

Well, again, every state is different. I'm not going to criticize individual governors. I'll just tell you in our case, I'm not going to bet on the federal government delivering on a promise that they can't make even before this Medicaid expansion. They've already shorted states like Wisconsin, they shorted other states across the country. Relying on the federal government for your balancing a budget is really I think a fool's bet.

CHUCK TODD:

Now, you made your name having to do with the collective bargaining issue in Wisconsin. There has been sort of an agreement I guess over the years, that if you come into the public sector, teacher, firefighter, police officer, that in exchange for not getting a private-sector-like salary opportunity, that you will get a pension, you will have protected retirement in the form of a pension, which of course, many in the private sector don't get. Do you believe still in that basic agreement?

SCOTT WALKER:

Well, in the end, I think providing for good, decent, hardworking public servants is a good thing. And we still do. When I did all this, my brother David's a banquet manager, his wife sells appliances at Sears. They are classic, American working family. He said, "I'd love to have the deal you're offering public employees."

We match their pension requirement, we asked them to pay just over 12% for their health insurance. The average family in our state's paying 20% to 25%. So we still provide a pretty good deal. And the benefit is, they don't have to pay union dues anymore--

(OVERTALK)

CHUCK TODD:

So you still believe in pension?

SCOTT WALKER:

--tenure.

CHUCK TODD:

You still believe in the pension for government workers?

SCOTT WALKER:

We have the only fully-funded pension system in the country because of our reforms and because of the reforms that were put in even before I took office.

CHUCK TODD:

I've got to ask you about 2016. You made a pledge in October that you were going to serve all four years. Does that pledge still hold?

SCOTT WALKER:

I said my plan was for four years. I've got a plan to keep going for the next four years. But, you know, certainly I care deeply about not only my state, but my country. We'll see what the future holds.

CHUCK TODD:

Do you defer to Paul Ryan?

SCOTT WALKER:

I love Paul Ryan. I've said many times before I'd be the president of Paul Ryan fan club. But I do think if we're going to beat Hillary Clinton in this next election, we've got to have a message that says, "Hillary Clinton is all about Washington." I think in many ways, she was the big loser on Tuesday because she embodies everything that's wrong with Washington.

We offer a fresh approach. Any of us, now 31 governors across the country have the executive experience from outside of Washington to provide a much better alternative to the old, tired, top-down approach you see out of Washington D.C. We need something fresh, organic, from the bottom up. And that's what you get in the states.

CHUCK TODD:

You're not deferring to Paul Ryan, then? It sounds like you believe a governor, not a member of Congress should be the Republican nominee?

SCOTT WALKER:

Paul Ryan may be the only exception to that rule. But overall, I think governors make much better presidents than members of Congress.

CHUCK TODD:

Governor Scott Walker, again, third election in four years. We'll see if you run again in two. Thanks for coming on Meet the Press.

SCOTT WALKER:

Thanks Chuck. Go Packers.

CHUCK TODD:

There you go. President Obama called his party's 2010 midterm defeats a "shellacking." But perhaps mindful of serving up a juicy sound bite, he avoided using such colorful language in the wake of Tuesday's results. But no matter how you describe them, there are plenty of reasons for Democrats to worry as they lick their wounds and look to 2016.

(BEGIN TAPE)

MARK PRYOR:

I must confess that I have some sadness tonight.

CHUCK TODD (V/O):

Surveying the wreckage. Democrats blamed defeat on an unpopular president, an unfriendly map, and an off-year electorate.

PRESIDENT OBAMA:

To everyone who voted, I want you to know that I hear you. To the two-thirds of voters who chose not to participate in the process yesterday, I hear you too.

NANCY PELOSI:

I don't consider it a wave. I think it's an ebbing of Democratic voters rather than a wave of Republican voters.

CHUCK TODD (V/O):

There's been finger pointing. Senator Harry Reid's chief of staff blamed Obama, telling The Washington Post, "The president's approval rating is barely 40%. What else more is there to say?"

REP. STEVE ISRAEL (D-NY):

We have more work to do.

CHUCK TODD (V/O):

And other Democrats argue Tuesday's losses actually were not a disaster.

REP. STEVE ISRAEL (D-NY):

We've had better nights. We've also had worse nights. This is a wave election. In 2006, the Republicans lost 30 seats. We lost probably about 15.

CHUCK TODD (V/O):

There's a word for that: spin. Not only did Republicans win Senate control, they are poised to hold their largest majority in the House since Herbert Hoover was president. It's a firewall that could take Democrats a decade to break through. How did it happen? In early 2014, Democrats had a game plan to run on a populist economic message.

PRESIDENT OBAMA:

An opportunity for all. Expand opportunity. Build new ladders of opportunity. Opportunity is who we are, so join the rest of the country. Say yes. Give America a raise.

CHUCK TODD (V/O):

Instead, while four red states approved minimum wage hikes by large margins on Tuesday, Democratic candidates largely abandoned the populist call to arms.

REP. JAMES CLYBURN (D-SC):

They have successfully made this campaign a referendum on President Obama. Which I do not believe would be all that important if we as Democrats had done a good job of messaging exactly what the president had done.

CHUCK TODD (V/O):

Senate Democrats also insisted the president delay executive action on immigration to save their red state candidates particularly in the South. Not only didn't it work, it may have hurt some Democrats in states with large Hispanic populations. In Florida, where Democrat Charlie Crist narrowly lost the governor's race, the Latino electorate dipped from 17% in 2012 to 13% in 2014.

And in Colorado, Republican Cory Gardner improved on Republicans' 2010 showing in 20 out of 21 counties that had the largest Hispanic population. To win, Democrats believed they needed their base voters to come out. And they made the election a project of assembling those coalition groups. That didn't work either.

Instead, young voters, single women, African Americans, and Latinos posted numbers that looked more like the Democrats' 2010 shellacking than Obama's 2012 victory. Leading even Democrats to ask, "Does the Obama coalition exist without Obama on the ballot?" And Democrats have a growing problem with white working-class voters.

In 2008, John McCain won whites with incomes under \$50,000 by just four points. But in the last three elections, white voters, and particularly white men, have broken for Republicans by huge margins. This year, the GOP won white, non-college graduates by 30 points. How does the party refresh itself? Don't expect new faces to lead the Democrats in Congress.

Both Reid and Nancy Pelosi are expected to keep their leadership position. Instead, the challenge of remaking the party for the next election will fall at the feet of another familiar face, Hillary Clinton.

(END TAPE)

CHUCK TODD:

I'm joined now by Howard Dean, he's of course the former governor of Vermont, 2004 presidential candidate. And as DNC chair, he was tasked with rebuilding the party after its 2004 defeat. Governor Dean, it's amazing. Here we are ten years later, your infamous 50-state strategy.

HOWARD DEAN:

Infamous? What do you mean?

CHUCK TODD:

No, I'm saying it's been--

(OVERTALK)

HOWARD DEAN:

That's right.

CHUCK TODD:

Do you sit there and say, "Well, dust off the playbook guys," and here it is.

HOWARD DEAN:

You've got to do the 50-state strategy again. The president has been brilliant in the 50-state strategy, but not so, the DNC hasn't been able to pull that back together again for a variety of reasons, not all having to do with the DNC. The biggest problem, Jim Clyburn was the most right person in that lead-up.

It was message. Sure, it was an off year, and we can make all these excuses. But the fact is, we have never been able to, and even through the days of the 50-state strategy and, you know, taking over the House, the Senate, and the president in four years, when I was running the DNC, I could never get the Washington Democrats to stay on message. The Republican message was, "We're not Obama." No substance whatsoever. "We're not Obama." What was the Democrats' message? "Oh, well, we're really not either." You cannot win if you are afraid.

CHUCK TODD:

Did you use that voice too? I mean, is that--

HOWARD DEAN:

It felt like it. Where the hell is the Democratic party? You've got to stand for something if you want to win.

CHUCK TODD:

Dan Balz had, I thought, a rough piece about the Democratic party. But two things, the headline is, "Two midterm elections have hollowed out the Democratic party." And they said this about the state parties in particular, "Without prominent statewide-elected leaders, Democrats are in danger of seeing their state party structures atrophy."

HOWARD DEAN:

We've been there before. We know what the solution is now.

CHUCK TODD:

And what is it?

HOWARD DEAN:

It is to put money into the state parties. They get to pick their own people, we do the training, we do all the intel, we get them to weave together this incredible organization that the president has done in the last eight years for his campaigns, two of the best campaigns ever run in the history of American presidential politics. But you've got to strengthen the state parties. It requires discipline, accountability, but it also requires money to go to the state parties and we have to trust the state parties.

CHUCK TODD:

Democratic party's been focused on the gender gap for a long time. Are they too focused on the women portion of that gender gap? I want to show you some numbers among white men. In 2006, Democrats won 44% of white men. Nobody was saying that they were going to win white men. The Democrats were competitive with white men. It's down to 33%.

HOWARD DEAN:

I saw that, but run of the reasons it has--

CHUCK TODD:

What do you think?

HOWARD DEAN:

One of the reasons has to do that we're not on the lunch bucket issues. When we stick to lunch-bucket issues, and opportunity, as you showed the president's clip, we do fine. You know, white men have been tough for us since the Southern strategy and Richard Nixon. So 4% is great for us, if lose by--

CHUCK TODD:

44, yeah, right.

HOWARD DEAN:

If we lose by 4%, that's terrific for us. But the erosion among white men has mostly to do with the fact that the economy has not gotten better. These folks have been feeling under big-time stress. And we have got to have a message that has to do with basic economics. It helps us all across the board, but particularly with white men.

CHUCK TODD:

Let me ask you about the Democratic party. There's a concern now among some that because there's going to be a coronation of Hillary Clinton, that actually, the Democratic party could use some refreshing, bring out new faces, still it could end up being Hillary Clinton as the nominee, and she's probably the strongest nominee. But are you concerned that suddenly there aren't going to be any other Democratic party leaders given a chance to sort of rise up here?

HOWARD DEAN:

There are definitely going to be some other Democratic party leaders, and some of them are going to come from the progressive end of the party, and I think that's a good thing.

CHUCK TODD:

Does she need a primary?

HOWARD DEAN:

From the point of view of a candidate, no candidate ever needs one.

CHUCK TODD:

No candidate wants one. Needs it. But does the Democratic party need one?

HOWARD DEAN:

I don't think we need one. But we're going to get one. Look, this is the most important office on the face of the earth. You're not going to have an uncontested march to an open seat. But the truth is, there's a lot of things we ought to debate. We ought to be debating income inequality.

We ought to be debating the fact that corporations are now controlling not only the Republican party, but the government of the United States. We ought to be debating the fact that the Supreme Court has deviated from the constitution on numerous occasions. I still have yet to find where the constitution says a corporation is a person. So there's a tremendous amount of debate here to be had. And those are the things our party needs to stand for.

CHUCK TODD:

Are you going to be part of that debate? Or are you done with presidential politics?

HOWARD DEAN:

Am I running for president?

CHUCK TODD:

Yeah.

HOWARD DEAN:

No. I'm supporting Hillary Clinton.

CHUCK TODD:

All right. Governor Howard Dean, former DNC chair who had to pick up the pieces ten years ago, do we do it all over again for you?

HOWARD DEAN:

We can do it. We can do it.

CHUCK TODD:

All right. Thanks for coming on Meet the Press. Coming up, one reason Democrats lost, we just talked about it with Governor Dean. This economic recovery that they're so proud of hasn't reached everyone. Up next, a man who knows something about creating jobs, Howard Schultz, CEO of Starbucks.

Commercial Break

CHUCK TODD:

Welcome back. The panel is here with lots to talk about. Eric Cantor, Stephanie Cutter, Amy Walter, and Jose Diaz-Balart, welcome to all of you. Mr. Cantor, since you're new to this punditry world, and you were formerly over there. Norm Ornstein and Tom Mann have an interesting op-ed today. And they basically say, "Which Republican party shows up to govern?" I pose the question to you. Which one will show up and which one should show up?

ERIC CANTOR:

Well, I think, Chuck, first of all, you ought to take a look at, you know, history over the last couple years. The House was extremely productive in passing legislation. And as we all know, bills just started to stack up in the Senate. And I do think that's part of the outcome that we saw on Tuesday is the inability for Congress to work, for the Senate to act.

CHUCK TODD:

You certainly won that argument. I think Democrats would say, you know, that Republicans held just as much responsibility for the gridlock.

ERIC CANTOR:

Significant frustration about the inability of Washington to work and you'd have to look at that process and say, "Hey, wait a minute." So now we're going to have a Senate that works. So the question will be, as a speaker, has said this work, "Is there going to be common ground?" And I think you're going to see very quickly within six weeks whether there's going to be common ground.

And on the one hand, we've heard a lot about the president saying he's going to unilaterally act on this question of an executive order for immigration. If he does that, that's incendiary. And I think we are going to be in store for a very, very difficult--

(OVERTALK)

ERIC CANTOR:

But isn't repealing health care just as incendiary?

ERIC CANTOR:

No, but listen. We--

CHUCK TODD:

Why isn't that incendiary?

ERIC CANTOR:

Well, I would say this. And there's probably something more incendiary, but that's not incendiary because we know that that's going to happen, just like after the 2006 election when the Democrats won, they went over and over again to pass bills condemning the position on Iraq. In the end, Congress ended up supporting President Bush's position.

CHUCK TODD:

Stephanie, is this sort of equal incendiary?

STEPHANIE CUTTER:

Yes.

CHUCK TODD:

Do you believe it is?

