the African-American community in the Hispanic community could have an earlier say in our presidential primary process and we need to look at that very important. But the party you know this is a time with Donald Trump I can tell you in Virginia today he's like 31 percent approval rating. This is the time we had elections coming up very shortly. We're going to sweep all three to.

Axelrod: [00:18:39] Talk about that in a in a bit about Virginia and where we are where we are today. I ask you this question as someone who was involved in with the administration very devoted to President Obama. And I was involved in the political operation and worked on both campaigns. Do you think that we failed in the last decade relative to the infrastructure of the party should we should more have been done to build the infrastructure. I feel that way. And you know I feel somewhat responsible for that failure.

McAuliffe: [00:19:18] It was you know I had a long talk with President Obama last week in office myself and Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer went over and spent about an hour and a half with the president to talk about. You know I think where we have failed as a party. You know we all get all gassed up and ginned up for the presidential election we raise billions of dollars and then they go away for four years and we haven't done what we need to do at the state local level when I'm obsessed by this topic because we're now doing this redistricting. But I mean you know that numbers David I think we've lost 978 state legislative seats in the last eight years you know 30 chambers 70 percent of the chambers in America today are now controlled by the Republicans. We're down to 15 governors lost 167 House seats. We've got to do a better job of going.

Axelrod: [00:20:03] Part of that of course was due to the redistricting of 2010 which was really they they caught the calendar in the right year. That was damaging. But some of it was in the Republican Party the Koch brothers that have devoted a lot of resources to building its infrastructure at the grassroots to recruiting candidates supporting candidates and the Democratic party hasn't done that yet. Certainly not to that degree and I think that's a big part of the story.

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McAuliffe: [00:20:33] So that's what we're trying to do with this new group called the National Democratic redistricting and president involved Eric Holder's involved and Nancy and I have traveled the country helping to raise money for it because what I'm very concerned about as a Democrat that 2020 we will have the new census 2021 every line in America will be redrawn under the set of circumstances we have today 70 percent will be drawn by very conservative Republican legislatures. The only person who can stop that is a Democratic governor and we're down to 15 1 5 today in America. Now we have 36 races coming up next year so I want to devote a lot of time. We have got to get Democratic governors in office because what's happening David is forget about Congress there's nothing happening there. And this is what the Koch brothers figured out. They said let's go at the state and local level all the rollback of women's rights LGBT rights environmental rights pro-gun anti voting is happening at the state. You know I vetoed a bill this year and ordered in order to get an absentee ballot. You have to fax in your driver's license. I had to veto a bill that you could sell machine guns out of our gun stores. I mean it is systematically happening state by state by state. We got to get in the game and we got to start when some of these governorships because that is the brick wall to stop what's going to happen in 2021.

Axelrod: [00:21:53] You as an entrepreneur will appreciate that I have to take a short break for a word from our sponsors.

McAuliffe: [00:21:58] Yes we've got to pay.

Axelrod: [00:22:07] We're back with Governor Terry McAuliffe. Nobody ever really figured you as a guy who would run for public office. You were always there and very very supportive. You ran the party. You weren't seen as a policy guy but you you made the decision to run for governor of Virginia. What drove you to do that.

McAuliffe: [00:22:34] Well listen I think you know I'd had big roles in the party I had been in business I thought I would bring more policy experience and fairness than anybody else. We had too many politicians who are in who won the war. I should say I did go back to Georgetown graduated it. But you know we need people in elective office who've had some real life experiences understand the challenges that people are facing everyday. We've got too many people in office. They're career politicians. That's all they've ever done. So I figured I could bring a wealth of having started over 30 different companies in a variety of different avenues. Bring that experience having run the party. I'd always wanted to run but something always came up. You know the Clintons were a longtime friend and a the time obligations that I had. But once you know I've you know after the 2008 race I had shared her campaign figures time I'm going to go do it myself. I ran in 0 9 which was an auspicious move to be honest with you David. Most people didn't even know I lived in Virginia but Dorothy and I had lived there with our five children for about 20 years. But I ran in 0 9. I was defeated in the primary I got up the next day and that issue was part of the I mean you had a three way race that was contentious and you and your roots in Virginia were questioned questioned and they don't like unfairness. I mean I get a kick I was always called a carpetbagger because I was from New York. But I remind you know Bob McDonald who was the sitting governor was born in Virginia. Tim Kaine was born in Virginia. Mark Warner was born in Virginia. George Allen was not born in Virginia. So if you look at our last history of governors none of them but I had more national profile when I ran.

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Axelrod: [00:24:12] And in fairness as everybody just heard a lot of good Syracuse stories too.