STEPHANIE CUTTER:

It is. I think the difference is that even though the House and the Senate, the new Republican majorities have already committed to attempt to repeal health care, the president has said, "I disagree with you. I vehemently disagree with you. But that's not going to stop me from working with you on other issues."

Now, contrast that to Republicans, who say, "If you move forward on immigration, Mr. President, even though we have not acted over multiple years, then we're just going to shut down and stop working with you." That is no way to start a new Republican majority. We have to find ways to work together, even if we disagree on some issues.

CHUCK TODD:

So Jose, what's the Hispanic community going to do if the president doesn't act? What if he tables for another six months? Is that incendiary?

JOSE DIAZ-BALART:

Yes, that would be very incendiary. And by the way, Stephanie, the Congress did act before going on the break. They did act and they voted to defund any future deferred actions that the president may take. So they did act and they did make a statement.

I think that the key here for immigration is that with a loss of Mr. Cantor, among other things, back then, it was a message that the House should not support immigration reform. If they had done it back then, we wouldn't be dealing about this now. The president made a promise. I think he's going to keep it.

CHUCK TODD:

Amy, this is two nuclear bombs it sounds like to me. Is that a fair way to put it? That each side has potentially and gridlock comes back like that?

AMY WALTER:

Well, gridlock could come back like that. Look, I think the biggest challenge right now is intraparty rather than, you know, the Democrats versus the Republicans.

CHUCK TODD:

Each side has to assert their own politics now?

AMY WALTER:

Well, and I think it's right now much more within the Republican party deciding who they want to be. I think that's exactly right. And knowing what they're up against in 2016, which is their own map problems in 2016. A lot of blue state Republicans up, can Mitch McConnell help protect them while also pushing an agenda?

CHUCK TODD:

All right. You guys are going to get to weigh in a little bit more. We've got a lot more for you guys to talk about. You can imagine how frustrated they are at the White House though, by the way. So many economic indicators have been good. And still, voters threw Democrats out of office because of the economy.

Unemployment rate has fallen more than four points since the bottom of the recession to 5.8%. the stock market has risen from a recession low of 6,500 to an all-time high on Friday. The deficit, the issue that has inspired the tea party has shrunk to its lowest level compared to size of the economy since 2008. Though the debt accumulation, of course, is still growing. Gas prices are low, bankruptcies are down, and consumers are bullish about job prospects.

And yet, Americans disapprove of the job the president is doing on the economy. And there's a reason for that. The recovery is concentrated in more densely-populated areas. So we asked NBC's Luke Russert to visit the America that the recovery has left behind.

(BEGIN TAPE)

LUKE RUSSERT:

Far from cities and often too far from the campaign trail, rural America is not feeling the economic recovery. Unemployment in Georgia stands at roughly 8%, the highest in the nation, and in the small towns, jobs with a future are hard to come by.

BILL MASSEE:

We may be in recovery in some areas but not in rural America, not in Marshallville, Georgia. Tough times.

BRADLEY LANE:

If I don't work, I don't eat.

LUKE RUSSERT:

Marshallville and other Middle Georgia towns once thrived growing peaches, but jobs left and the work never came back. What's not working for them -- Washington.

BOBBY MCKENZIE:

If you can't control stuff up there, how can you control stuff down here?

LUKE RUSSERT:

At a lunchtime barbecue, barbers and clients say they have been left behind.

RON ROUMPH:

If the president's voice can't be heard, senator's voice can't be heard, how can my voice be heard?

LUKE RUSSERT:

Feeling ignored -- small business owners like Tony Bass, who owns a landscaping truck company nearby. He wants to create jobs, and pay his employees higher wages, but says taxes and government regulations stand in his way.

TONY BASS:

Only time I hear from the federal government is if we're in trouble."

LUKE RUSSERT:

And while business has returned to some degree, it's not booming.

TONY BASS:

Wall Street investors, they're all H-A-P-P-Y. But small business owners, I can't say there is that much enthusiasm.

CHUCK TODD:

In fact, there is a helpless feeling here in rural America, that the political system is not set up for them.

BILL MASSEE:

They don't seem to want to do anything. they are fighting each other.

LUKE RUSSERT (TO BILL MASSEE):

This was your father's business right here?

LUKE RUSSERT:

His father sold furniture but had to close down in the '80s when jobs and customers left.

BILL MASSEE:

They need to get out of Washington and come to small towns.

LUKE RUSSERT:

And while the struggle continues, rural Americans voice an unending desire to be heard and not forgotten.

BOBBY MCKENZIE:

We all need to vote, and hope and pray.

LUKE RUSSERT:

For Meet The Press, Luke Russert

(END TAPE)

CHUCK TODD:

Nothing says economic growth than when a Starbucks shows up in your community. So I thought it'd be a good idea to bring in the CEO of Starbucks, Howard Schultz, to talk about this issue of rural America and sort of this uneven economic recovery. Mr. Schultz, thanks for coming on Meet the Press.

HOWARD SCHULTZ:

Thanks, Chuck.

CHUCK TODD:

So in many ways, right, the symbol, the Starbucks symbol, when it shows up in a neighborhood, you know, there's this feeling, the neighborhood is on the move. If you're not in a neighborhood, then it's this feeling that that neighborhood isn't moving. So what do you look for in a rural or ex-urban community?

You know, we know where you go in urban communities, but what do you look for that tells you, "This is going to be a good place to put a Starbucks." What is it that needs to happen in these communities to make you feel as if the economy's growing there?

HOWARD SCHULTZ:

Well, I look at that video, and my heart goes out to those people. But the truth of the matter is, problems exist throughout the country not only in rural America. We have stores everywhere. I feel as if the economic situation that we are dealing with is directly linked to this situation in Washington in which there's been a fracturing of trust and confidence for over ten years now.

CHUCK TODD:

Really? You think this issue of sort of the bad economy is directly tied to Washington?

HOWARD SCHULTZ:

Absolutely. You know, and I--

CHUCK TODD:

Explain.

HOWARD SCHULTZ:

Well, here's an example. I was at West Point on Friday. I spent the entire day with an extraordinary group of young cadets. Everywhere I went, you saw three words, "Honor, country, and duty." Can you imagine if people in Washington, the new Congress, the administration, embraced those words and lived by that? We would be in a much better position than we are today. In addition to that, we have a million veterans now entering civilian life. Two and a half million have served in Iraq for the last 15 years.

CHUCK TODD:

By the way, disproportionately from rural America, and ex-urban America, that they're coming home to and they're not finding jobs.

HOWARD SCHULTZ:

That's right. But it would be catalytic to the country if we hired these veterans who have extraordinary skills. But we're not. As a result of that, we've written a book. We have a big concert on Tuesday night, and we're encouraging businesses and business leaders to do one thing. Forget Washington for a while. Let's forget pointing fingers, stop blaming them. As business people and business leaders, we need to take the lead and do what we can to move the country forward. And that will help the economy.

CHUCK TODD:

So tell me this. What would be your recipe for the issue of rural economy? Because here's what's going on there. They were one-manufacturing towns. Right? That manufacturer leaves, the jobs have been replaced sometimes at the casino, sometimes it's just home healthcare workers is the only growing job opportunity. But then, anybody that decides they're looking for better work, they just leave. So what do you do?

HOWARD SCHULTZ:

Well, let me tell you an example. I was in East Liverpool, Ohio, right outside of Pittsburgh. We saw an old factory that has been out of work for over ten years. A pottery factory. We went to that factory. Starbucks gave them an order, and we started employing people and we started that factory. Businesses across the country need to recognize we need to bring manufacturing back to America. And these rural towns cannot be left behind.

CHUCK TODD:

And if so, do you think it should be a priority of companies like yours to say, "You know what, even if it's not the best decision from a bottom line, because maybe I ship something overseas, rebuilding rural America is a better long-term--"

(OVERTALK)

HOWARD SCHULTZ:

Well, here's the deal. The rules of engagement for a public company today have changed dramatically. We all have to recognize one thing. It's not only about the bottom line, it's not out stock price. There has to be a balance between profitability and doing everything we can to get the country moving again. And that goes back to Washington.

Washington has let the country down. The Congress now has a unique opportunity with the administration to stop the polarization dysfunction and demonstrate immediately a new set of rules. And that rule has to be civility and conversation and cooperation. If we don't get that in the next 30 days, the business community is going to do what they've done for the last ten years, dismiss Washington. But we can't have that. This is a unique opportunity.

CHUCK TODD:

Let me ask you, you're doing this concert here on Veteran's Day on Tuesday. You wrote a book, For Love of Country. This is about these veterans that are coming home. There's been a lot of talk about trying to help them get back into civilian life. What is the one thing that you think the public needs to understand about helping these folks back into civilian life?

HOWARD SCHULTZ:

Two and a half million extraordinary young men and women have served for the last ten, 15 years in an all-volunteer service. As a result of that, most of America, 98% have not had real skin in the game. We need to have a conversation, be empathetic, be understanding, and do everything we possibly can across the country, in rural America and every town, to hire a veteran.

CHUCK TODD:

All right. Howard Schultz, CEO of Starbucks, thanks for coming on. Thanks for doing this concert. We'll be watching on Tuesday. It's an amazing lineup that you have there. Something for everybody.

HOWARD SCHULTZ:

Bruce Springsteen, Eminem, Carrie Underwood.

CHUCK TODD:

There you go. It doesn't matter your taste. You've got something there. Thank you very much. Tomorrow, NBC News is going to be putting a human face on the Ebola tragedy that's taking place in West Africa. Let's remember, that's where this is a true epidemic. We'll be telling 24 stories of people that are fighting this deadly disease. Check out Facebook/NBCNews to find out more. In a few minutes, why Democrats might actually have reasons to be optimistic about 2016, despite the 2014 drubbing.

Commercial Break

CHUCK TODD:

And welcome back. We've heard a lot so far about what the next Congress might or might not do. So it feels like a good moment to actually get some answers from two newcomers to the 114th Congress. I've got Republican Mike Rounds. He's the former governor of South Dakota. He handily won a Senate seat on Tuesday. He's now a senator-elect. And Gwen Graham from Florida's panhandle is a rare breed from Tuesday, a Democrat, on Tuesday, who knocked off a Republican incumbent.

And we should note, she's the daughter of former Florida governor and senator, Bob Graham. Welcome to both of you. Mrs. Graham, welcome to Washington. Senator Mike Rounds, you'll be here soon enough, I imagine. Let me start with you, Senator-Elect Rounds. Why the message. What is your mandate that you believe the voters gave you when you come into Congress next year?

MIKE ROUNDS:

Washington's dysfunctional. It's got to be fixed. America is not broken, but Washington is. And part of it says is that South Dakota common sense can help. It means you work side by side with other people to get the job done. I think the Republican majority now has an opportunity to show that we can actually govern, we can put together an agenda, and we can execute on it.

That means getting results. It means you go back in and you take up on ObamaCare, or the Affordable Care Act section by section. You pass the Keystone XL Pipeline. Get energy production started again and get our drain back out of those railcars that right now can't get to market because of the incredible oil that's coming through on the rail lines.

CHUCK TODD:

So dismantling healthcare is a priority? You don't think that's going to add to the dysfunction of Congress, though?

MIKE ROUNDS:

I think there are bits and pieces of it. You start out with section by section and you do it in such a fashion that you pick those items which have to be fixed. You start out, look, there's a section in it, the independent payment advisory board, which needs to be eliminated in my opinion. I think most people out there would agree with that.

The medical devices tax that are there right now has to be taken apart. So I think there are pieces in there which Republicans and Democrats alike recognize have got to be fixed. And it's even more than that. It's the fact that Republicans have to set the agenda and we have to execute. We have to tell people what our overall plan is. Let's actually get a budget and let's pass a budget every single year. Let's do it on time.

Let's make government functional once again. That's what the American people are expecting. They want us to go in and to do our jobs. And the message that I think a lot of us have is we didn't come there to stay on our butts. We came there to get the job done.

CHUCK TODD:

Congresswomen-Elect Graham, you just laughed at that last one. You know, in many ways, some of this sounds very similar to what I heard from you also on Tuesday night. So what parts of what you heard do you agree with Senator-Elect Rounds and what parts do you disagree?

GWEN GRAHAM:

I completely agree with him that we need to find compromise and we need to find a way to break through the dysfunction. As I traveled around my district, all 14 counties, that's what I heard over and over and over again, is that people want a government that functions. They want a government in where people get along.

And that's what I ran on a platform of saying, "The North Florida way." And the North Florida way is finding a way to get along, find common-sense solutions. We may not always agree, but we've got to be able to find compromise in order to make the decisions that need to be made to move our country forward.

CHUCK TODD:

You won voters that voted for Rick Scott for governor, the Republican, and Gwen Graham for Congress. Why do you think you were able to pull that off?

GWEN GRAHAM:

I, from day one of this race, I have just been reaching out to all 14 counties of the district. I wanted to make sure that everybody knew that I cared about earning their support. And I think that's what made the difference. I put 37,000 miles on my car since I entered the race, and met as many people as I could. And it was just a phenomenal experience. And I think it was that connection with folks that I had that made the difference.

CHUCK TODD:

Governor-Elect, Senator-Elect, I say this, and I meant governor, because many former governors that serve in the Senate don't like it. What have you heard from former governors about your tenure that you're about to begin?

MIKE ROUNDS:

They told me to be prepared to be frustrated. They said time and again, "Look, you've got to get in and you've got to go to work on it, because you've been measured on the results already. Washington has not been." And so there's no time frame there, there's nobody there that seems to understand that the people outside of Washington expect results.

And so part of the message has got to be that the bureaucracy, which has taken over, or the vacuum, because Congress has been dysfunctional, has not been doing their job. You've got a bureaucracy which is growing. We've got to get that bureaucracy back under control again.

CHUCK TODD:

And Congresswoman-Elect, advice your father gave you?

GWEN GRAHAM:

Well, he said, "First of all, be informed."

CHUCK TODD:

Nobody was more informed than him. That's for sure. Good luck keeping up to that.

GWEN GRAHAM:

I will. And to make sure that you're not partisan. Make sure that you're looking for good solutions and bring people together to make the right decisions. And that's what I'm committed to doing.

CHUCK TODD:

And we should also note that it's your father's birthday today.

GWEN GRAHAM:

It is. Happy birthday to my dad.

CHUCK TODD:

here it is. Senator-Elect Rounds, congratulations. Welcome to Washington soon enough. Congresswoman-Elect Graham, thanks for coming on Meet the Press. Thank you both.

GWEN GRAHAM:

Thank you, Chuck. I appreciate it very much.

CHUCK TODD:

By the way, I should note, my step-father's having a birthday today.

MIKE ROUNDS:

Thank you.

CHUCK TODD:

So we share today. So thank you to both.

GWEN GRAHAM:

Great day.

CHUCK TODD:

Happy birthday to him. Coming up, what the midterms mean for the big one. We'll read the tea leaves and look ahead to 2016.

Commercial Break

CHUCK TODD:

While there are still 730 days until a new president is elected, the results of the midterms this week can give us a hint of where the battle for the White House will be fought in 2016. So let's go to the map. These nine states in yellow, of course, made up the battleground in 2012 and probably will again in 2016.

Now let me explain the 242/191 that we start with. The states that are in blue that add up to 242, these are states that Democrats have won in six straight presidential elections. Now, with this cycle, they hope to add to their sort of permanent blue wall here. They were hoping with victories in Florida, Virginia, Iowa, Colorado, that in a midterm year, if they were to hold and win races there, that they would be able to say to the Republicans, "You can't win there in 2016."

But guess what happened? Republican wins in Colorado, Iowa. Put those two states back in the battleground. Florida governor, Rick Scott eked it out again, back in the battleground. Virginia, Mark Warner may have won, but it took us till Wednesday to find out. Back in the battleground. Speaking of the battleground, how about Wisconsin?

If Scott Walker keeps winning there, you've got to put that one back in the battleground. Minnesota and Michigan, by the way, Senate races that Republicans thought they could make competitive, they didn't. It's not making it into our battleground. Now, there is some good news here if you're Democrat.

Look at a few other states that may have been added to the battleground as well. Take Georgia. Yes, David Perdue won 53/45. But it was a wave year. He got 53% in a good Republican year in Georgia. Folks, Georgia's back on the battleground. Then take a look at Arizona. They have five Democratic members of Congress running for reelection, four of them are coming back. And the fifth, when all the votes are counted, may indeed come back.

Arizona, back in the battleground. So there you go. The Democratic blue wall may be down to 232 rather than 242, by throwing in Wisconsin. But the Republican wall is now down to 164. For now, look at this. It's a pretty impressive battleground map. It goes from coast to coast, multiple time zones. Who's to say there isn't going to be a decent amount of people actually feeling the presidential election.

Commercial Break

CHUCK TODD:

Panel is back. You guys have been having an interesting conversation about immigration, which I wish we could've put all back on camera and all this stuff. But I want to do a little bit here of sort of future of the Democratic party, Stephanie Cutter, is this a project, a reclamation project? Or is this a, "Eh, it's the midterms. Everything will be honky dory again in 2016." Where do you stand on it?

STEPHANIE CUTTER:

Well, I hope it's a serious project.

CHUCK TODD:

You think it should be?

STEPHANIE CUTTER:

You're talking about the project that--

CHUCK TODD:

DNC feels like they've got to look at this and there may be some problems.

STEPHANIE CUTTER:

Debbie Wasserman Schultz announced over the weekend. Yeah, I think that if we don't take it seriously, it's to our own peril. We have a midterm problem. And that's serious. And we have a bench problem of how we are cultivating new Democrats to come into the fold of the party and to be willing to run for things. So we can't show up every four years and think we're going to win midterms unless we invest in it. And we saw Governor Dean make that point with you just a little bit earlier.

CHUCK TODD:

Amy, you look at the leadership of the Democratic party. And suddenly, you sit there and you say, "Do they have a staleness issue?" I mean, Harry Reid, Nancy Pelosi, going to be same people, Hillary Clinton's a familiar face. There's no new faces. Look at what the Republicans, just elected a ton of new faces to the party. Now their leadership's the same, but that's a lot of new faces versus the Democrat's party of old faces, no?

AMY WALTER:

I mean, I agree that there's a bigger problem, which there's a messaging problem. And some of it is the messenger. But a lot of it is, look, this election was as much a referendum on the president as it was about the fact that people didn't feel like the economy was working for them. Even though as you pointed out, the statistics would tell you it is working for them.

And this is the challenge, I think, for Hillary Clinton going forward in 2016, which is you're going to be tagged with the Obama economy, you're going to be tagged as being a Democrat. How do you convince voters that they want another four years of a Democrat in charge of the economy? That's the bigger challenge I think than all the talk about what do we do about demographics and white men. It's how do we convince people that four more years of a Democrat is going to be good for them economically.

CHUCK TODD:

Now, Eric Cantor, do the Republicans, a good midterm year doesn't solve your presidential problem.

ERIC CANTOR:

Right. Well, first of all, let's look at the benches. You know, Stephanie talked about the lack of a bench on the Democratic side. And that's the striking difference, I think, right away, is, you know, this Hillary Clinton and I agree with Amy, she's going to have a very difficult time disconnecting herself from the Obama administration, whether it is from the being the secretary of State, the economy, or what have you. I also think though that if you look at at least what's going on in the Democratic party, they're looking like Elizabeth Warren is where the passion and intensity is.

CHUCK TODD:

But if she doesn't run, where does that passion go?

ERIC CANTOR:

And so you even see Hillary Clinton now, to Amy's point, trying to appeal to the base by saying, "Hey, businesses don't create jobs." Which everyone knows is counterintuitive. Now, look at our bench. We will have, I bet there's a dozen people out there looking to run.

CHUCK TODD:

There's no doubt. But have you solved the bigger demographic challenges?

ERIC CANTOR:

Well, I think if you look at the midterm elections and what's going on, people are looking for ideas and solutions to get them out of this funk, that they don't feel their life is working. They don't feel the country's working for them. So it is about ideas. And what you've seen though, look, take a look at Cory Gardner's race in Colorado.

You had Mark Udall practice the politics that the left has been trying to undertake for decades now, which is the war on women. And that fell flat on its face. So it proves that the Democrats, they're out of ideas. The Republicans will have to sift through all these different players to see which ideas are going to take our party forward.

CHUCK TODD:

Jose, back to the basic question, though. If the Republicans can't connect with Hispanics, they're not going to win the presidential election.

JOSE DIAZ-BALART:

That's correct. And if the Democrats can't get Hispanics to know that they're covering their back and that they're working for them, it's going to be tougher for them to come out and support them like they did President Obama. Let's not forget, President Obama got 71% of the Latino vote last time around, because Mitt Romney's official position on immigration was self-deportation.

So both parties have a lot of work to do. But the fact is, every single day in this country, 1,000 people are deported. And the vast majority of those people that are deported aren't criminals, they're not rapists. Those people are on the streets. The people that are being deported many times are family, fathers and mothers.

And those people, those people don't see anyone in Washington standing up and saying, "Let's deal with this problem." Because it's more than just discussions and dilettante discussions in offices. It's also about people whose lives are being affected every single day. And that, that they don't see as a concern in Washington.

CHUCK TODD:

Well, let's talk quickly about this Washington dysfunction before we go. There was a lot of talk about bipartisan compromise this week. But of course, what are the chances of Washington politicians actually breaking the habit of a lifetime and hugging it out, finding these areas of common ground for the good of the country? According to the winners this week, it sounds like it'll be priority number one.

(BEGIN TAPE)

CORY GARDNER:

They are not red, they are not blue. But they are crystal clear. Crystal clear in their message to Washington D.C. Get your job done and get the heck out of the way.

JEANNE SHAHEEN:

I promise you I will work with anyone in the Senate, Democrat, Republican, Independent, to get things done.

THOM TILLIS:

I want to come back here next year and talk to people about the bipartisan things that we accomplish for the good of the nation.

(END TAPE)

CHUCK TODD:

Yeah, so far so good, right? But guess what? We've heard hopeful-like talk like this before from leaders.

(BEGIN TAPE)

JOHN BOEHNER:

We need to work together on behalf of the American people.

NANCY PELOSI:

We both expressed our wish to work in a bipartisan way for the benefit of the American people.

NEWT GINGRICH:

To have a serious discussion in the next few days about the places where we do agree.

(END TAPE)

CHUCK TODD:

Of course, I get chuckles from everybody here, because guess what usually follows after that happy talk? Gridlock. So this time, does it sound like there's a different path that might help stop the gridlock in Congress? Well, guess what? The president apparently has had a change of heart.

(BEGIN TAPE)

PRESIDENT OBAMA:

Some folks still don't think I spend enough time with Congress. "Why don't you get a drink with Mitch McConnell," they ask. Really? Why don't you get a drink with Mitch McConnell. You know, actually I would enjoy having some Kentucky bourbon with Mitch McConnell. I don't know what his preferred drink is. But--

MITCH MCCONNELL:

And the best way to drink it, in my opinion, is to make a Manhattan.

(END TAPE)

CHUCK TODD:

How about that? First of all, you're not going to hear Mitch McConnell say nice things about Manhattan very often. The voice of President Obama, soon to be majority leader. If you ever want to come right here in our studio, work through the gridlock, here's what we've got for you. We've got the bourbon, we've got it on ice here. I know he wants to have it as a Manhattan, have is there. Okay, Eric Cantor, you said six weeks will test bipartisanship. Why?

ERIC CANTOR:

Six weeks. One of two things. You've got the Republicans, the Congress needs to pass the spending package. Can't do another CR--

(OVERTALK)

CHUCK TODD:

So if they do it in a big way in this lame duck, their shows that's a Republican sort of--

ERIC CANTOR:

We're going to work.

CHUCK TODD:

We're going to work with the president?

ERIC CANTOR:

We're going to work together and the president cannot sign that executive order. He's going to light a fuse.

CHUCK TODD:

Stephanie? What's the test?

STEPHANIE CUTTER:

I think that I agree with Eric that over the next six weeks, we've got to see some progress. They've got to get some things done together. I think that what Mr. Schultz is talking about, in terms of veterans' employment would be a good opportunity. And so the speaker mentioned that.

CHUCK TODD:

Very fast.

AMY WALTER:

There's no one left to compromise with. That's the problem with wave elections.

CHUCK TODD:

I agree. Where are the centrists?

STEPHANIE CUTTER:

If you take out all the moderates on both sides, there's no one left to compromise with.

CHUCK TODD:

There are no centrists.

JOSE DIAZ-BALART:

The president has to act and he's got to follow through on his promises. He's going to do that. And if that poisons the well, then maybe it's time to change the water.

CHUCK TODD:

Oh boy. Here we go. By the way, this marks the 67th anniversary of Meet the Press. Thank you Martha Rountree. So happy birthday to everybody who's ever worked on this show. But I'd also like to congratulate our friends over at Face the Nation this morning. They're celebrating their big 6-0. Welcome to your 60s. We've been collecting our social security paycheck for a while now. You'll get yours soon enough. That's all for today. We'll be back next week because if it's Sunday, it's Meet the Press.

* * *END OF TRANSCRIPT* * *

"MEET THE PRESS" 11/16/14 -- BURWELL: 100K NEW HEALTHCARE APPLICATIONS ON DAY 1; JINDAL: OBAMA THREATENING TO SHUT DOWN THE GOVERNMENT

Burwell: "focused on transparency" Jindal: "Republicans should do everything they can" to stop Obama on immigration

NOVEMBER 16, 2014 -- Today's "Meet the Press with Chuck Todd" featured exclusive interviews with Health and Human Services Secretary **Sylvia Matthews Burwell** and Louisiana Governor **Bobby Jindal** (R), as well as a discussion on healthcare with **Dr. Toby Cosgrove** of the Cleveland Clinic, **Neera Tanden** of the Center for American Progress and *Forbes'* **Avik Roy**.

Today's political panel included MSNBC's **Chris Matthews**, **Helene Cooper** of *The New York Times*, former Hewlett Packard CEO **Carly Fiorina**, and **Reid Wilson** of *The Washington Post*. Also: **Richard Engel** provided the latest details on the new ISIS video and **Anne Thompson** compared the effects of the healthcare law in Texas and Illinois.

Below are highlights and a rush transcript of today's program. Video will be available online at <http://www.MeetThePressNBC.com>.

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Sec. Burwell: 100,000 new applications submitted on first day of open enrollment

VIDEO: <http://nbcnews.to/1wJz84v>

SYLVIA BURWELL: Yesterday, we had 100,000 folks submit applications.

CHUCK TODD: New applications?

SYLVIA BURWELL: Submit applications. ... And there were over 500,000 people who logged in effectively yesterday as well. So I think the vast majority of people coming to the site were able to get on and do what they were intending to do.