McAuliffe: [00:24:17] Yeah.

Axelrod: [00:24:18] So so people identified you with that.

McAuliffe: [00:24:23] I wasn't born there but you know what David I chose to go there I couldn't go anywhere I wanted. I picked Virginia which I always said was a better you know you didn't get to pick my mother where to be born. She made that decision for me.

Axelrod: [00:24:37] Now I guess the response to that would be you know you could you could join the choir but you don't necessarily become the choir director right away you got to sing a little before you but you're but you're. But but you overcame that. Before I get to that I skipped over a bit of history that we should cover here. I was involved in that 2008 campaign as you know in fact I remember me seeing you at the Cafe Milano in Washington with your core of fundraisers. It was like and I was I think I was there with Adam Nagourney from the times or something and I was sitting there having dinner with my we and we this was right at the beginning of the campaign and you came over and gave us gave me a raft of whatever about how much this team that you had there it was going to raise and I did feel like the little sisters of the poor lined up against the Green Bay Packers. But what, talk to me about Hillary and both campaigns and there you know you are a you're Europe palpably gregarious open maybe sometimes to your detriment but out there kind of personality.

McAuliffe: [00:25:57] I would never say to my detriment. I'm tired of politicians who put their finger up trying to find out the wind. You will never ever wonder where I'm coming from.

Axelrod: [00:26:05] Yeah that can be to your detriment at times but that's OK [crosstalk] I fundamentally believe that authenticity is a leading indicator for success in politics these days because people's B.S. meters are tuned up so high. Now you can be open and they can judge you as still being full of b.s.. But but you're a very authentic person.

McAuliffe: [00:26:37] Same as I was six years ago.

Axelrod: [00:26:39] But but she seemed to have a problem sort of opening up. Did you ever talk to her about that.

McAuliffe: [00:26:46] Many times. Listen I loved Listen I've been friends of the family for a long time with very close personal friends. We vacation together. You know I just have them. I was just at her 70th surprise party the other day. I love Hillary. Loved the president and you know in the '08 campaign I can't argue with the campaign staff. You know we need to do more things to get her out because I know her so well and you know we're very well David and when you're with her she's got the greatest sense of humor She's got the greatest laugh. She is a load of fun whenever you're with her but sometimes that never came across in the campaign. The real genuine I mean every time. I mean I just. Hard to answer that. I think it's people's own personality and what they're comfortable doing. Some people say you're more comfortable being out there than others. And I always wish the Hillary Clinton that I knew was the Hillary Clinton that the American public knew. Because as you know she has a lot of fun smart as a wet

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but just a load of fun. You know when you're talking we're always used to talking about your family I mean literally she can name me all five of my children.

Axelrod: [00:27:52] I look I've had that experience and you know she she was very kind to me and my family around my daughter's epilepsy and she was a champion of our cause. And she was very kind. You know and very warm. But as you say those qualities that you saw in private were not not as evident in public because she seemed to lock down in front of cameras and I mean was part of that just calluses that grew up over the years of being in [crosstalk]

McAuliffe: [00:28:31] Part of the process that you actually go through and you know listen get her in situations where people can understand and relate to her is who she really was. I always advocated the campaign that is something those are the types of events we ought to be doing. I mean she is a load of fun. But it didn't come you know come across and you know it's unfortunate. Look what we have in the White House today is just really unfortunate what happened in the last campaign. But you know she's a very special woman very bright and you know I spent a lot of years volunteer and helping her and she would have been a great person.

Axelrod: [00:29:05] I agree with what you say. You know I think there's a lot of analogies between political campaigns and sports. And if you're a coach of a team you're your mission has to be to try and maximize your player's strengths and minimize their weaknesses put them in a position to succeed to the extent you have the ability to control what your candidate is doing you want to put them in settings that you know. And hers was not the big rallies speeches and so on hers were the more more intimate events she could relate to people. But there was there was something else which is you're you travel your state and you know that there is a lot of economic anxiety out there.

McAuliffe: [00:29:53] You bet.

Axelrod: [00:29:53] And it feels like that wasn't as front and center in the campaign as perhaps it should have been.

McAuliffe: [00:30:00] Yeah I been and I didn't run the campaign and.

Axelrod: [00:30:03] No I'm not I'm not I'm not.

McAuliffe: [00:30:04] No no no I'm just setting it up I mean.

Axelrod: [00:30:06] I'm asking you as a master practitioner.

McAuliffe: [00:30:08] Yeah. And what we did in Virginia and I'm very proud we carried Virginia we're the only Southern state. Yeah I had told Hillary in January of the election year will win the state by over 200000 we did. We won by about 200 15000. We were able to condemn this work. People were happy in Virginia. You know vast majority think the states had in the right direction well they think the country's in the wrong direction.