Burwell responds to Gruber comments: says she is "focused on transparency"

VIDEO: <http://nbcnews.to/1ENtL8T>

SYLVIA BURWELL: I have to start with how fundamentally I disagree with his comments about the bill and about the American people. Since I've been at the department, one of the things that I've focused on is transparency, making sure that all our numbers coming out, whether they're good or bad. And the other thing is that the law is based on the issues of transparency and belief in the American people and choices in the marketplace. ... When you give the American people the tools to make the right choices for themselves, they're going to do that. And that's what this is about.

Burwell: "we fundamentally disagree" with Gruber

VIDEO: <http://nbcnews.to/1vfhlB>

CHUCK TODD: Is Mr. Gruber going to be welcomed back as a consultant?

SYLVIA BURWELL: Certainly right now in terms of the work that we're doing at HHS, we are doing our work and focusing on what we are doing and our modeling.

CHUCK TODD: So he's not welcome back?

SYLVIA BURWELL: With regard to Mr. Gruber and his comments, I think I've been clear. That's something we fundamentally disagree with.

Jindal: expanding Medicaid in Louisiana would be "a huge mistake"

VIDEO: <http://nbcnews.to/1H5ut5p>

CHUCK TODD: Expanding Medicaid coverage -- you'd have more people off of the uninsured roles in Louisiana if you did it. Why aren't you doing it?

GOV. BOBBY JINDAL: Chuck, look. Democrats and Republicans both want to help the vulnerable, want to help people get affordable, high-quality healthcare. Medicaid is not the right way to do it. ... It was a program designed to take care of the disabled, of vulnerable children. It was never designed to be there for able-bodied adults. ... In Louisiana, if we were to expand Medicaid, it

would cost my taxpayers \$1.7 billion over ten years. For every uninsured person we'd cover, oh, we'd have to kick more than one person out of private insurance. Now, think about that. I know that this president likes to define success as more people dependent on the government. I would have to take over 200,000 out of private insurance and put them into Medicaid. To me, that's a huge mistake.

Jindal: Pres. Obama is threatening to shut down the government with executive action on immigration and "Republicans should do everything they can" to stop him

CHUCK TODD: Very quickly on immigration. If the president goes through with his executive action, do you think Republicans and Capitol Hill ought to use even the power of shutting down the government to stop him from doing it?

GOV. BOBBY JINDAL: Two things. I don't think the president should shut down the government to try to break the Constitution. The reality is this. I do think the--

CHUCK TODD: You think the president would be shutting down the government?

GOV. BOBBY JINDAL: Oh, absolutely.

CHUCK TODD: So you do want Republicans to fight him on this to the point that it could shut down the government?

GOV. BOBBY JINDAL: Absolute-- I don't think the president should shut down the government. ... I would expect even Democrats who may agree with him on substance, to say the right way to do this is to follow the Constitution, follow the law. No, we shouldn't shut down the government, but absolutely Republicans should do everything they can to force the president to follow the law. Let's secure the border. No, the president shouldn't shut down the government so that he can break the law.

Jindal: "we are praying" about whether to run for President

VIDEO: <http://nbcnews.to/1wJzhF9>

CHUCK TODD: You're going to decide when, by the 1st of the year?

GOV. BOBBY JINDAL: First half of next year. We are praying about this. But bottom line is let's restore the American dream for our children and grandchildren.

Carly Fiorina: "this president has taken advantage" of Hispanics

VIDEO: <http://nbcnews.to/1vfhH15>

CARLY FIORINA: What they should do is systematically and soberly pass a series of bills to solve a decades-old problem. And they should point out to Hispanics all over this nation that this president has taken advantage of them. He sunk comprehensive immigration reform in 2007. He did nothing to push forward immigration reform when he had the Senate, the House, and the White House. He said in '11 and '12 he couldn't do anything. And then he delayed his action for the elections. Unbelievable cynicism.

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Additional video clips from today's program:

Richard Engel on Latest ISIS Video

<http://nbcnews.to/1qMNU8t>

Chuck Todd on Obama's Legacy

<http://nbcnews.to/11fXKcf>

#NerdScreen: How 2014's Turnout Could Define 2016

<http://nbcnews.to/1BDVbS9>

Anne Thompson on Healthcare Reform: A Tale of Two States

<http://nbcnews.to/11btnEg>

Deep Dive into the Affordable Care Act

<http://nbcnews.to/1uijcl7>

Chris Matthews: Tea Party is the Problem

<http://nbcnews.to/1A3HHXj>

World Leaders Embrace Koalas

<http://nbcnews.to/1vfi2AN>

Panel: Obama vs. Republicans

<http://nbcnews.to/1A3HPgv>

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Below is a RUSH transcript of the 10AM feed of this morning's broadcast -- mandatory attribution to NBC News' "Meet the Press." A final transcript of the program will be available at www.MeetThePressNBC.com.

"MEET THE PRESS WITH CHUCK TODD"

November 16, 2014

CHUCK TODD (V/O):

This Sunday, what appears to be another beheading of an American by the radical Islamic group ISIS. The victim is apparently hostage Peter Kassig, a former aid worker. We'll have a full report. Here at home, the gloves are off again.

PRESIDENT OBAMA:

What I'm not going to do is just wait.

CHUCK TODD (V/O):

On one side, a president, no longer constrained by another election. On the other side, triumphant Republicans. At stake, two huge issues: immigration and healthcare.

JOHN BOEHNER:

We're going to fight the president tooth and nail.

CHUCK TODD (V/O):

President Obama prepares to bypass Congress with executive action on immigration reform.

PRESIDENT OBAMA:

And it's way overdue. And we've been talking about it for ten years now.

CHUCK TODD (V/O):

How will Republicans respond? Also, will Republicans follow through on their goal to dismantle the Affordable Care Act? Where you stand on the issue...

ROBERT MAYFIELD:

It's going to be more taxes on all the Texas people.

CHUCK TODD (V/O):

...may depend on where you sit.

KEITH MOON:

If you don't want to repeal this law, you go without insurance for two years and tell me how you feel.

CHUCK TODD:

Plus, following the Republican midterm wave, can Democrats reassemble their winning coalition in 2016 without President Obama on the ballot? I'm Chuck Todd. And joining me to provide insight and analysis are MSNBC's Chris Matthews, Helene Cooper of The

New York Times, former CEO Hewlett Packard, of Carly Fiorina, and Reid Wilson of The Washington Post. Also Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal, a possible Republican presidential candidate. And Health and Human Services Secretary, Sylvia Burwell are here exclusively. Welcome to Sunday. It's Meet the Press.

ANNOUNCER:

From NBC News in Washington, this is Meet the Press with Chuck Todd.

CHUCK TODD:

Good morning. We begin with some grim news from Syria. Intelligence officials are investigating a video that was posted online purportedly by ISIS that claims to show that captured U.S. aid worker, Peter Kassig, has been killed. The video also shows the killing of several Syrian soldiers. Kassig, 26, from Indiana, was working as a humanitarian aid worker in Syria when he was captured by ISIS in October of 2013.

He was born Peter Kassig, but changed his name to Abdul Rahman after converting to Islam while in captivity. Now, the National Security Council has released a statement this morning. It reads in part: "We are aware of a video that claims to show the murder of U.S. citizen Peter Kassig. The intelligence community is working as quickly as possible to determine its authenticity. If confirmed, we are appalled by the brutal murder of an innocent American aid worker, and we express our deepest condolences to his family and friends."

I'm joined now by our chief foreign correspondent, Richard Engel. He is in Istanbul where he has been based to cover this war. Richard, it seems as if the government is assuming this video is authentic. What do you know?

RICHARD ENGEL:

Well, I've seen the video and unfortunately, it does appear to be authentic. We see the same, now familiar, militant dressed in all black with a distinctive London accent, saying that Peter Kassig has been killed. You don't actually see the beheading. You just see the militant and then what looks to be Peter Kassig's head at his feet.

It was a long video. It shows the beheadings of other hostages, a group that are allegedly Syrian soldiers. If, in fact, it is confirmed that Kassig was murdered, he would be the fifth Western hostage killed by ISIS. And the reason ISIS said it killed Kassig is because he was a former soldier who served in Iraq before he changed his life and went to Syria to help provide some humanitarian and medical relief to Syrian victims of war.

CHUCK TODD:

Now Richard, speaking of Iraq, General Martin Dempsey, of course, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, he made a surprise visit to Iraq yesterday. I think he's still there. Where he's supposed to get a firsthand look at the Iraqi military. We've got advisors on the ground. There's some talk that maybe more have the go. What is the state of the Iraqi military, and how are they doing on the fight against ISIS?

RICHARD ENGEL:

I think it's very mixed, frankly. There are some units of the Iraqi military that are making some progress. They made some advances north of Baghdad in the last several days. But the military is infiltrated. It's infiltrated by Shiite militias, it's infiltrated by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard. Just a few weeks ago, in fact, a unit from the Iraqi military, backed up by militias, went into a town, they killed some ISIS.

But then they also went back and butchered Sunni civilians who were living in the town. And this was an act according to officials that I've spoken to, directly carried out by an Iranian-backed group within the Iraqi Security Services. So I think it is a very mixed record of success so far.

The Kurds are making advances. Some units of the Iraqi army are making advances. But others are Iranian-backed death squads. And this is the Iraqi army, this patchwork that we are supposed to be guiding, advising, and leading in a fight against ISIS.

CHUCK TODD:

Looks like it's going to be a longer slog than anybody wants to deal with. Richard Engel, in Istanbul for us this morning, Richard, thanks very much. Now I want to switch gears here, get to domestic politics. The new third rails of American politics these days; one, immigration reform.

Democrats now on it. Republicans not for what the president wants. And then President Obama now says he's going to go ahead with or without the GOP. The other, of course, is healthcare reform. It's President Obama's signature achievement, his legislative

place in history. And here come the Republicans. They want to take it apart brick by brick.

There are two intractable issues so important to each side that neither is willing to give any quarter. Defy the other side, and you're declaring political war. And that's just what's happening. To quote Bette Davis, fasten your seatbelts. It's going to be a bumpy night.

(BEGIN TAPE)

CHUCK TODD (V/O):

If Republicans thought a wave election would humble the president, he didn't show it. Promising executive action that would stop deportations for millions of undocumented immigrants, a lightning rod for the GOP, the president doubled down.

PRESIDENT OBAMA:

And that's going to happen. That's going to happen before the end of the year.

JOHN BOEHNER:

We're going to fight the president tooth and nail if he continues down this path.

CHUCK TODD (V/O):

So much for that kumbaya lunch at the White House last week. And there's healthcare. Yesterday marked the premier of season two of Obamacare. The president now playing salesman in chief.

PRESIDENT OBAMA:

You can go online or call 1-800-318-2596 and get covered for 2015.

CHUCK TODD (V/O):

New website, new cast, and this time, administration officials hope a new story line after a disastrous debut last year.

PRESIDENT OBAMA:

Nobody's madder than me about the fact that the website isn't working as well as it should.

CHUCK TODD (V/O):

7.1 million Americans signed up and paid by the end of the first enrollment period, hitting projections. This time around, the government expects a total of between nine and ten million for 2015. But that's over three million less than the government's original projection of 13 million signups. And yes, the future of the law remains somewhat cloudy.

Thirteen states, plus D.C., run their own health insurance exchanges. Thirty-seven states, mostly with Republican governors, haven't set up their own exchange, and rely on the federal government. But what the Affordable Care Act is doing for the cost of healthcare, this map shows the change in premiums from the largest cities in each state, and it's a mixed bag. Premiums up in some states, and down in others. And in January, the new Republican majority in Congress takes office, promising to dismember the law.

MITCH MCCONNELL:

I want to pull this law out root and branch.

CHUCK TODD (V/O):

And to top it all off, the Supreme Court will hear another case this term about those exchanges, which could cripple the law.

(END TAPE)

CHUCK TODD:

I'm joined now by Sylvia Mathews Burwell, secretary of Health and Human Services, welcome to Meet the Press.

SYLVIA BURWELL:

Thank you.

CHUCK TODD:

Madam Secretary, I want to start with, we heard the President earlier this morning, or yesterday or tomorrow, however you want to

talk about Australian time. He said 23,000 new applications is what he reported. Do you have any up-to-date numbers? And I guess I would ask, it seems as if new applications went well on the website. People trying to get to their old accounts struggled.

SYLVIA BURWELL:

So with regard to that, yes I do. Yesterday, we had 100,000 folks submit applications.

CHUCK TODD:

New applications?

SYLVIA BURWELL:

Submit applications.

CHUCK TODD:

Okay.

SYLVIA BURWELL:

And there were over 500,000 people who logged in effectively yesterday as well. So I think the vast majority of people coming to the site were able to get on and do what they were intending to do.

CHUCK TODD:

Do you have an issue with people getting onto their old accounts? Is that an issue that you've identified or is this just user error?

SYLVIA BURWELL:

So with regard to that, we think the vast majority were able to. That's what we see in that 500,000. In some of those examples, we're tracking them down. That's part of what I said we were going to do and what we want to do. Some people forget their user names. Some people are renewing their passwords and other things, if there were any other technical problems. Our customer service folks are ready and able to help people. There were over 100,000 calls yesterday.

CHUCK TODD:

All right. Let me ask if you if you guys have, the uninsured right has dropped by 25%. The average premium has gone down for 2015. There's Medicare solvency has increased. So a bunch of good news. And yet the public's opinion about the healthcare law hasn't changed one bit. Still more people think it's a bad idea than a good idea. Why is that? Why hasn't success translated?

SYLVIA BURWELL:

I think one of the things we need to do is translate that success because I think when you ask the American people about those things individually, or when you ask the American people about the importance of no longer being held off healthcare because of preexisting conditions, or the fact that their children up to the age 26 can be on their plans, that's three million. When you ask them about the substance of the issue, the American people respond positively. And that's what I think we need to more about.