Axelrod: [00:30:28] I'm asking about that campaign. I'm giving you your props. You did a good job in Virginia and delivered for her. And but what should there have been more of an emphasis on the economy in the campaign.

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McAuliffe: [00:30:42] Yeah and I've said that very publicly. I think she was talking about the economy but they never used the paid media to build a whole campaign infrastructure that that is the message.

Axelrod: [00:30:52] The other thing is she had 100 ideas some of which had real merit but sometimes a hundred ideas is less than three.

McAuliffe: [00:30:59] Right. And none of his are reality. But you know what they connected with people who just you know they're busting press every day working and they just don't see themselves getting a promotion right or busting their ass at work every day they come home and they're just stuck in the same place. And that's the frustration that people felt. I think in the last election. And that's what needed to be addressing Trump out there with this wall and all the insanity had but you know when you're angry someone put an opportunity out there or a new idea out there. You know let's give it a try.

Axelrod: [00:31:30] There is.

McAuliffe: [00:31:30] I've heard the same old stuff forever. Let's give it a try.

Axelrod: [00:31:33] Right. And that too is a problem for her because she'd been around for a very long time and she was kind of associated with Washington with the status quo and people were looking to extend or send a message of real change sort of give Washington a kick in the rear.

Axelrod: [00:31:53] Turned out as we know David's.

McAuliffe: [00:31:55] It was a total lie. I mean look at it today last month September is the first month in seven years. We lost jobs in the month. And guess what. Donald Trump was playing golf nine days in the month of September.

Axelrod: [00:32:09] In Virginia.

McAuliffe: [00:32:10] In Virginia and he won't campaign or Ed Gillespie won't let him campaign. So I keep tweaking him by it out my own little tweet your [crosstalk] and he will not have Trump come in and campaign for him as I said the other day to the president when I tweeted him.

McAuliffe: [00:32:29] He treats you like you're a communicable disease you know it just drives them all crazy. Just you know.

Axelrod: [00:32:35] But if the president were here I should say parents medically he'd say Well we've had robust growth GDP growth and the stock market's up. So when you hear that a lot from him.

McAuliffe: [00:32:48] And as you know it takes time I will give President Obama a tremendous amount of credit of eight years. I mean what they don't give President Obama which really was unfortunate was it you think when he came into office I mean listen our economy was on a fiscal

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cliff. We were about to tip over you know the auto industry had been wiped out and we were really in tough shape.

Axelrod: [00:33:09] Yeah I remember when I was sitting. [crosstalk]

McAuliffe: [00:33:15] People forgot and we were on the verge of an economic Armageddon.

Axelrod: [00:33:20] Yeah. No I I I remember those days very very clearly. Talk about your governorship as a prelude to talking about where this race is because a number of the things that you are involved in are issues in this campaign. One of them was the extension of voting rights to felons which is now an issue in the campaign. Talk to me about what motivated you to do that. And I want to ask you about a specific issue that has been raised by.

McAuliffe: [00:33:56] Sure.

Axelrod: [00:33:57] By Gillespie the Republican and the campaign against your lieutenant governor Northam.

McAuliffe: [00:34:03] So when I ran for governor restoration rights was a big part of my platform. Virginia has unfortunately a very sordid history as relates to race relations and giving people back their right to vote in America. 40 states David it's automatic automatic no questions asked the governor's not involved. It is automatic. Two states you vote while you're in prison. Vermont Maine 14 states you vote the second you walk out of prison the remaining states out of prison don't get probation or parole. So when I became governor I moved incrementally to do what we needed to do. I was just voting rights. There were other rights that were so its voting rights serve on a jury become a notary not your gun rights. So but 40 states is what these people are back in society David. I mean they're back they're working they're paying taxes into these permanently disenfranchised is just plain wrong in what had happened in Virginia.

Axelrod: [00:34:56] What are you saying is disproportionately those people or people of color.

McAuliffe: [00:35:00] Yeah. You bet. If you go back and you look at you and I could talk forever about the felony threshold in Virginia and all those other issues but it didn't matter to me what the color of your skin was this was just wrong. But it was a relative Jim Crow. It came in in 1992 on the steps of the Capitol. A state senator by the name of glass put a poll tax or literacy test and disenfranchisement felons in the Constitution. And he said at that time David I am doing this quote to eliminate the darkie from being a political factor in Virginia politics. That was his quote. So that's what I was overcoming. And I decided after the incrementals I'm just going to do the whole thing. I have the authority. A.D. scoured the legal scholar who wrote our Constitution in the 70s said I had the authority as governor to do it. So I did it through an exec.. on the spot on the Capitol to erase what had been a horrible sordid history and.

Axelrod: [00:35:52] It's been the source of legal wrangling and so on. As to.

McAuliffe: [00:35:57] The issue is do I have the authority as governor. Now I just told you I went back to Georgetown Law School. I'll be honest with you. You know I ran three companies went full time day. You probably wouldn't hire me to be your lawyer but I'm a member of the bar. However I even knew the sentence The governor has the authority to restore his rights is pretty

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clear. But the Republicans sued me totally the Supreme Court of Virginia and unfortunately they are confirmed by the same people who are the plaintiffs and the judge ruled or the Supreme Court ruled that I didn't have the authority. Not on a constitutional basis.

Axelrod: [00:36:26] It as a class that you didn't have the authority to do it as a class, you could individually.

McAuliffe: [00:36:32] They said well the constitutional theory they said was that no governor had done it before. Well that's not a constitutional theory and that's not based in our Constitution. You know no governor done before because this was going to be hard work. In fact Tim Kaine and Mark Warner both called me after and said thank you for doing it that way I know what a lift that was because I was going to get.

Axelrod: [00:36:51] Former governors.

McAuliffe: [00:36:52] Two former governors but you know that's that's life. I'm not afraid as you said earlier of leaning in doing what you think is right. They then came back and said You have to sign them all individually.

Axelrod: [00:37:01] Right.

McAuliffe: [00:37:02] I said fine I told my staff give me as many pens as you can I will start signing them today all 200000 of them. Well they didn't like that the Republicans and then they sued me again for contempt of court. I think I'm the first governor to be sued for contempt of court and the Supreme Court of Virginia didn't like this they were getting railed by the editorial pages around the country. Was it perfectly disenfranchising. And they ruled with me this time and now we are about 170000 folks have their voting rights back. And there's not a day David that goes by that I don't have a mother father brother sister somebody comes up to me and said Governor. Thank you. I feel like a real citizen again of this commonwealth.

Axelrod: [00:37:40] Well Ed Gillespie isn't saying thank you. He's running an ad right now against Northam that features one of the people who I guess briefly got their voting rights back who was convicted in 2001 of a sex offender charge and then rearrested later he got his voting rights back on a child pornography charge I guess that hasn't been adjudicated yet is that right.

McAuliffe: [00:38:12] Well so the ad that he's running which is is false. First of all in 40 states David you couldn't run this ad because it's automatic. Just want your listeners to be very clear. If there's no discussion you would audit this guy would automatically be. So he got his rights back because he had completed his sentence and probation. He was out. So he got his rights back. He then was rearrested on another charge and he wasn't convicted of anything yet he now has been subsequently convicted.

Axelrod: [00:38:39] I see.

McAuliffe: [00:38:39] He's lost his rights again. So what but what it Ed is trying to scare people and run the most hateful bigoted racist campaign I've ever seen.

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Axelrod: [00:38:47] We should point out that they were very careful to select someone who isn't African American to feature in the.

McAuliffe: [00:38:52] And they also said it helps get their gun rights back. That's false. I as governor cannot restore anyone's gun rights zero authority. It has to be done by a judge and a prosecutor. I have zero say so the ads just blatantly false. But you know they're running an MS 13 ad ed Gillespie. He's got to...

Axelrod: [00:39:11] Explain M-S 13. They're a gang that has a presence in Virginia.

McAuliffe: [00:39:17] As every state probably has some gangs we have M-S 13.

Axelrod: [00:39:21] It's a it's a gang from Latin America Latin America.

McAuliffe: [00:39:25] So they're running this ad now the gang members in the commercial are not in Virginia they're in jail in El Salvador have never been to Virginia. And the gang they're with is fighting MS 13 so I mean at first I was not even done correctly. But we don't have let me be clear so. Ralph Northam wants to have sanctuary cities. We're a Dillon rules state in Virginia. We do not have sanctuary cities. We are not allowed by law to have sanctuary cities. So the ad is just [crosstalk]

Axelrod: [00:39:55] The ad combines these issues and says that Northam supports sanctuary cities and therefore he is coddling.

McAuliffe: [00:40:03] David we don't have sanctuary cities we're not allowed to by law. So the premise there but this is the Trump this is Gillespie campaign no on our economy is doing great. Unemployment's gone from 5.4 all the way to 3.7. My unemployment initial unemployment claims just hit a 43 year low. I've brought in about eighteen point six billion dollars six billion more than any governor before. We're almost at full employment in Virginia. So people are happy with our economy. And Ed can't run on that so he's got to take the Trump playbook and divide people. Hateful.