CHUCK TODD:

So whose fault is this?

SYLVIA BURWELL:

I think what we need to do is make sure that we're communicating clearly and that we talk about what is the substance instead of something that is one-word descriptions but actually what this is. This is about three things: Affordability, quality, and access. And when you talk about, as you just did, the measures against those things, that's what we need to do more of.

CHUCK TODD:

So why is it that you had to downgrade the expectations of how many people would sign up? You're looking at less than ten million. The original projection was try to get to 13 million after year two. That's a steep expectation decline. Why?

SYLVIA BURWELL:

So the 13 million was a number that was set as CBO scored the initial bill. And scoring, as we know, is something that is done to determine--

CHUCK TODD:

They were accurate about year one.

SYLVIA BURWELL:

So with regard to that though, what we have done is when I got to HHS, I asked the team to actually look at the numbers and let's figure out what we think that target should be. It has two basic pieces to it: reenrollment and new enrollees. With regard to the reenrollment, what we did was went actually out to the marketplace, asked people, "What is the general reenrollment of this type of thing?"

They created a range that was 70% to 90%. Many of the people were in the 80% to 85%. We chose 83%. And then what we did was build the number that way. So in setting our target, what we did was take the information from last year, including the fact that when CBO did its estimates, and others did estimates, they actually thought more people would switch from employer-based care than did.

CHUCK TODD:

So you think that's one of the reasons that this, employers have to dropped people. But this is the first year the employer mandate. Do you expect to see employers drop people now?

SYLVIA BURWELL:

So with regard to the number, we think it's a number of elements. And as we made the number that we chose, that 9.1, we said there'd be 28% growth. And we believe in the second year of a new marketplace, 28% growth is strong and healthy growth.

CHUCK TODD:

All right. I've got to ask you about these comments from Jonathan Gruber. He's of course, a lot of opponents of the Affordable Care Act have been pointing to these comments all week long. He's an MIT professor. He helped write the healthcare law both in Massachusetts, an advisor to the healthcare law and to people that wrote it back when the Obama administration was working on it.

I understand you didn't necessarily work with him very closely. But I do want to have you take a listen and get you to respond. This is how Gruber explained taxing high-end Cadillac health insurance plans and sort of doing a little "okey-doke" on the American public. Take a listen.

(BEGIN TAPE)

JONATHAN GRUBER:

We just tax the insurance companies. They pass on higher prices, that offsets the tax break we get it, it ends up being the same thing. It's a very clever, you know, basic exploitation of the lack of economic understanding of the American voter. And they proposed it and it passed, because the American voter is too stupid to understand the difference.

Lack of transparency is a huge political advantage. And basically, you know, call it the stupidity of the American voter, or whatever. But basically, that was really, really critical to getting this thing to pass. So what does this bill do? This bill takes, what I call, the spaghetti approach. Which is it takes a bunch of ideas that might work and throws them against the wall, we'll see what sticks.

(END TAPE)

CHUCK TODD:

He's playing into every fear that many conservatives had about this bill, that it's not transparent, that there are things in it that people don't know. This certainly can't help a credibility gap.

SYLVIA BURWELL:

I have to start with how fundamentally I disagree with his comments about the bill and about the American people. Since I've been at the department, one of the things that I've focused on is transparency, making sure that all our numbers coming out, whether they're good or bad. And the other thing is that the law is based on the issues of transparency and belief in the American people and choices in the marketplace.

This past week, since we've had window shopping on, over a million people have come to the site and done window shopping. Because what they're doing is they're comparing. They're comparing based on premiums, they're comparing based on deductibility. When you give the American people the tools to make the right choices for themselves, they're going to do that. And that's what this is about. From the issue of actually the consumer to the fact that we have put out information so that people can see what providers are receiving from pharmaceuticals.

CHUCK TODD:

He said, "Spaghetti at the wall." And he said that the week the health care law passed. Is that what this bill is? To see what works and what doesn't?

SYLVIA BURWELL:

This law is a piece of legislation that is about three fundamental things. And these are things that have bipartisan agreement. Affordability, access, and quality. That's what the American people want. And actually, there's bipartisan agreement. The bill has a lot of different pieces. You touched on many of them, and people know about them, whether it's closing the Medicare donut hole. And there are eight million American seniors that benefited from that \$11 billion. There are so many parts of this law that target those three fundamental things.

CHUCK TODD:

Is Mr. Gruber going to be welcomed back as a consultant?

SYLVIA BURWELL:

Certainly right now in terms of the work that we're doing at HHS, we are doing our work and focusing on what we are doing and our modeling.

CHUCK TODD:

So he's not welcome back?

SYLVIA BURWELL:

With regard to Mr. Gruber and his comments, I think I've been clear. That's something we fundamentally disagree with.

CHUCK TODD:

Madam Secretary, thanks for coming on Meet the Press.

SYLVIA BURWELL:

Thank you.

CHUCK TODD:

All right.

CHUCK TODD:

And now joining me since the Affordable Care Act was implemented, 23 states have not expanded Medicaid to help cover low-income individuals, leaving 3.8 million in a so-called coverage gap where their income is above Medicaid eligibility limits, but below the threshold for marketplace premium tax credit. Why does it matter? Let me show you an example in two states.

Arkansas did expand Medicaid coverage. They saw their uninsured rate decrease by 46%. Next door in Louisiana, which did not expand Medicaid coverage, the uninsured rate was only reduced by 15%. So to talk about this and some other things, I'm joined now by the governor of Louisiana, Republican Bobby Jindal. Governor, welcome back to Meet the Press.

GOV. BOBBY JINDAL:

Chuck, thank you for having me.

CHUCK TODD:

Let's go right there to that number. You look at Arkansas, your neighbor to the north. I know you don't want to talk about Arkansas right now.

(OVERTALK)

CHUCK TODD:

--that issue last night. But obviously, expanding Medicaid coverage, you'd have more people off of the uninsured roles in Louisiana if you did it. Why aren't you doing it?

GOV. BOBBY JINDAL:

Chuck, look. Democrats and Republicans both want to help the vulnerable, want to help people get affordable, high-quality healthcare. Medicaid is not the right way to do it. The problem with expanding Medicaid, the problem with the Affordable Care Act,

the problem with ObamaCare, is that it chooses a top-down, closed approach, where the government is running your healthcare.

Medicaid's already a program with bad healthcare outcomes. You look at the Oregon study, they showed by expanding Medicaid, there was no improvement in physical outcomes. It was a program designed to take care of the disabled, of vulnerable children. It was never designed to be there for able-bodied adults.

By expanding and creating a new entitlement when we can't afford the ones we've already got, the Affordable Care Act, the president basically is doubling down on a failed approach for providing healthcare. There's a better way to help those uninsured.

CHUCK TODD:

Here's the thing though. It would cost your state nothing. In fact, look, you've got your own fiscal problems right now with the deficit issue. You'd have more money from the federal government. They're paying for it. It's not going to cost Louisiana taxpayers any extra state money. Why not do it while the law is enacted?

GOV. BOBBY JINDAL:

So, look, two things. Chuck, I'm glad you asked that. One of the things I love is when Democrats say, "Oh, this is free money." This is not free money. Every dollar we don't spend on Medicaid is another dollar we don't have to borrow from China. This is the reason we've gotten nearly \$18 trillion in debt.

Louisiana taxpayers are federal taxpayer. These are federal tax dollars. Why waste these tax dollars? We've got to stop acting in this city like all of this money is free money. Secondly, secondly, when you look at the best way to help folks, it is to decrease the cost of healthcare. I propose a detailed plan to repeal and replace ObamaCare. If the president were really serious, why not give states more flexibility? Why not go to states and say--

CHUCK TODD:

But he has. I mean, you look at in Indiana. So why is, I guess, John Kasich wrong? Why is Mike Pence of Indiana wrong? Mike Pence did get the federal government to approve a much different plan. Why not negotiate with the government and do something that you want to do?

GOV. BOBBY JINDAL:

In Louisiana, if we were to expand Medicaid, it would cost my taxpayers \$1.7 billion over ten years. For every uninsured person we'd cover, oh, we'd have to kick more than one person out of private insurance. Now, think about that. I know that this president likes to define success as more people dependent on the government. I would have to take over 200,000 out of private insurance and put them into Medicaid. To me, that's a huge mistake.

CHUCK TODD:

Yeah, but you have 200,000 not insured at all, though.

GOV. BOBBY JINDAL:

Well, but no, I'm saying for every uninsured person you're covering, you're taking more than another person out of private insurance. In Louisiana in particular, we inherited a decades-old public hospital system, unlike other states. We're the only state, we had ten state-operated hospitals. The private sector, public/private partnerships, we've actually improved healthcare access and outcomes.

For one example, it used to take ten days to get a prescription filled, now you can get it done in ten minutes. Through Bayou health, we reformed our program, we had before 5% of our adults were getting preventive care screenings, now over 80% of our-- Chuck, my point is This. There are better ways to provide healthcare to the vulnerable, to the uninsured. The answer's not for the government to be running healthcare. The answer is not to expand a failed program, a one-size-fits-all approach like Medicaid.

CHUCK TODD:

You think Medicaid's a total failure?

GOV. BOBBY JINDAL:

No, I think Medicaid--

CHUCK TODD:

But why do you implement any of it?

GOV. BOBBY JINDAL:

I think Medicaid, when it was targeted for the disabled, for children, in Louisiana, over 95% of our children have coverage. I think that it can be improved and more flexibility. Oregon, the Harvard-- now, this wasn't a conservative study. The Harvard study showed when you expanded Medicaid after two years in Oregon, there was no improvement of physical healthcare outcomes. Simply giving people a card without giving them access to healthcare, to doctors, to hospitals doesn't improve anything.

CHUCK TODD:

Very quickly on immigration. If the president goes through with his executive action, do you think Republicans and Capitol Hill ought to use even the power of shutting down the government to stop him from doing it?

GOV. BOBBY JINDAL:

Two things. I don't think the president should shut down the government to try to break the Constitution. The reality is this. I do think the--

CHUCK TODD:

You think the president would be shutting down the government?

GOV. BOBBY JINDAL:

Oh, absolutely.

CHUCK TODD:

So you do want Republicans to fight him on this to the point that it could shut down the government?

GOV. BOBBY JINDAL:

Absolute-- I don't think the president should shut down the government.

CHUCK TODD:

But you're twisting my question.

GOV. BOBBY JINDAL:

But wait, wait.

CHUCK TODD:

That means you want that kind of showdown?

GOV. BOBBY JINDAL:

Let's step back and understand what we're talking about. So the president said, "I want to break the law." He purposely said I'm going to wait till after the election, because I know it's not going to be popular to grant amnesty to millions of folks here that are here illegally. We had an election. He said his policies were on the ballot.

He lost in red states, purple states, blue states. The American people overwhelmingly rejected and rejected his policies. Now he's saying, "I'm still going to break the law." Talk about arrogance. This president used to say, "Elections have consequences." We're talking about how can the Congress force the president to follow the law?

I would expect even Democrats who may agree with him on substance, to say the right way to do this is to follow the Constitution, follow the law. No, we shouldn't shut down the government, but absolutely Republicans should do everything they can to force the president to follow the law. Let's secure the border. No, the president shouldn't shut down the government so that he can break the law.

CHUCK TODD:

All right. I'm going to ask you about your own presidential ambitions. A majority in Louisiana disapprove of your job as governor. Why is that a launching pad to Iowa and New Hampshire?

GOV. BOBBY JINDAL:

Chuck, I don't care at all about poll numbers. I never have. The reality is, I was elected in Louisiana to make generational changes. Look at what we've done in Louisiana. So now, we've cut our state budget 26%, cut the number of state employees 34%.

We've got the best private-sector economy in a generation. Our economy has grown twice as fast as the national economy. More

people working than ever before at a higher income than ever before. We transformed the charity house. That's, like, the third rail in Louisiana politics.

Statewide school of choice, so our children have the opportunity to get a great education. If I were to run, and I haven't made that decision, if I were to run for president, it's because I believe in our country. The American dream is at jeopardy. This president has defined the American dream as more dependence on the government. We need to restore the American dream. So it's more about opportunity and growth and not redistribution.

CHUCK TODD:

But very quickly, one part of your record, you now have nearly a billion dollar hole in your budget. Every midyear review, your deficit has grown. You did a big tax cut at the beginning of your term as governor. Revenues haven't followed.

GOV. BOBBY JINDAL:

That's not actually true, Chuck. The billion dollars is if you assume we grow government next year. Our budget's been balanced every year. We've never raised taxes. I've had eight credit upgrades in three of the major credit rating agencies. Best credit ratings in decades in our state. We've actually balanced our budget every single year without running deficits, without raising taxes.

CHUCK TODD:

Well, you constitutionally have to balance your budget.

GOV. BOBBY JINDAL:

And we need to do that in D.C. as well. But my point is, we've actually made the tough choices. Unlike D.C., we cut our spending \$9 billion. I'm not talking about cutting growth. We cut our budget by \$9 billion. So we've actually balanced our budget and we've done it by growing the private sector.

We've got, right now in Louisiana, we've got more than 80,000 jobs, more than \$50 billion in private investment coming into our state. We actually, our economy's doing so well, when I was elected, our worry was we were losing our sons and daughters. Today, our biggest challenge is filling all these great jobs.

CHUCK TODD:

Governor Bobby Jindal, I will have to leave it there. You're going to decide when, by the 1st of the year?

GOV. BOBBY JINDAL:

First half of next year. We are praying about this. But bottom line is let's restore the American dream for our children and grandchildren.

CHUCK TODD:

Governor, thanks for coming back to Meet the Press. Coming up, President Obama says, "Election? What election?" The Democrats' midterm losses not only haven't stopped him, they seemed to have energized him. How will Republicans respond?

Commercial Break

CHUCK TODD:

The controversial Keystone XL Pipeline, which would transport oil from Canada down to the Gulf of Mexico is back in the news. The senate is expected to take up a bill this week that could allow the project to go forward. So we asked two experts to argue for and against the pipeline being built in our weekly web series, Make the Case. That and more can be found on our website at MeetThePressNBC.com. Up next, President Obama and Republicans get ready for another series of partisan showdowns.

Commercial Break

CHUCK TODD:

And welcome back. This month's midterm results were miserable for the Democratic party. They lost the Senate, and of course, a lot more seats in the House. So with two years of his tenure left, President Obama has two options: Eke out some areas of compromise with the new Republican majority, or try to be bold and push his agenda by using his executive authority. Well, this week, it became clear that the president has opted to favor the latter approach. As they say, he may believe the best form of a defense is a good offense.

(BEGIN TAPE)

PRESIDENT OBAMA:

Without any Republican support on anything then it's going to be hard to get things done.

CHUCK TODD (V/O)

That was four years ago. This is now.

PRESIDENT OBAMA:

There are going to be actions I take that they don't like, and there are going to be bills they pass that I don't like.

CHUCK TODD (V/O)

In 2010, President Obama, realizing he himself would be facing voters in two years, walked away from the shellacking with a pledge to build consensus. The effort and accommodation failed. A grand bargain on taxes and entitlements broke down. And clashes over spending paved the way for a government shutdown. This time around, without the burden of a re-election campaign, the president is learning a different lesson from defeat. With time running out to secure a legacy, this week, the president put his fists up, telling supporters, "Let's go."

PRESIDENT OBAMA:

I'm laying out a plan to keep the internet free and open.

CHUCK TODD (V/O)

On Monday, the president pushed the FCC to issue the strongest possible rules for internet service providers like Verizon and NBC parent company, Comcast, saying the internet should be regulated like a public utility so broadband companies can't charge for better access. Republican Senator Ted Cruz called it, "ObamaCare for the internet." On Tuesday, Mr. Obama announced an historic climate deal with China, designed to cut carbon emissions from both countries.

PRESIDENT OBAMA:

For the first time, we got China to make a very serious commitment to constrain its greenhouse gasses. Why would anybody be against that?

CHUCK TODD (V/O)

Republicans were.

MITCH MCCONNELL:

I had maybe naïvely hoped the president would look at the results of the election and decide to come to this political center. But the early signs are not good.

CHUCK TODD (V/O)

As early as next week, President Obama will give Republicans another target when he acts alone to extend protections to as many as five million undocumented immigrants.

JOHN BOEHNER:

We're going to fight the president tooth and nail.

MITCH MCCONNELL:

It's like waving a red flag in front of a bull.

REP. BRAD WENSTRUP (R-OH):

The president may have said, "I hear you," but by the looks of things, it's just the opposite.

CHUCK TODD (V/O)

Republican leaders, hoping to prevent a government shutdown, and to avoid upsetting conservatives, are now considering another option: the courts.

PRESIDENT OBAMA

I would advise rather than devote a lot of time trying to constrain my lawful actions, as the chief executive of the U.S. government in charge of enforcing our immigration laws, that they spend some time passing a bill.

CHUCK TODD (V/O)

Now instead of worrying about shoring up red state incumbents, the president is working on firing up base Democrats who stayed home on Election Day, contributing to the lowest overall midterm turnout in more than seven decades. That may mean picking a fight with members of his own party, as Democratic soul searching revives a rift between moderates and progressives. The first skirmish in the battle to define the party's future, a Senate vote next week on the Keystone Pipeline.

MARY LANDRIEU:

I'd like to vote on Keystone now.

PRESIDENT OBAMA:

Understand what this project is. It is providing the ability of Canada to pump their oil, send it through our land, down to the Gulf, where it will be sold everywhere else. It doesn't have an impact on U.S. gas prices.

(END TAPE)

CHUCK TODD:

Well, the panel is here. I want to start with Keystone. Chris Matthews, the president, is he going to veto it? And is that a death knell for Mary Landrieu?

CHRIS MATTHEWS:

I think this time around, he'll veto. But it's going to come back again and again. And it's one of things that will end up being negotiated.

CHUCK TODD:

Is it a mistake to veto it?

CHRIS MATTHEWS:

Well, he may feel he has to do it for his environmental supporters. But it's not going to stop it. It's going to happen. It will happen. It'll happen now or next year or the year after. Because the country wants jobs and energy is always a primary concern of the American people. And look who are the swing electorate? Working-class whites.

These are the people that Hillary Clinton will want, the Republicans will want. These people are going to be for jobs like this. He said, "There's nothing in it for us." There are jobs in it. And that's the way the American people look at it. Not energy, jobs.

CHUCK TODD:

Helene Cooper, are you surprised at this more energized President Obama?

HELENE COOPER:

I'm not. I think it's really interesting though because somebody clearly didn't tell him that his party got whipped.

CHUCK TODD:

Yeah. It wasn't close.

HELENE COOPER:

Yeah. So it's really interesting seeing just how he's come out. He's clearly now shooting for the fences. He's thinking about his legacy. He wants to get things done. I think that's why you're going to see him doing much more things on the international stage, where he has more ability. And I think, you know, for all of the nice talk that you heard, you know, the day after the election about trying to get along, that's not going to happen. I think we're in for two years of complete gridlock.

CHUCK TODD:

So Carly Fiorina, what should Republicans do if the president, you know, wants to basically still enact his agenda and not let the midterms interrupt that? How should Republicans respond?

CARLY FIORINA:

Well, first, just on Keystone Pipeline, perhaps the president will veto this. But on what basis would he do so? The American people support it by wide majorities. What we are doing today is actually worse for global greenhouse gas emissions than the Keystone Pipeline would be. It would create jobs despite his bizarre statement that it wouldn't. And finally, two and a half years--

CHUCK TODD:

There have been some mixed studies on this. I mean, there's temporary jobs and then there's full-time jobs.

CARLY FIORINA:

Two and a half years of a process, that's either purposeful foot dragging or it's incompetence. And the American people know that. I think what the Republicans should do is soberly and systematically pass bills that make sense, that have bipartisan support. And Keystone XL Pipeline is one of them. They should pass it. If he jumps in and does this executive action on immigration, I think Republicans should not be goaded into--

CHUCK TODD:

Showdown?

CARLY FIORINA:

Showdown. Because it only help Obama and hurts the American people. But what they should do is systematically and soberly pass a series of bills to solve a decades-old problem. And they should point out to Hispanics all over this nation that this president has taken advantage of them. He sunk comprehensive immigration reform in 2007. He did nothing to push forward immigration reform when he had the Senate, the House, and the White House. He said in '11 and '12 he couldn't do anything. And then he delayed his action for the elections. Unbelievable cynicism.

CHUCK TODD:

Reid, it does appear as if the president is looking at different Democratic constituency groups. And when in doubt, going to the base.

REID WILSON:

And your point earlier that this is the beginning of a feud between the two factions of the Democratic party, he's absolutely correct.

CHUCK TODD:

You think there is? Yeah.

REID WILSON:

I mean, I think it's more valuable for Mary Landrieu to be against President Obama and have him veto the Keystone Pipeline than it is for her to actually be able to deliver it. I mean, here we are fully--

CHUCK TODD:

Do you think that's better politics for Mary Landrieu?

REID WILSON:

It certainly is. In a state where President Obama--

(OVERTALK)

CHUCK TODD:

If she can't get something that she wants to get done done, that's good for her?

REID WILSON:

She's not going to be able to convince voters that she's not President Obama's vote. You know, another vote for President Obama. This is the constant problem that Democrats across the country had. They were too closely tied to him. Why not do everything possible to distance yourself from the White House?

CHUCK TODD:

So a veto might help her? No?

REID WILSON:

Look, she doesn't have great chances either way.

CHUCK TODD:

All right, all right. Either way. Yeah.

HELENE COOPER:
But that's--

CHRIS MATTHEWS:
It all happens before December 12th, too. In ten days, they're going to have the veto one way or the other. It's going to happen. We'll have the verdict.

CHUCK TODD:
All right. You guys are coming back. We're going to talk a little bit more about this coming up. Democrats stayed home on election day. Can they reassemble that coalition that elected President Obama twice if he's not on the ballot? On Meet the Press, our Nerd Screen segment is next.

Commercial Break

CHUCK TODD:
Well, the Democratic party's prospects for 2016 are all about who shows up to vote. One reason President Obama did so well in 2012 was due to minority and youth turnout. In fact, let's take a look at 2012. 72% of that vote was white, 13% black, 10% Hispanic. And 19% of the overall electorate was between the ages of 18 and 29.

Now, here's what we know. Whites voted for Mitt Romney by nearly 20 points, 59-39. But if you look at everybody else, blacks, Hispanics, Asians, the president won that share of the vote 80 to 19. Now, let's take a look at what happened last Tuesday. We all know turnout was pretty low. But the percentage of white voters actually was up compared to 2012, 75%.

Black and Hispanic numbers dropped, and perhaps most significantly, that 18 to 29 year old vote, dropped all the way down to 13% of those who voted. And guess what that did? It helped produce the GOP wave that we saw. In fact, here are two states where a turnout that looked more like 2012 likely would've changed the outcome of the election.

Colorado and North Carolina. In Colorado, Republican Cory Gardner beat the Democratic incumbent Mark Udall by roughly 42,000 votes. Now look at this. Between 2012 and 2014, the youth turnout in Colorado, mostly Democratic voters, dropped from being 20% of the electorate, one in five voters, to 14%. The youth turnout it held steady, guess what? Probably would've produced enough votes to put Udall over the top. Let's take a look at another example, North Carolina.

Republican Thom Tillis beat the Democratic incumbent Kay Hagan by a little more than 45,000 votes. Had the African American turnout been the same percentage of the electorate as it was in 2012, Senator Hagan easily may have won. In fact, it would've produced 56,000 more votes, would've led to a different outcome.

So what does all this mean for 2016? Many have argued that you need someone like Barack Obama at the top of the ballot to get the kind of turnout that favors the Democrats, or at least favored them in '08 and '12. Well, if that's true, the Democrats could have a problem. Barack Obama's not going to be at the top of the ticket.

But the long-term shift in demographics in the United States as a whole probably will help the Democratic party in the next presidential election when turnout will be higher. Experts expect the white vote turnout to be about 69%. And that alone could help almost any Democrat no matter who's at the top of the ticket, even if his name or her name is not Barack Obama.

Commercial Break

CHUCK TODD:
And welcome back, a little earlier I discussed the politics of healthcare with Secretary Burwell and Governor Jindal. But what difference has the Affordable Care Act made to the millions of Americans who have signed up for coverage? I asked my colleague Anne Thompson to take a look at two states, Texas and Illinois. They took very different approaches to the law.

(BEGIN TAPE)

ANNE THOMPSON (ON TAPE):
Everything is bigger in Texas. Including the opposition to the Affordable Care Act.

ROBERT MAYFIELD:
And it's going to be more taxes on all the Texas people. I mean, that's a trap if it was one, it seems to me.

ANNE THOMPSON (ON TAPE):

1,000 miles away in the land of Lincoln and the current president, it's also called the ACA and embraced.

KEITH MOON:

The ACA saved us.

ANNE THOMPSON (ON TAPE):

One year later, two states with very different assessments. Robert Mayfield has a sizzling business in Austin, Texas. He owns a burger joint and six Dairy Queens, employing just under 100 people at above minimum wage.

ROBERT MAYFIELD:

We pay \$10 an hour to start. We don't have to. We don't do that because we're nice guys. We do that because we get the best people.

ANNE THOMPSON (ON TAPE):

Mayfield wants to expand the business started by his father in 1949. But going over that 100 employee mark means he would have to offer healthcare to most of his full-time workers or pay penalties under the law's employer mandate.

ROBERT MAYFIELD:

These costs the government imposes on a business, they don't come out of the air. You know, if we have to pay them, we've got to pass them on, or we don't stay in business.

ANNE THOMPSON (ON TAPE):

And if 30 hours a week is how the law defines a full-time worker, forget expansion. Mayfield says he may have to cut hours or jobs.

ROBERT MAYFIELD:

We've got some people that I care very much about that have worked for us ten, 12 years. You know, what do I do with them?

ANNE THOMPSON (ON TAPE):

Texas has the highest percentage of uninsured in the nation, some six million people. Only 733,000 signed up for the ACA.

REP. JOHN ZERWAS:

It was just characterized that this is going to be the panacea to our uninsured issues out there. Well, it's not and it never was.

ANNE THOMPSON (ON TAPE):

State Representative John Zerwas says he hears complaints from people who paid more for less coverage. And though Texas rejected the Medicaid expansion, this Republican doctor is open to other ways.

REP. JOHN ZERWAS:

There is the possibility to look at ways of how we provide insurance for some kind of program available to this million, million and a half people. For which there's not an option for right now.

ANNE THOMPSON (ON TAPE):

In Washington, the incoming Republican majority vows to repeal the law. Fighting words in Keith Moon's house outside Chicago.

KEITH MOON:

If you don't want to repeal this law and the people that won't extend Medicaid, they sit there with insurance, you go without insurance for two years and tell me how you feel.