Axelrod: [00:40:34] Which is kind of a strange thing because Ed hasn't been from the Trump wing of the party. He comes out of the Bush White House he's been. He was someone who spoke to the need for immigration reform. And so this is a little bit out of character.

McAuliffe: [00:40:52] I guess. Well but you've got to own your ads. I'm sorry that it has been a friend of mine for years. I mean he was chairman of the party when I was chairman we did a lot of speeches together.

Axelrod: [00:40:59] He's on the board of my institute so I know him well.

McAuliffe: [00:41:02] But you own the ads. I'm sorry you know. So this is not the ED GILLESPIE I knew but the Ed Gillespie the campaign is racist bigoted hurtful and it shouldn't be allowed but it's it's the Trump playbook. And as a candidate you own your ads. Plain and simple.

Axelrod: [00:41:20] Well I have to own mine too so we're going to take another short break and we'll be right back with Terry McAuliffe. What do you make of the the indictments this week of

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Paul Manafort of his right hand man Gates of this young man who was a policy guy who apparently had some conversation with Russia. Where is this all going.

McAuliffe: [00:41:53] Well clearly the third gentleman who was part of the senior policy foreign policy team was trying to set up means with the Russians I think he just became part of the junior foreign policy. And I guess it was a sealed indictment for a month or so. They've had this for a while.

Axelrod: [00:42:08] Right.

McAuliffe: [00:42:09] And apparently he's cooperating. I mean the bottom line the crux of this entire issue is that people were working with a foreign government who you know is not working in our best interest to destabilize our elections and to destabilize our country. You know we'll see where it goes. It's not treason today. But if we do find out that they were working with a foreign actor who wants to destabilize and hurt our country and ultimately I think that's what Mueller is actually looking at. And that's the place where they're going to get at. But we know what they did in the election and think of Putin today he's going to be sitting back in Russia now look at the destabilization in our country today that's been wrought because of this. You know we've got issues with NATO today. Look at the issues going on with North Korea. He's going to.

Axelrod: [00:42:55] Won the lottery there.

McAuliffe: [00:42:57] Yeah we won. I did it. And if we find that any U.S. citizen was involved in this it's treason.

Axelrod: [00:43:04] And do you think it's headed that way.

McAuliffe: [00:43:06] I think that what I've always said was I have no idea. But somebody David had to give these people a roadmap of who to talk to what names to put on memos and things as you know Comey said because of that fake memo. But somebody had to know the four names to put on it so somebody gave them a roadmap to give this. And what adds to buy and what to be involved in I mean as you know this is a very sophisticated business. And they're not sitting over Moscow because there's somebody who I believe had to give them the roadmap.

Axelrod: [00:43:37] And you think the president knew about that.

McAuliffe: [00:43:40] I don't think we know today and you know today on today's facts outside of the the one gentleman over there the man before and the gates guy this was all about them getting money in that report and on paying taxes you know always pay your taxes. I mean think what was it 75 or ninety five million dollars. I mean pay your taxes you're still going to be in great shape but it just it's gluttony. And but this is just the beginning I think of a long series of things that are about to come but put all that aside for a second. This is about the greatest nation on earth and people actively working to destabilize our government which hurts people.

Axelrod: [00:44:20] You mentioned Donald Trump and you had a direct sort of interaction with him recently around another issue that has become prominent in your gubernatorial race and that is this horrible this horrible I guess confrontation I would call it over monument's in Charlottesville that resulted in the death of one of one person and really was a national and two

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of my state troopers and to me who is not yet sure who we should not at all forget. Right. They and their families. You are initially you you you didn't lay into the president particularly but then it became more intense. How would you would talk to me about how you felt the president handled that.

McAuliffe: [00:45:23] Well. And I've said this publicly before I talked to the president that afternoon. He had called me. I explained to him what was happening in Charlottesville Neo-Nazis, white supremacists, The alt-right and we had been tipped off by the FBI I had known for a month that these folks would come in to do harm. They were told to come with weapons. And these were bad people and they were coming in from out of state and I told the president they are very bad people we need to condemn them. And I thought at the end of the phone call that I'd had the president in that place and I believe John Kelly was listening to the phone call. And unfortunately they delayed the press conference for an hour and he comes out and does this. Absolutely.

Axelrod: [00:46:04] There are bad people on both sides.

McAuliffe: [00:46:06] Sad conference where he said they were both sides. Now I was there David. So I went out after the president spoke and wasn't both sides. I blame the people who should've been blamed. Alt-right the KKK and the white supremacists I told him to go home they're not wanted in Virginia. They pretend they're patriots they aren't they were cowards and they'd come in from out of state. So I condemn him right off the president should have done that. You know as your president as you know and the president had Charleston or President Clinton had Oklahoma City there is a time that the nation is looking to their president for words.

Axelrod: [00:46:38] Why do you think he did not.

McAuliffe: [00:46:42] My gut is you listen I can't answer the question when I hung up from the phone. I thought we'd had in a good place because this wasn't Virginia this is about a nation in who we are. And I think got to the White House and I think whoever part of that team had him come out and say it and then he came down a week later and even worse doubled down at Trump Tower and just condemned the other side. Well the other side got to be very clear. The other side was there to protest against neo-Nazis white supremacy and the alt right. I was there. These folks were wearing swastikas and T-shirts with Adolf Hitler's picture on it. I mean are you kidding me. And I heard what they said what they spew their anger their hate in their language against the African American community.

Axelrod: [00:47:30] Anti-Semitism as well.

McAuliffe: [00:47:32] They went to they went in front of one of the synagogues and said You should all burn back in the Holocaust. I mean you just can't believe what these people said. Now they came in from out of state. They laughed it. They pretended at least they even know who Robert Lee was. Come on let's cut to the chase here.

Axelrod: [00:47:46] But this is what they later. But the president did shift the discussion or try to shift the discussion to the monuments themselves. And now that it was at the Gillespie campaign has picked up on that that he'll stand up for for these monuments. But let me ask you about that. It's possible to say our heritage like he know he's talking about what what what how

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do people relate to these monuments. In in your state and in the South you know you probably heard Mitch Landrieu who's very fine speech about this. Down in New Orleans these monuments some people do associate them with heritage but others associated with what the Civil War was ultimately motivated by which is slavery.

McAuliffe: [00:48:34] And I'm going to paraphrase the numbers. Let's say we have 180 statues in Virginia. You know there was probably one to the war of 1812 to two World War One maybe two to World War Two. The American Revolution I think we have two. You know 90 percent are Confederate monuments. We were the capital the Confederacy Virginia Richmond. Many came in long after David as you know had nothing to do with the civil war. They came in just as the rebel flag came in during the 50s during massive resistance issues and so forth. In Virginia today and the point that I've tried to make first of all is make the decision what they're going to do. It very much defined in the law what they can do and not do. I think a majority of you look at the polling data says today that you know just leave me alone. I want I want you elected officials focused on is the living right now. How about school funding and things like that. But you know I view him as a very divisive symbol. I took executive action a couple of years ago and took the rebel flag the Confederate flag off the license plates. I did that I had the authority to do that as governor. I don't have the authority to take any monuments down but I did take it down because it was a sign of divisiveness into the African-American community. As you say slavery hatred bigotry. So I took the actions that I could. I think what most people in this debate going on today. You know they want to first before we talk about spending millions on monuments they want to make sure indeed that we are taking care of the people and the children today make sure they're all getting a quality education. But Ralph has said that he wants to see the monuments come down.

Axelrod: [00:50:10] NORTHAM.

McAuliffe: [00:50:11] Ralph Northam running for governor but he can say whatever he wants. It is up to the ones that are state controlled. It is up to the General Assembly. The governor has no say.

Axelrod: [00:50:21] And I presume you view the invocation of this in the campaign as another element of appeals to division.

McAuliffe: [00:50:32] Yes yes. You bet.

Axelrod: [00:50:33] And how effective has this been because there is this sense that the Gillespie campaign has picked up some momentum. Northam has been leading along is that over overdone.

McAuliffe: [00:50:48] I think it's overdone. I think Ralph I mean you know forget polls you and I for a long time been seeing polls Quinnipiac that had Ralph up 13 points, I don't believe it.

Axelrod: [00:50:57] Right.

McAuliffe: [00:50:58] It's an off year we have elections every year Virginia. And remember I broke a 40 year trend to get elected whoever wins the White House the other party wins the

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governor's mansion. You know it's hard to turnout goes from the high 70s down to the low 40s. So you can't take anything for granted but people are happy with the economy

Axelrod: [00:51:16] I think turnout is the big issue in that.

McAuliffe: [00:51:18] A hundred percent of it.

Axelrod: [00:51:19] Do you think Democrats will come out.

McAuliffe: [00:51:22] I do. I think for a lot of reasons. One every poll shows they are vastly happy with the state. They like me. They like Ralph they like Mark our approval ratings are high. I was at 56 the other day. Trump was at 31. So they're happy with the state where it is. They don't like what I believe is Ed Gillespie who's bigoted hurtful racist bigoted campaign that he's run in now. His whole goal is to try and get parts of the rural Virginia to come out in a sort of like a presidential Trump here.

Axelrod: [00:51:53] Well the fact is that they didn't particularly like Gillespie he almost lost the primary because they viewed him as too moderate too establishment. Can he.

McAuliffe: [00:52:04] Corey Stewart who was the chair of the Trump campaign who got fired for being too extreme imagine being too extreme for the Trump campaign. He got fired almost beat ad I think it was just a couple of thousand votes in the primary.

Axelrod: [00:52:16] So he's trying to he's trying to energize that base will that base come out.

McAuliffe: [00:52:22] I'm very optimistic and you and I will talk in about nine days and I believe I'll make.

Axelrod: [00:52:27] Sure this is all recorded so your prediction is now a matter of public record.

McAuliffe: [00:52:31] OK very good. When will this run.

Axelrod: [00:52:33] This will run. The Thursday before the election.

McAuliffe: [00:52:37] Okay great. So I'm predicting we win all three statewide. The other nice thing is I think we can pick up four to eight maybe 10 House delegates.

Axelrod: [00:52:45] And this has been a source of frustration for you because you have you've tried to win control of legislature back. It's been it's been a uphill fight.

McAuliffe: [00:52:55] Gerrymandered seats but I'm very proud the Democrats are in my house of delegates is 66 Republicans David out of 100. So I also have another record I have vetoed more bills than any governor of Virginia history. And I'm very proud. 66 Republicans if they get 67 I get overridden. I never lost one vote. I'm 120 to 0 to stop the really anti-women, you know anti LGBT Bash, and anti-environment. I was able to veto all those bills and that's why Ralph Northam's election is so important. They are going to beat till we fix gerrymandered districts you know you have almost impossible time when in these seats now there are 17 seats that Hillary

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carried in the last presidential election that we have candidates in every one of those 17 seats. So those are a real opportunity.

Axelrod: [00:53:38] You're saying is that because there will be a redistricting on the watch of this next governor that will be this will be really important. So talk about Donald Trump more broadly how do you assess him. I mean let's stipulate your antipathy toward his views and his approach. But what is the Trump phenomenon and and assess him as a as a politician one politician assessing another.

McAuliffe: [00:54:06] Well good question. First of all let us not forget he wiped out how many primary opponents.

Axelrod: [00:54:11] Yeah I think 16.

McAuliffe: [00:54:13] OK let's be clear on that. And then you know.

Axelrod: [00:54:16] Were you surprised when that was happening.

McAuliffe: [00:54:17] I was very surprised. I always thought every day something new would come out. And then of course the attacks on John McCain the Billy Bush tape. I mean every day you know attacking our generals the worst army in the world the worst military I mean every day I thought something new would do it. You know he didn't win the popular vote. But I mean he did what he did.

Axelrod: [00:54:37] He did say early on that he could go out on Fifth Avenue and shoot someone and his supporters would stick with him. That seems to be true. I mean he hasn't shot anybody. Let's be clear I'm not accusing him of that.

McAuliffe: [00:54:50] I think it's fading. I think people with their frustration as you and I talked about before are the folks who are working so hard not getting promoted. I think they were looking for hope and I think that is really that hope is evaporating. They're tired of it. I compete on a global basis. I mean I'm the most traveled governor in the United States of America. I just did my 34th trade mission. I head off to the big global climate summit in Norway next week on a trade mission. I now have to spend. I've been to dozens of countries. You know I just announced \$91 billion of Ag and forestry last year. Thirty two percent since I became governor. I'm selling products. I now have to spend a half an hour David with all of these world leaders and businesses around the globe trying to explain what's going on in Washington trying to explain Trump. And what do you tell them. Well interesting. And this is bad for America because our international procedure is down. What I tell them and I just complete is I served as the chairman of the National Governors Association. I changed it. We worked hard to change how we did business. I brought Prime Minister Trudeau in first time we were and world leaders come meet directly with governors. Now what are you what are you telling them do business directly with it forget the federal government. It is it is chaos if you want to get things done in the country. I mean look what's happened on climate change he pulls out the Paris agreement and I was very proud. I was the first governor the next day I said I'm going to do it ourselves. What's happening now with the governors. Interesting story for federalism because this has never happened before because the actions of our president the governors are stepping into the void. We're going to get to the same place David but we're going to do what the governor is doing in

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our own states on climate change to deal with these issues. This has never happened on trading. I'm out there doing business. I tell world leaders all the time. You got to do a deal. Come directly do deals with the governors. They have lost faith. They don't know what to think of Trump.

Axelrod: [00:56:40] But what but what do you attribute he seems to he's hanging in there it's not a very high number but he's hanging in there in sort of the mid mid to high 30s in terms of approval he's got an 80 percent approval rating among Republicans. It's been to say the least a tumultuous time. So why is it what is it that causes his core.

McAuliffe: [00:57:04] He was at 38 today. Low as he's ever been, NBC today. But I think our country unfortunately is very fractured. He's going to have that core base let it be 30 32 percent of those folks no matter what he does they are going to stay with them. They believe him when they say he's going to build this wall. You know he's not going to build the wall. Let me be very clear is not going to happen. But you know they believe it. And we've got to bring this country back together I mean as you know President Obama had to deal with this for eight years dealing with the Congress. You know nobody worked harder to try to bring people together. I mean he literally put his hand out constantly and the budget deals with with Boehner and others. But you know and I bring this all back to the root of the problem I believe is these gerrymandered districts. The problem we have in America today is you cannot lose a general.

Axelrod: [00:57:53] Deeper than that though. I mean it's social media it's it's frankly money and the amount of money that goes into sort of you know campaign campaigns of of character assassination against various public officials around issues it's there's a lot of stuff. It's a tough environment.

McAuliffe: [00:58:15] Yeah it's a tough environment. I honestly I you know and that's why you know Nancy's out. How was it she realized no matter how much money you have David if a line is drawn in a district you can't win on the.

Axelrod: [00:58:27] No question about it.

McAuliffe: [00:58:28] You can't.

Axelrod: [00:58:29] Well let me ask you as you said earlier in another context that people people look at officeholders and say why not me. Do you look at Trump and say why not me.

McAuliffe: [00:58:44] I think it's a good question. I hope that Trump is not an inspiration for anybody to want to be president of United States.

Axelrod: [00:58:52] Are you inspired to want to be president of the United States.

McAuliffe: [00:58:54] What I've said very publicly David. I want to finish up here strong. We've got a great record going in Virginia. The taxpayers are paying me. And I leave on January 13th and I'm running to the tape. I don't walk.

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Axelrod: [00:59:06] I'm sure you don't but that's three months from now. You were just in Ohio last night. You're traveling around the country. You're obviously speaking. You're clearly thinking about it.

McAuliffe: [00:59:18] What I'm thinking about honestly and I'm a very straight shooter. I'm not I have no idea what I would be doing in 2020 but I am going to be doing next year is doing the national debt and redistricting working with Eric Holder and the president and others. I am going to take a lead on winning these 36 governors races. So I'm going to be all over America next year traveling to help our governors because forget 2020 drives me wild when Democrats talk about 2020 because if we don't have a successful night in 2018 and we are going to get redistricted and they're going to draw the lines David our party and the principles we care about are going to be wiped out from 20 21 22.

Axelrod: [00:59:57] I hear it all but I'm just asking you as a straight shooter are you would do. Let's put it this way you wouldn't rule out the notion that you might be a candidate.

McAuliffe: [01:00:08] Never rule anything out. You know my life I've had such a fascinating life. You know I'd love to be pope you know I'd like to be in well.

Axelrod: [01:00:16] Let's stipulate that is not likely to happen it's probably for a wide range.

McAuliffe: [01:00:20] I don't think anything off but never take anything off the table but you know if you would ask me you know 50 years ago that I'd be sitting here today. The experiences I've had as a young man of businesses I've started the politics I've done the friends I've. You just win it. You know I love life as you can tell. I love every moment of it. I'm the ultimate optimist. You know I sing the Star-Spangled Banner in Russia. I love life. And we'll see where life takes you. And I tell I give a lot of graduation speeches David and I tell young people all the time to minium set a course and I tell him don't do that because opportunities will come in. If I had left Georgetown Law School to take this risk on a candidate or present they didn't think I would be re-elected. I wouldn't be sitting here today David. You just don't know.

Axelrod: [01:01:07] So any Georgetown students who are listening now take that to heart you get a good offer.

McAuliffe: [01:01:12] There you go. Take it, enjoy life you live once Sleep when you're dead.

Axelrod: [01:01:18] Sleep when you're dead. What better message to leave on than that. Terry McAuliffe thank you for being here and for being at the Institute. Thank you.

[01:01:29] Thank you for listening to the Axe Files part of the CNN podcast network. For more episodes of The Axe Files visit CNN.com slash podcast and subscribe on iTunes stitcher or your favorite app. And for more programming from the University of Chicago Institute of Politics visit politics.uchicago.edu