ANNE THOMPSON (ON TAPE):

Moon's family did after he and his wife Joyce lost their jobs. Joyce's pre-existing thyroid condition pushed the price tag for insurance to an unaffordable \$1,750 a month.

ANNE THOMPSON:

As a husband, your wife isn't getting the attention she needs.

KEITH MOON:

It was terrible. You felt awful about that.

ANNE THOMPSON (ON TAPE):

Now with the ACA, they pay \$300 a month. And Joyce gets the care she needs.

ANNE THOMPSON:

One year later, what's the emotional difference?

KEITH MOON:

You don't have that overhanging stress and risk of medical bankruptcy. So you have that burden lift from your shoulders is just, I don't even know how to put it in words.

ANNE THOMPSON (ON TAPE):

In Illinois, of the 1.2 million people eligible, more than 700,000 signed up.

BRIAN GORMAN:

Because of the coverage in the Affordable Care Act, a lot of people are more likely to live. Families are less likely to go bankrupt.

ANNE THOMPSON (ON TAPE):

Entering year two, the Affordable Care Act has not healed the divide it created. For Meet the Press, Anne Thompson.

(END TAPE)

CHUCK TODD:

Now for a deep dive on the policy, I'm joined by Dr. Toby Cosgrove, head of the Cleveland Clinic, Neera Tanden, President of the Center for American Progress. She worked with the White House and in the White House to develop President Obama healthcare law, and Avik Roy, he's a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research and opinion editor for Forbes, who advised Mitt Romney on healthcare. Welcome to all of you. Dr. Cosgrove, let me start with you. Affordable Care Act, is it working?

DR. TOBY COSGROVE:

Well, we've seen several good things happen. It's really started out to decrease the cost. And the jury's not in on that yet. And you have to understand that costs are not just about the individual. They're also about the cost for healthcare across the nation. It certainly has improved.

CHUCK TODD:

And you, as the head of the Cleveland Clinic, you would know.

DR. TOBY COSGROVE:

Well, we certainly have seen that, yes.

CHUCK TODD:

And so you feel like costs have come down?

DR. TOBY COSGROVE:

We are working very hard to bring costs down. We realize that the pressure is on healthcare providers across the country to try and make care more affordable and greater efficiency, and at the same time, bring up quality. And we've seen the national quality indicators go up and we certainly have seen access increased across the country. So there are the main thing that we're seeing is the jury is not in yet on how we're doing as far as costs across the country is concerned.

CHUCK TODD:

Avik?

AVIK ROY:

Hospital costs are going up.

CHUCK TODD:

But I was just going to say, first year, is it not the doom and gloom that was predicted?

AVIK ROY:

Well, so hospital costs and the underlying cost of insurance for people to buy coverage on their own did go up in year one for ObamaCare. It's stable this year from those higher levels. But a big part of what's happening that a lot of people haven't been paying attention to is as more people are on Medicaid and Medicare, the big government insurance plans, hospitals across the country are merging in order to have higher market power to raise prices on people with private insurance.

And thereby increase premiums for people with private insurance. We're seeing that actually in Northeastern Ohio, the Cleveland Clinic recently merged with the hospital system in Akron. Now, Toby's situation might be an exception. But in general, these mergers have led not so much to increased quality, but to higher prices. On average, 44% higher prices for things like knee replacements and angioplasty and heart surgery compared to what they were like in competitive markets in the old days.

CHUCK TODD:

Neera, you're shaking your head.

NEERA TANDEN:

Just to clarify, we actually have data on these things. And premiums, national premiums, are coming down. Premiums that people are paying, your out-of-pocket costs are actually coming down. We used to have double-digit increases over the last couple years, those come down. So it's true that the healthcare system is transforming itself, because there is a lot of pressure to bring costs down.

There is greater concentration in some areas. Sometimes, and in most of those cases, the world we're seeing is that there's better value for the patient. So I'm happy to discuss the ins and outs of particular areas, but as a national plan, we have national numbers and medical inflation is down. And it's translating into lower premium increases.

CHUCK TODD:

Dr. Cosgrove, what's the next metric?

DR. TOBY COSGROVE:

Well, the metrics are going to be around quality transparency and the transparency around costs. And we're going to see both of those happen over time. And that will bring the marketplace to a real marketplace. We need to have people understand and have a part in how much they are paying for their health care. And we really need to move from sick care to well care.

And that's going to require that people get involved in their care and understand what they're doing. And at the end of the day, you have to understand that the health of the country is only as good as the health of its citizens. And we need to work on that hard.

CHUCK TODD:

Avik, what would you be advising Republicans to do right now? Do you try to dismantle the law, or do you try to improve it?

AVIK ROY:

I think you try to make changes to the law based on things that you think the president can sign, whether it's bipartisan support.

CHUCK TODD:

So you wouldn't be going for the kill on this?

AVIK ROY:

No, I mean, they're going to have a vote on repeal, because the base really wants it. They've made that promise to the voters, and that's fine. But Republicans in the next two years really have to start thinking constructively about how to make the healthcare system better. One of those is to increase access to coverage, access to care.

But a big part of how you increase access to care is to make it less expensive. The average day spent in a hospital in the United States costs five times what it does in the typical industrial country. That's way too high. And it's not enough to just say, "Okay, we're increasing hospital costs by 2% or 3% next year." We've got to bring it down.

CHUCK TODD:

And Neera, that's one part of this law that didn't, you know, it really focused on insurance coverage. It was having a harder time to go after the cost.

NEERA TANDEN:

Well, we do have national health expenditures that have been lowering. And I think that's in part because of the ACA, but a lot of other factors as well.

CHUCK TODD:
Sure, economics.

NEERA TANDEN:
You know, the economic downturn has had some pressure as well. I think the thing that we have to distinguish is that out-of-pocket costs have been going up for consumers. That's a ten-year trend. Those employers have been shifting. So I think that's the next area for Democrats, I hope Republicans, the next area to really concentrate on. How much consumers are paying. The law has actually had a big benefit here because premiums are coming down. But people have to, you know, that's a huge issue for all people.

CHUCK TODD:
Very quickly.

DR. TOBY COSGROVE:
We have to understand also we're going to have a shortage of doctors and nurses. 800,000 nurses in a decade and another 130,000 doctor shortage. And we have to address that before it gets to be a real crisis.

CHUCK TODD:
All right, Dr. Cosgrove, Avik Roy, Neera Tanden, a little substance with people's Sunday morning breakfast we thought would be good--
(OVERTALK)

CHUCK TODD:
--a little policy-wonkish. Thank you all for this. We'll be back in 15 seconds with more from the political panel.

Commercial Break

CHUCK TODD:
And welcome back. The panel is still here. And I want to pick up on quickly on the healthcare conversation. Carly Fiorina, would you be advising for repeal at this point in time? And do you think at some point, you've got to almost stop talking about repeal, or no?

CARLY FIORINA:
I think that the Republican House will pass the bill that repeals it. I think ultimately this bill does need to be repealed.

CHUCK TODD:
And you don't think the Senate will?

CARLY FIORINA:
No, I don't think the Senate will. Let me tell you why I think it needs to be repealed utilities. You know, what happens when you have vast legislative overreach is you don't particularly fix the problem you started out to fix and you create problems for everyone else. And that's what we've done.

The number of uninsured isn't coming down fast enough. Preexisting conditions, I'm a cancer survivor. Of course that should not be a reason not to get health insurance, but they keep talking about premiums. What they don't talk about is everyone's deductibles have gone up. What they don't talk about is not enough people are getting insured. And very created so many other problems. You referenced Jonathan Gruber before. This law is longer than a Harry Potter novel. It's been accompanied of tens of thousands of paper regulation.

CHUCK TODD:
But shouldn't have--

(OVERTALK)

CHUCK TODD:

I never understood the--

CARLY FIORINA:

Of course nobody understands it.

CHUCK TODD:

But in the health--

CARLY FIORINA:

It created problems for everyone.

CHUCK TODD:

But of course, the healthcare, you're going to write a big, long law. Or you don't?

CARLY FIORINA:

Well, or, you can go to the one force that we know reliably improves quality and lowers costs and it's called competition. The health insurance market has never been competitive. It was crony capitalism, the way this bill was written between the health insurance companies trying to protect their franchises and big government.

CHUCK TODD:

Well, Reid Wilson, you helped me a lot on my book, *Stranger*. And when went through the healthcare thing, clearly passing the bill became more important than sometimes the words in the bill.

REID WILSON:

It did. And within the White House, there was a lot sort of overcorrection for the mistakes that the Clintons had made. They ceded a lot of power, a lot of writing authority to Capitol Hill. That didn't work because of some internal dynamics within the Democratic Conference up there especially in the Senate. So this is, you know, a political problem for the president. From the first day of his administration, it has plagued him. And it will continue to do so in the last two years of his serve.

CHUCK TODD:

You know, Chris Matthews, if you're the administration, you know, Sylvia Burwell admitted, they still haven't marketed health care very well.

CHRIS MATTHEWS:

I agree with that. But I want to go back to the basis, the genesis of this bill. And it's the same as the fight over immigration. As long as you have an intractable opposition, I mean, I was hoping we could get Orrin Hatch on this health care bill. I was hoping that Mike Enzi, these are all good people, they were negotiating. They all fell off because of fear of the tea party people. Same with immigration. Please God have a meeting between the president and the speaker in the House this week before this--

(OVERTALK)

CHUCK TODD:

You think they need to meet before?

CHRIS MATTHEWS:

Meeting in public. I'd like it on television. What is your opposition to this immigration bill? Is it we don't have enough enforcement? I'll give you more enforcement. Is it hiring rules? We're going to enforce them. I promise you we're going to enforce them. What do you want? So you're absolutely against any kind of amnesty for people who have been here 20, 30 years, absolutely against it?

So what then when the president issues the executive order, people will understand he really tried to negotiate. Let me tell you something, we're negotiating with Tehran right now. We're desperately trying to cut a deal over nuclear weapons to the last moment. Why don't we have negotiations going on right now between the two sides?

CHUCK TODD:

You know, he brings up a point, and I can hear Republicans now echoing, he'll negotiate with the Iranians, he won't negotiate with us on immigration.

HELENE COOPER:

I think though for the Republicans, though, there's also--

CHRIS MATTHEWS:

That's not the way I said it.

CHUCK TODD:

No, I'm telling you how you're going to get requoted.

CHRIS MATTHEWS:

Right.

CHUCK TODD:

No, you and I both know that.

HELENE COOPER:

You're right. You're absolutely right.

CHUCK TODD:

No, that's how he's going to get requoted.

(OVERTALK)

CHRIS MATTHEWS:

But they want to negotiate though, Chuck.

(OVERTALK)

CHRIS MATTHEWS:

Well, they need to tape more television shows. What's their opposition to immigration? I'm sorry, Helene.

CHUCK TODD:

Very quick.

HELENE COOPER:

I think that for the Republicans, there's going to be a danger of overreach as well. Because they right now control the Senate and if they're going to go and shut down the government over an immigration bill, they're going to go after repealing healthcare, what are they going to be for?

s getting h

Well, that's what they have to figure out. Alright, before I let you go, we thought we'd end on a happy note. The president of course is on his way home from the G20 summit in Australia. Reportedly, there were some edgy exchanges of course and some meetings between the leaders, Russian President Putin.

But being Australia, the host brought out some cuddly koalas to relieve any tension as the summit ended. Well, look at that. Putin and a koala. This is like him posing with an animal that wasn't faked, by the way. There's the president, almost getting tickled by a koala. Is this just a reminder that just everything goes better with animals? Right? Everybody's in a happier mood when--

CHRIS MATTHEWS:

You want an Irish joke?

CHUCK TODD:

Yeah, go quick.

CHRIS MATTHEWS:

Okay.

CHUCK TODD:

Uh-oh.

CHRIS MATTHEWS:

An Irishman is trying to get through immigration. The guy says, "Do you have a criminal record?" He said, "No, is it still required?"

CHUCK TODD:

Oh, ouch. Ouch. Carly Fiorina, before I let you go, how serious are you about running for president?

CARLY FIORINA:

That'll be something I consider at the right time.

CHUCK TODD:

So are you considering?

CARLY FIORINA:

Well, when people ask you over and over again, you have to pause and reflect. So I'll pause and reflect at the right time.

CHUCK TODD:

So that means it's something you're pondering? You're going to go Iowa soon?

CARLY FIORINA:

You have to ponder when people keep asking. And I've been to Iowa plenty to help women engage and isn't it fantastic that Joni Ernst won?

REID WILSON:

There's a direct flight out of DCA now.

CHUCK TODD:

All right. That's all for today. We'll be back next week because if it's Sunday, it's Meet the Press.

*** * *END OF TRANSCRIPT* * ***

"MEET THE PRESS" 11/23/14 -- SENATORS PUSH FOR IMMIGRATION LEGISLATION; GIULIANI: FERGUSON GRAND JURY "UNDER INCREDIBLE PRESSURE TO INDICT"

Flake: "We ought to put legislation on the president's desk." Menendez: Obama's executive action is "absolutely" constitutional
Giuliani and Dyson argue over violence in black communities

NOVEMBER 23, 2014 -- Today's "Meet the Press with Chuck Todd" featured a discussion on immigration reform with two members of the "Gang of Eight," Senators **Jeff Flake** (R-AZ) and **Robert Menendez** (D-NJ); a conversation about the Ferguson trial with **Anthony Gray**, the lawyer for Michael Brown's family, former New York City mayor **Rudy Giuliani**, and Georgetown professor **Michael Eric Dyson**; a look at the future of U.S. energy with author **Daniel Yergin** and Shell Oil Company's **John Hofmeister**; and insight from the political panel: NBC's **Joe Scarborough**, former New Mexico Gov. **Bill Richardson** (D), **Amy Walter** of The Cook Political Report, and MSNBC and Telemundo anchor **Jose Diaz-Balart**.

The program also included a report from **John Yang** on Arizona's reaction to the president's immigration announcement, an update from **Ron Allen** on the ground in Ferguson, MO; and a look at the life of former DC mayor Marion Barry.

Below are highlights and a rush transcript of today's program. Video will be available online at <http://www.MeetThePressNBC.com>.

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Sen. Flake: "the president moved beyond his authority" with executive action on immigration

CHUCK TODD: Do you think it's appropriate to sue the president on his action?

SENATOR JEFF FLAKE: I do think that the president moved beyond his authority, no less than The Washington Post editorial board has opined about that. Having said that, for my role in the Senate, I think we ought to put legislation on the president's desk. That ought to be the response.

Sen. Menendez: the president's action "absolutely" meets a constitutional test

CHUCK TODD: Are you comfortable that this meets a constitutional test?

SENATOR BOB MENENDEZ: Oh, absolutely. ... And over a hundred constitutional law professors in the country have issued statements to the president before he acted that this was well within his authority. So look, as a result of the president's actions, more felons will be deported, more border patrol will be at the southern border, more people will pay taxes, and more families will be able to stay together. I think those are goals that are worthy of being achieved.

Flake and Menendez stress "persistent, urgent need" for more legislation on immigration reform

CHUCK TODD: Senator Flake, are you against the policy that the President's implementing? It doesn't sound like you are.

SENATOR JEFF FLAKE: No, I should say that we did much of what the president did. ... The problem is the way he did it is going to make it very difficult to move the other parts of immigration reform that we really need. So it's not that he did something that we wouldn't have done otherwise. It's the way he went about it.

CHUCK TODD: Senator Menendez, I want to pick up on that point. I've heard this from others who actually, activists, who now worry because the president did this, there's no urgency anymore to pass immigration reform in Congress.

SENATOR BOB MENENDEZ: Well, that couldn't be farther from the truth. ... There's still clearly a persistent, urgent need to do that. The president could not and did not extend his legal authority beyond that which he could. Which is why he can't deal with the whole issue. Only Congress can do that. We did it in the Senate. The House needs to act. There's only one person stopping us from achieving this. And that's Speaker Boehner. Put the bill on the floor. I believe it would pass, and we would move forward.

Flake: "we ought to move beyond" Benghazi

SENATOR JEFF FLAKE: Well, I've always thought the biggest problem with Benghazi is how it was cast by the administration and the remarks that Susan Rice just really threw in the face of what we knew was going on. But with regard to the other things that were addressed by this report, well, yes, I thought for a long time that we ought to move beyond that.

Anthony Gray: the Ferguson trial "may be therapeutic for the community" but he is "concerned about the process itself"

CHUCK TODD: What are you concerned about in this process? Are you concerned about the secrecy, or are you simply concerned that they're not going to indict?

ANTHONY GRAY: Well, I'm not concerned that they're not going to indict. I am concerned about the process itself. ... There's just a level of distrust over the whole process and those that are involved in the process that I think that that's adding a level of anxiety to this whole situation that doesn't have to be necessary had they done things a little bit differently in the beginning.

CHUCK TODD: You believe if there is a trial, even if it's a trial that the cop is found innocent, Officer Wilson is found innocent, that having the trial itself will be therapeutic for the community?

ANTHONY GRAY: I think it may be therapeutic, but you've got to understand, Chuck, there are people that are locked and loaded into how they feel about this situation. And anything short of reaching their full expectation, will just never be satisfied. And you've got that small, or maybe perhaps a large group of people that feel that way. And I'm not so sure if it'd be therapeutic for them. It may be therapeutic for the community however.

Giuliani on Gov. Nixon's preemptive state of emergency: "I would've kept it quiet"

RUDY GIULIANI: It's hard to second-guess a governor in a situation like that. What I would've done, and I've had three situations similar to this, I would've had a state of emergency, but I would've kept it quiet. In other words, I would've kept my police on alert, I'd have kept them in places where you couldn't see them. Be ready in a moment's notice to stop any kind of violence. But maybe not do it in advance.

Giuliani: "this grand jury is under incredible pressure to indict"

RUDY GIULIANI: What I'm concerned about is no one is explaining the grand jury to people. I mean, we're not educating people. Grand juries are secret to protect innocent people. That's why they're secret. It's a federal crime to release information from a grand jury. Because a grand jury has a very low burden to prove probable cause to commit a crime. And this grand jury is under incredible pressure, incredible pressure to indict. I feel sorry for these people because they know if they walk out of that grand jury room and have not indicted, they may have created a massive riot in their city and maybe throughout the United States. To me, that kind of pressure is completely inconsistent with the American criminal justice system. And the people who are putting on that pressure should be ashamed of themselves.

Dyson spars with Giuliani: "White people who are policemen who kill black people do not go to jail."

RUDY GIULIANI: Right. I was glad to see that we weren't, by the way. But the fact is, I find it very disappointing that you're not discussing the fact that 93% of blacks in America are killed by other blacks. We're talking about the exception here.

...

MICHAEL ERIC DYSON: Black people who kill black people go to jail. White people who are policemen who kill black people do not go to jail. If a jury can indict a ham sandwich, why is it taking so long?

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Below is a RUSH transcript of the 10AM feed of this morning's broadcast -- mandatory attribution to NBC News' "Meet the Press." A final transcript of the program will be available at www.MeetThePressNBC.com.

"MEET THE PRESS WITH CHUCK TODD"

November 23, 2014

CHUCK TODD:

This Sunday, tension in America on two fronts: race and immigration. In Ferguson, Missouri, ground zero for racial tensions.

RASHEEN ALDRIDGE:

Once you push so far, what do you do? You fight back.

CHUCK TODD:

The governor preemptively declares a state of emergency.

JAY NIXON:

Well, I'm not preparing for that. I'm preparing for peace.

CHUCK TODD:

And the nation waits to find out if a white police officer will be indicted for killing an unarmed black teenager. We'll go live to Ferguson. And in Washington, where Republicans vow to fight the president.

JOHN BOEHNER:

You're damaging the presidency itself.

CHUCK TODD:

After he unveils a sweeping executive action to get five million undocumented immigrants the right to stay and work legally in this country.

PRESIDENT OBAMA:

Our immigration system is broken. And everybody knows it.

CHUCK TODD:

Plus an American icon accused. Bill Cosby remains silent over multiple accusations of sexual assault as he loses a sitcom deal and Hollywood seems to walk away from him while venues cancel shows. And remembering former Washington D.C. mayor, Marion Barry. She died overnight at the age of 78.

I'm Chuck Todd and joining me to provide insight and analysis are NBC's Joe Scarborough, former Democratic governor of New Mexico, Bill Richardson, Amy Walter of The Cook Political Report, and MSNBC and Telemundo anchor, Jose Diaz-Balart. Welcome to Sunday, it's Meet the Press.

ANNOUNCER:

From NBC News in Washington, this is Meet the Press with Chuck Todd.

CHUCK TODD:

And good morning. Two big stories dominating the news this Sunday. We're going to go live to Ferguson, Missouri in a few minutes. But first, it's the aftermath of the president's decision on immigration. In total, about five million undocumented immigrants are now shielded from deportation under President Obama's plan. Who are these five million?

About four million are undocumented parents of legal American residents. And about 300,000 are young people who were brought to the country illegally but when they were children. The plan also applies to immigrants who have been in the U.S. for five years or more and they can pass a background check.

What's not there? Six million aren't covered at all and there is no pathway to citizenship right now for those five million that are covered. Deportations are being halted, but only for three years. There's also tougher border security being promised and deportation focus that is on new immigrant arrivals as well as criminals. Now in the aftermath, the GOP has been unified on one issue: how they describe the president.

JOHN BOEHNER

He's not an emperor. But he's sure acting like one.

TED CRUZ:

An unaccountable monarch.

CHUCK TODD:

And now the question is whether or not Republicans can get a bill passed through Congress. The president says he's done his part.

PRESIDENT OBAMA:

I cajoled and I called and I met. I told John Boehner, "Yeah, I'll wash your car. I'll walk your dog. Whatever you need to do. Just call the bill."

CHUCK TODD:

I asked my colleague John Yang to go down to Arizona to get a firsthand look at how people on the ground are reacting to the president's plan.

(BEGIN TAPE)

JOHN YANG:

El Mirage, Arizona, outside Phoenix, is the kind of place where President Obama's immigration policies become real, potentially changing lives.

MAIRA GOMEZ:

I'm going to be able to go to college now.

JOHN YANG (V/O):

Maira Gomez, brought here against the law from El Salvador by her parents ten years ago, is now eligible for protection.

JOHN YANG:

What do you want to study?

MAIRA GOMEZ:

I want to become a nurse and then become a detective.

JOHN YANG (V/O):

Sixteen-year-old Maria Flores watched the president on her laptop at soccer practice.

JOHN YANG:

How did you feel?

MARIA FLORES:

I felt happy because, you know, my mom's going to be -- you know, she's going to come out of the shadows.

JOHN YANG (V/O):

Maria's a citizen because she was born in Arizona. But her single mother is an undocumented, Mexican immigrant. Now her mom may work legally and not worry about being deported.

JOHN YANG:

Tell me what that's like to live in the shadows.

MARIA FLORES:

It's a really, you know, a big thing because, like, a lot of people are, like, you know, scared of, you know, sheriffs, you know, getting deported. Or, like, you know, not seeing their families ever again.

JOHN YANG (V/O):

Which is Maricopa County, where Sheriff Joe Arpaio is known for his tough stand on illegal immigration. He's already suing to block the new policy, calling it a "free pass" for undocumented immigrants.

JOE ARPAIO:

What about all the millions of people that come into our country, they wait for years to get here, and they do it the right way, and now how do you think they feel when you give them a "get out of jail" card free to these five million people?

JOHN YANG (V/O):

We asked a number of Republican groups for comment and they declined.

JOHN YANG:

El Mirage was founded by migrant farm workers from Mexico who wanted to put down roots of their own. Today, their descendants and newer arrivals, both documented and undocumented, still play a crucial role in the area's economy.

JOHN YANG (V/O):

No one knows how many undocumented immigrants already work illegally on farms, in restaurants, or in construction.

JOHN YANG:

What would it mean to this community if everyone who was undocumented was deported?

MAIRA GOMEZ:

This community would become like a ghost town. It'll be empty.

JOHN YANG (V/O):

Fourth generation West Valley farmer Kevin Rogers says the new policy helps agriculture get the workers it needs.

KEVIN ROGERS:

Today's folks don't want to work in the field. They don't want to drive my hay baler at 3:00 in the morning. They don't want to harvest lettuce. This is a career they choose not to do even at \$10, \$15 an hour they choose not to do that.

JOHN YANG (V/O):

For Maria Flores, it means hope for the future.

MARIA FLORES:

Go to college, you know, I'll have a better life. And I'll go through what mom has been through.

JOHN YANG (V/O):

The kind of future anyone would wish for the next generation. For Meet the Press John Yang, El Mirage, Arizona.

(END TAPE)

CHUCK TODD:

Again, a lot of Republican groups in Arizona did not want to respond on camera when we sent John Yang down there. I'm joined now by two members of so-called "gang of eight." They were the ones who drafted a bipartisan immigration bill in 2013 that passed the Senate only to essentially die in the House. Though technically, there's still a few more weeks of the session there.

Republican Senator Jeff Flake of Arizona and Democrat Bob Menendez of New Jersey. Thank you both for joining me. Senator Flake, let me start with you. Very quickly, Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio, his lawsuit, there's possibly a couple others that states may file. Do you support Arpaio's lawsuit against the president?

SENATOR JEFF FLAKE:

Well, what I think we ought to do is put legislation on the president's desk. You know, the president has only addressed one small portion of what needs to be done with immigration reform. We've got to do border security, interior enforcement, guest worker plan, and have a mechanism to deal with those who are here illegal. He has done one portion of the latter. So I'd rather move legislation on the other three items and put it on his desk. That would be my approach.

CHUCK TODD:

I understand that. But so are you for or against this lawsuit?

SENATOR JEFF FLAKE:

I haven't even seen the lawsuit. So I don't know what it contains. I do think that--

(OVERTALK)

CHUCK TODD:

Do you think it's appropriate to sue the president on his action?

SENATOR JEFF FLAKE:

I do think that the president moved beyond his authority, no less than The Washington Post editorial board has opined about that. Having said that, for my role in the Senate, I think we ought to put legislation on the president's desk. That ought to be the response.

CHUCK TODD:

Senator Menendez, let me pick up on legal case here. The question is whether the president can be impacting millions of people with prosecutorial discretion and things like that. Are you comfortable that this meets a constitutional test?

SENATOR BOB MENENDEZ:

Oh, absolutely. Look, 11 presidents going back to President Eisenhower on 39 separate occasions issued executive actions on immigration over the last 60 years. And the most recent significant one was President Reagan and the first President Bush, who issued executive actions that protected 1.5 million undocumented people in the country, which is about 40% of all the undocumented in the country at the time.

And over a hundred constitutional law professors in the country have issued statements to the president before he acted that this was well within his authority. So look, as a result of the president's actions, more felons will be deported, more border patrol will be at the southern border, more people will pay taxes, and more families will be able to stay together. I think those are goals that are worthy of being achieved.

CHUCK TODD: