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Wed, Mar 22, 2023 2:11PM 46:56

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, thought, person, vanessa, talk, vote, jeff chandler, austin, turned, mickey leland, legislators, bill, jimmy, transgendered, hate crimes bill, activist, lobbyists, activism, houston, point

SPEAKERS

Sarah DePalma, Jimmy Carper, Vanessa Edwards

J Jimmy Carper 00:01
Jimmy Carter, this is Katie hefty Houston and K er West College state shake.

V Vanessa Edwards 00:06
He's actually turning redder than

S Sarah DePalma 00:10
me. But it's not easy.

J Jimmy Carper 00:13
Vanessa are here and I'm turning it over to them.

V Vanessa Edwards 00:18
And 15 shades of pink at the same time.

S Sarah DePalma 00:22
That's all right. You have to see him here when when we're sitting on the air and Jimmy's poking me in the ribs going quietly. I smell smoke. Like what do you mean you

J Jimmy Carper 00:32

smell smoke? Yeah, when or the story of the first time we met? Yeah, the first time she came into the studio, she was asked by one of my other co hosts to be a guest. And to be interviewed. That co host didn't show up. Sara walks in. I have no idea. And I'm standing here in the grass and

S Sarah DePalma 00:57
aggressive hula skirt. I figured I'm riding home in this studio. Hey, know the cost? rhotic part is that co host got fired.

V Vanessa Edwards 01:14
Serendipity

S Sarah DePalma 01:17
it was kind of weird, but that's alright. Yeah, no,

J Jimmy Carper 01:19
it's weird. I don't know why I was wearing a hula skirt. Somebody brought it and you know, it was kind of worrying. Sarah G brought it where he brought it. Yeah. And put it on? Cuz I don't know why. Because I go to Hawaii every year. She happened. I don't know where she found it.

S Sarah DePalma 01:35
Yeah. So you're in for some just one to make therapy. So she walked in the studio with neuro was coming up and he said, Who are you? Yeah. I said, I'm your I'm your guest tonight. And he says you are?

J Jimmy Carper 01:48
Yeah. So she ended up being the co host for the whole show. So it was great. Yeah,

S Sarah DePalma 01:54
it was just we just kind of funny how it worked out. Yeah, it was it was meant to happen.

J Jimmy Carper 01:59
It was it really was it really was it cuz I was looking for transgendered co hosts. It's

- S** Sarah DePalma 02:07
funny when I did an interview with you Australian broadcast network. And they couldn't get over the idea that a transgendered person could be a could be a radio person in Texas. They've got this idea, you know that the Texas is like John Wayne. And I'd say that well no, that's not exactly true. You know, Houston. Yeah. And you know what, this is where this space center is located in Baldwin that say yes, but this is Texas in America. They just couldn't
- V** Vanessa Edwards 02:37
get some people in Texas I think that too.
- S** Sarah DePalma 02:40
And ironically, now they have a transgendered person who's on the Australian broadcast network that and that will happen at least in part because we had her on the air here live from Australia. We did we did
- J** Jimmy Carper 02:52
and they really loose have loosened up to New Zealand has Zealand transgendered Mayor Yeah, in one of their towns.
- V** Vanessa Edwards 03:01
There's actually a transgendered city council person in one of the the cities in the outback in Australia.
- S** Sarah DePalma 03:08
They just had a transgender person elected mayor in one of the cities of South Africa
- J** Jimmy Carper 03:12
Whoa, so good, good good making headway
- V** Vanessa Edwards 03:15
all around the world

S Sarah DePalma 03:16
all around the world and except here, speaking of saying sometimes we even gained an inch in Texas.

J Jimmy Carper 03:25
We can go in there. I have two easy something that I pulled off the net and I know you've already seen it, but we haven't talked about it yet. Jimmy's digging through his list of stuff here I am.

V Vanessa Edwards 03:42
I am a member of things.

S Sarah DePalma 03:46
If there's anything Jimmy does he comes prepared.

J Jimmy Carper 03:47
Yes. He Yes. But not organized. Unfortunate. Well, I

S Sarah DePalma 03:53
didn't say that.

J Jimmy Carper 03:56
I may have to like kind of talk about it. Wing it somebody make it has written their memoirs. And in it they talk about movie star Jeff Chandler

S Sarah DePalma 04:13
using the that was trying to think your name now she didn't start with Esther Williams. That's right. Write it for the audience who may be too young to remember this. Jeff Chandler was a really hunky guy. Oh, yeah. And you may remember him best for movie Buck co chiefs that he did. Well, here's Jeff Chandler, you know, white guy

J Jimmy Carper 04:34
nortravina Cochise. But he was always reallv Butch. He did these butchv girls reallv

portraying Coombes. But he was always really, but he did these safety gins really,

S Sarah DePalma 04:38

Butch movies and supposedly, according to Esther Williams, he was across dress. Yeah. She came home one night and he was in a red chiffon dress or something. And it just absolutely freaked her out. Yeah, about Jeff.

J Jimmy Carper 04:51

They had been dating for quite a while and sounds like they were living together actually. After that she moved out the next day they

S Sarah DePalma 05:01

she'd be seriously contemplating marry him up until that

J Jimmy Carper 05:04

point. Yeah. And I think that she couldn't stop screaming. Yeah. And have

S Sarah DePalma 05:09

you ever seen Jeff Chandler? I mean, I can't picture him in her nightgown. Sorry.

V Vanessa Edwards 05:13

I don't know what he looks like it.

S Sarah DePalma 05:15

Oh, he was a real he was a real funky looking dude. Usually dark skin played in Indian a lot for some reason. Yeah, get started typecast or he was in oil like these be westerns and he would always be the captain that would come to the rescue.

J Jimmy Carper 05:29

Kind of rugged. Yeah, real rough. Yeah,

S Sarah DePalma 05:32

.....

yeah. And, oh, well, if it's true, that's interesting.

J Jimmy Carper 05:37

Have a woman from Richmond, Richmond, Richmond, Texas, had a musical request for long stockings are the main offices. And those are two groups I've been looking to get I, I don't have anything by either of those groups. But I know the groups that I've been looking for their, their stuff. So if she can call back and let me know how I can get music by either of those two groups, I would be very happy. The Mavis is I believe, are a punk group out of Australia, as I recall, because John, generally who is a member of the pansy division was on the show a few years ago when he had one of their CDs. And we played a cut at that time.

S Sarah DePalma 06:21

Yeah, yeah. Well, let's go. Let's go ahead and get into this discussion. Yes, I started to tell the audience earlier that there's a magazine you may very well be familiar with called the attorney reader. And it is a magazine, they they compile the best of what they call the alternative media. And so you could say I guess it's kind of all a moderately conservative type of thing. And in any case, any reader has in their, their July and August issue, their cover is called. So they say changing the world is hard. Why bother? And the issue is about why would anyone want to be an activist in a world the cynicism and cynics and, you know, I mean, let's face it being an activist is hard. And so some, you know, just the word activist scares a lot of people off, you know, why don't want to be an activist. And I thought that would be kind of an interesting topic, because Vanessa, being from a little bit, a little bit of a different generation, I don't think probably cares for the word activist, even though that's what she does. That's, I think, I think it's kind of a generational thing. She now we're talking about this earlier. Activism is what the people in the 60s and 70s did. Today, we have dialogues, right? You know,

V Vanessa Edwards 07:40

you speak with people, you sit down and work out a compromise. It's all very business oriented. You take the 90s approach to everything's, let's, let's meet over lunch.

J Jimmy Carper 07:51

Yes, our lunch.

S Sarah DePalma 07:53

I think a lot of people you say the word activism, they think that means Oh, protest in the street? Well,

V Vanessa Edwards 07:57

that's exactly the way that I viewed it. I really was very loath to even get involved in any kind of

that's exactly the way that I viewed it, I really was very loath to even get involved in any kind of activism. In fact, it's kind of funny, many years ago, the only time the only participation I ever had in the political process was just the occasional votes. And that was usually votes in protest.

S

Sarah DePalma 08:19

Vote for George McGovern. Yeah. That's

V

Vanessa Edwards 08:21

why I did not want any anything to do with activism is because I really disliked the political process that much I assumed anything to do with politics. I hated all politicians. I thought, you know, every one of them were corrupted cetera, et cetera. And there was nothing that I could do to change any of this. I

J

Jimmy Carper 08:41

felt the same way until until a nice ran for office. Exactly.

S

Sarah DePalma 08:48

You know, and it's funny, because the longer I've worked with politicians, the more I've come to see them as cowards.

V

Vanessa Edwards 08:54

Well, yes, and no, I believe a lot of that, even though it is cowardice, in one sense. I think a lot of what they are doing is an attempt to compromise to stay elected is what they're trying to stay like, yes, there are some individuals that are a little more principled in indeed, you do have to, in essence, kind of give a little to get a little. And that's one of the things that I guess I learned in the entire process. Before I didn't even I guess I didn't, I couldn't fathom that. To me, it was all or nothing. It was very, very much stuck with idealism and pragmatism was only as a last ditch effort to save your life and in which point after you did so you reverted immediately back to idealism and, and to heck with them, they didn't believe with my ideal so I just, I wouldn't get involved with it. But when I actually started doing it, and started seeing, number one, the problems involved in it, and the scope and the size of what it wasn't we were trying to get accomplished. I started thinking, My God, this is too big of a task, I think a bit off more than I can chew. I need to back out of this. But I couldn't. It can be very intimidating. Well, the main reason I even started any of this was because you were tired.

S

Sarah DePalma 10:17

I got tired, burned out. And so that's it. I'm out of here.

V Vanessa Edwards 10:20

I sat there in your living room in shock. I was going, Wait, you can't do this.

S Sarah DePalma 10:25

I guess I had enough. That's exactly what she told me. gotten to the point Laurie had to send me an email to get my attention. And I thought, That's it, we're over the line.

V Vanessa Edwards 10:34

He's gonna be doing this. I mean, who's gonna do the ad the name and gender change? Who's going to be pushing for our rights on employment, non discrimination, and you remember your response?

S Sarah DePalma 10:46

Nobody

V Vanessa Edwards 10:49

was gonna be somebody, but it's not gonna be me. That's right. And I just kind of sat there. And I thought, Well, somebody's got to do this. Yeah. And in my mind, it was somebody else. Well, we

J Jimmy Carper 11:00

always have that, you know, somebody else has got to do this. We never think of us

V Vanessa Edwards 11:05

exactly. And that's the person that was my first reaction. I shopped it around at the other groups, just kind of dropping the news and waiting for someone to pick it up and become the new, I guess, activist or new leader, whatever you want to call them. I wanted someone else to do it. And I didn't want anything to do with it. Sarah basically was the one that was saying, Well, you can do it, anyone can do it. It just takes actually getting out there. And taking the time and visiting with these people. And I, I just, I basically blew that off.

S Sarah DePalma 11:38

That shows you the effect.

V Vanessa Edwards 11:41

Somebody else can take this and do that. That's good advice for someone else. But I shopped it around the end, when I told everyone that Sarah was retiring. It was basically a big shrug and well, so

S Sarah DePalma 11:57

told me it was a good thing every time. No, because help was not forthcoming.

V Vanessa Edwards 12:04

It was very depressing. I actually went home I was just about at the point of tears. I thought we can't just, you know, have a vacuum. And I knew Phyllis, Phyllis was limited in what she could do.

J Jimmy Carper 12:17

You bet. She had been doing a lot for many, many, many long conference and become a

S Sarah DePalma 12:21

full time. Yeah.

V Vanessa Edwards 12:23

And Sarah was the number two person she was, in essence, the point person for the statewide lobbying the statewide activism. And I thought, well, we've lost that. And these stupid people around here don't even realize that they've lost. I thought, Why can't someone see this and pick up the ball? And I got home and I started looking at myself in the mirror. And I thought, well, I'm saying this about everyone else. So I'm doing the same thing. And it finally dawned on me, well, you know, if I want someone to pick up the ball and do it, just pick it up myself. And

S Sarah DePalma 12:55

I've been off more than I could chew was the problem I had. I was at that time was the national director for time, America, the state politics had been going very badly, we were doing protests. And I just felt like I was getting beaten up from every front. And at some point, I just had to get out just to save my own neck. It I mean, that's basically what it came down to is I had to get out for a while just to save myself.

J Jimmy Carper 13:16

jimmy carper 13:10

Well, not only that, but more people needed to get involved. As long as you were doing any everything. Nobody else was going to step up to the bat.

S

Sarah DePalma 13:25

And that was actually part of what I was hoping is that if I would step back, some other people say, Well, wait a minute, we'll give you some help. And that didn't exactly happen. Well, eventually, it did eventually. And that was largely Vanessa's doing. But I had just reached the point where I simply could not do it alone anymore. I couldn't go to local hearing city hearing state hearings, national hearings, all by myself out of my own pocket. It just wasn't possible.

V

Vanessa Edwards 13:48

Very first time I went up and lobbied that was my first exposure to any activism. And I thought it was going to be a one time shot. I'll go up there. I'll speak with these guys. They'll get the message. And it'll be done. Everything's pretty much academic. Wrong. didn't quite work that way. Oh, no. In fact, I actually had the very last appointment I had from the other first trip up there was probably the best I've ever had. It was very eye opening. But it was also very depressing as well, because the guy I spoke with his name was Tom Walz. He was with Senator bumpers his office at the time. Um, he was the legislative director there, and gave me a lot of the inside story as to what was going on. And one of the things that I had pressed was the, the information that held us had given us on the end of vote and Senate. And he basically sat me down and said, well, I need to let you know something. What you're seeing is not actually what happened. Right. And I kind of looked at most of what he mean. He said, there's a lot of politics involved here. You're aware of that? And I said yes. And That's when he basically informed me of a lot of the machinations that are involved in back of a lot of these votes. And in back of a lot of the motions and whether or not something makes it to the floor gets voted on, etcetera, etcetera. And I came away from that meeting about six o'clock in the evening, extremely depressed. I was very happy to have the information in to see everything is clearly. But at the same time, it was also not the information I was wanting. And I thought this is going to take a long time.

S

Sarah DePalma 15:33

Well, I think that's actually what scares people off of politics. You know, as somebody that's, you know, a child of the 60s and the Watergate era. I used to get a lot of, and I still get this at work. Sometimes people will say to me, you don't trust the government at all to you? They'll say no. So why not? It's because I grew up in the 60s, we were being lied to thrown through the government's teeth at every turn. I grew up with Watergate and Richard, tricky Dicky Nixon. And as you know, I have I always want to get T shirts. I'm worse as I still hate Nixon, even though even after he's dead, even after he's dead, I still hate Nixon. It but I think that turned a lot of people off. And I think you're exactly right, people. First of all, I don't think people feel like the government really works for them, which is generally true. All right, I'm sorry to say it but worse, they don't feel like they can have any any impact toward changing it. And that's a problem. Yep.

- V Vanessa Edwards 16:36
Commercial Free and listener sponsored. Houston is 90.1 KPFT, the sound of Texas of Pacifica network station KPFT, Houston, KOLs College Station. Great blend.
- S Sarah DePalma 16:48
That was so subtle. Sorry.
- V Vanessa Edwards 16:54
I love segues
- S Sarah DePalma 16:56
in I think when they see people like us that are politically active, they don't understand it. And I've had people tell me, Listen, you can't accomplish anything. Why do you keep doing it? And I keep telling I keep saying zoom. But if you never go, you're guaranteed to accomplish nothing. And they'll say, Well, isn't that a little bit like bashing your head at the wall? And I'll say yes, but the Berlin Wall came down. And
- V Vanessa Edwards 17:22
you know what I had bashing letterhead bashing.
- S Sarah DePalma 17:24
That's right. And but people there are a lot of people who just don't grasp that. And I'll give you I really got in real. Down on politics. I worked on just part time as an aide with Mickey Leland office. And I'll never forget, we were in the House of Representatives. And there was a vote that came up on an airplane. It had failed every single test that had been given. The Navy said they didn't want it. And that bill passed, that plane got voted in. And Mickey Lee, I swear to God, true story. Mickey Leland got up and said, Well, let me see if I understand this. This plane doesn't fly. It doesn't fly. It doesn't do anything that it's supposed to do. And it failed every test. And did we just vote for this yet this plane? Well, the answer was so many deals had been made behind the scenes. My bill and I'll vote for your bill, that when this thing came up, it was going to get passed no matter what. And I'll never forget one of the congressmen as we were walking out turning Mickey Leland said, you know, I can't be seen as being soft on defense. To which mica Leland said how can you can be considered pro defense. If you vote for playing it won't fly. That must really scare the hell out of the Russian.
- V Vanessa Edwards 18:34
Yeah, just fly the plane over Russia.

S

Sarah DePalma 18:38

You can see how people would really get cynical about politics when you see things like that go down. Yes. And you know, you're in school and you get taught you the American government in your civics class. You go and you you go to a Washington or to go to Austin and you find out oh, my God, my civics class was written by a bachelor wires. There's nothing that happens in Austin or Washington. That's like you've been told in your civics class. And and actually, to me, that's half the challenge was to figure out how it did work. And I'm still learning that that's what we talked about tonight was even though we didn't get any bills passed in the last session, we really got an education and, and we've gotten a lot of really good advice. And we're, you know, we've learned a lot from from it. And I think a lot of people are just they're not willing to work that hard. I can see why people would walk away and throw their hands up and say To hell with it.

V

Vanessa Edwards 19:31

Well, the thing is that we can't do this alone. I found this out in February when I went up that very first time, and I thought, Okay, well I know this is going to take a lot of effort and it's going to take a lot of time. And I can't do this forever myself. I started thinking basically about what you were saying. And like I said, I approach this with, you know, this being a one time shot. I really had no inclinations whatsoever towards activism and

J

Jimmy Carper 19:59

Porter You fell right into it though girl is so good.

S

Sarah DePalma 20:05

It's like being in the circus, it gets in your blood, you can't get out of it.

V

Vanessa Edwards 20:09

They made me mad.

S

Sarah DePalma 20:13

It takes righteous indignation. That'll do it

V

Vanessa Edwards 20:17

to the point where I'm starting to get confrontational, and that kind of bothers me a little bit. Well, tonight I was, I guess, kind of challenging. I guess a couple of things. And it's like

J Jimmy Carper 20:29
no, Hamnet has helped you out on that too. i Yes.

V Vanessa Edwards 20:32
confrontational.

J Jimmy Carper 20:36
You do what you do, what kind of that's kind of almost closeted confrontationalism, because you don't have to face the person. But then then you get it into your blood and then face.

S Sarah DePalma 20:48
Yeah, sometimes that's what's required. You know, and that's what we're talking about tonight. Now, we're in pretty good terms with the Lesbian Gay rights lobby. But there was a lot of there were a lot of years when we weren't Oh, yeah. And what turned that around was the protest that we did in Austin. We stole their thunder, we embarrass them, we stole their television coverage. I ended up speaking to 8000 thought 8000 people and she went home at the end result of that was the next time there was a legislative session. She didn't want to repeat of that. And so we work together. And so sometimes as my you know, is the the time and place for those kinds of confrontations is getting thinner. And and for further in part, as we learned to work together, yes, but there were times when it was really necessary, because that was the only tactic left open to us. It's just like, I'm in still in favor of the next time the HRC has an event here in Houston. I'm in favor of leafleting the hell out of them.

V Vanessa Edwards 21:49
I don't mind the air very pleasantly.

S Sarah DePalma 21:51
Sweet, and just leaflet the hell out of you say, Did you know The HRC is screwing us around in here? Let me tell you what, yeah. It and I know the last time I said that I got a bunch of flack from some people in the community said, Well, you know, if you do that, you know, HRC is going to turn on us my approaches they've already turned on its Huawei has exactly Hello. We have no support from them. We can't do anything wrong, right.

V Vanessa Edwards 22:17
Actually, one thing I was thinking about is when we leave let them we can also pass out some

flyers for a gITF. And maybe, you know, give them an opportunity or an option.

S Sarah DePalma 22:26
I don't know. I don't know how they would feel about about like it. Yeah,

V Vanessa Edwards 22:29
I mean, let them know what a real organization. Yes.

S Sarah DePalma 22:34
About a dictatorship.

V Vanessa Edwards 22:35
A Exactly.

J Jimmy Carper 22:37
And a group that understands community.

V Vanessa Edwards 22:39
Yeah, yeah. And they truly do. In fact, if anything, they are probably more human rights than the Human Rights Campaign. don't really believe in it. That's a principle.

S Sarah DePalma 22:49
And what's happened now, Jimmy is that there are people in the community they're we're starting to see Vanessa as a role model. Yep.

V Vanessa Edwards 22:55
Which shocks me?

J Jimmy Carper 22:58
It happens.

S Sarah DePalma 22:59
It shocks me and

V Vanessa Edwards 23:00
it's like, what are you doing?

S Sarah DePalma 23:01
Jimmy Sam, hearkening back? Me? YEAH. Jimmy sat here in the air with me one night and says, you realize you're you're becoming a role model. And I remember sitting you say, oh, no, I'm not. In Jimmy said, Oh, yes. You know, you just don't realize it. No, no, no. Well, he's fully you know, what? And then sure, it wasn't too long after that. I started hearing from people who say, you know, I transition because of you. And I thought, Damn, Jimmy had it right. But this is really scary stuff.

J Jimmy Carper 23:25
Yeah. Because you feel that responsibility. And you're afraid oh, gosh, if I said something that'll throw somebody over the edge, or, you know, it really is kind of a decision theory thing.

S Sarah DePalma 23:38
The decision making process for things is really scary to give example, Vanessa night tonight coming in, we're talking about the next legislative session, and what we needed to do between now on that, and what kind of bills we wanted to do in the next session. And I said, Well, I the next session, the only bill, I want to go forward with his name and gender change bill, and we're going to concentrate on one bill and get it passed. So we can say we had a success. But then we started to think about it Well, that's fine, but that is almost exclusively a transsexual bill. Well, how are the cross dressers is going to feel we don't want the cross dressers being left out. Okay. So Vanessa says, Well, you know, we ought to really do something with the hate crimes bill. Well see, and I have a problem with that, because I think hate crimes laws are basically lousy laws. So we were talking about that. And the point is, that the the the creation of an agenda is no easy matter. No, there's just two people involved and we had really different views. When you start and go out and solicit those opinions from people around the state, you end up with 50 different views, then you have to finally make a decision and live by it knowing that you're gonna get criticized for because you made a decision. Oh,

V Vanessa Edwards 24:48
oh, well, I agree that we do need to focus a little more, maybe we need to winnow down as opposed to going in with seven or eight different bills that we're pushing for. But something even just two bills, too. bills, we can make concise we can make it, you know, a very good

strike. And I still kind of I know, it's it's a difference in the philosophies. But I still think that we can utilize hate crimes, if for nothing else to keep the information out there with the legislators to let them know that yes, this is still happening. And this is why and it gives us the opportunity to educate while we're there, so

S

Sarah DePalma 25:24

I can live with two. I don't want to go more than that, though. But say that for the audience, this is how these decisions get made. Now, the hard part of being an activist, or I guess, in my case, because I'm really interested in the state politics, a lot of people aren't I just saw a survey the other day where seven out of 10 people couldn't identify their state legislator. Oh, they don't know. They they had no idea. When and what brought this up was the tax free weekend. Apparently nobody in the community knew was coming up except the retailers. And they knew what the legislature had done

J

Jimmy Carper 26:01

that just drove me crazy. Because all of the ads that weekend, were, you know, come in for the sale. Nobody was having a sale, you just didn't pay the tax isn't paid tax.

V

Vanessa Edwards 26:12

Yeah. Well, that's not a sale. No, no false advertise No, got it.

S

Sarah DePalma 26:15

The point is that I've always been fascinated with state politics. Now realize, for a lot of people, that's like talking about third world. But on the other hand, what they do in the state legislature is going to affect you a lot more directly than anything Congress does. With the exception of the IRS, you bet anything the state legislature does, or the city council does, is going to affect you immediately. So my real focus of interest is always been in the state. And it's one of the reasons I like I want to make sure that we keep teaching going. Because that that's that's the part that it's interesting to me. At the same time, I've had to learn over a period of years, that once a decision is made, you have to live by it. And you just have to know that you're going to take a ton of criticism because you made a decision. Yep. And you can't back down because you get criticized, there is the decision, this is what we're going forward with into discussion.

J

Jimmy Carper 27:05

And it may be hard, or it may be one of those things that you go for is the hate crimes bill that you're not really all that thrilled about.

S

Sarah DePalma 27:15

I'm not thrilled about it. But we promoted last time because the people in the community wanted in even though I think it's really a poor law. The community believes in it. And I've always felt like it was my responsibility to promote what the community believed, not what I believed. But that's a judgment call. Yeah, I mean, you know, that's a judgment call. I don't like the hate crimes legislation is it's it was it was word of the last session, maybe it would be worded differently this time. But it's if the community says this, and we believe in this bill, we want to do it, then we'll promote it. But I want to be

J Jimmy Carper 27:52
the community is going to be for a hate crimes bill.

S Sarah DePalma 27:55
I think so too.

V Vanessa Edwards 27:56
I think some I do. Yeah. It's not so much a matter. I've heard the argument and there is a lot of validity to the fact that it is in essence trying to probe into the mind of an individual and kind of legislate against their thoughts. But in essence, isn't that what they do when they discern between manslaughter and first degree murder? Yep, yes, the same type of approach you're taking in individuals thoughts in basically imposing whether or not there is premeditation or not. So in essence, that's not really something that to me holds, I guess, a lot of

S Sarah DePalma 28:35
say, saying I was telling her that I'm opposed to the death penalty. And if they hate crimes law is going to mean more death penalties than I don't want to do that.

J Jimmy Carper 28:46
The other argument is that we already have laws on the books about battering and beating somebody out are killing them. That's my so when you make a hate crimes,

S Sarah DePalma 28:59
enforce the current laws. We do have hate crimes laws.

J Jimmy Carper 29:03
Well, when we went when you make these new laws, then you use you have a special you have special rights. Yeah. Especially people.

V Vanessa Edwards 29:14

Well, actually, yes. But then again, no, if you word this correctly, if indeed you make this for all categories for everyone, be it a hate crime against a heterosexual, white male, straight, you know, from the suburbs, all the way to you know, a gay transgendered African American activist, yeah, if you can word this where it includes everyone, then there is indeed no special rights. You are covering each and every class. But the thing is, we have to word this very broadly, to be able to do this and make sure that we in essence, leave no holes in here for anything to leak

S Sarah DePalma 29:56

now for the audience, then what they're hearing from us in this Question is the reason that we're activists when we come right down to it is we care? Yes. I mean, that's the bottom line. And for me, the question has always been, why is it that we care and the vast majority don't. And it's taken me a long time to realize that's not exactly true. No, it isn't true. The truth of the matter is that the vast majority out there feel helpless. And they feel like there's nothing that they can do will make a difference that they feel because they're individuals, they can't make a change. But that's really not true. I think I've told this story before. But we're coming back from Austin, after we had we had made a presentation and with the Wendy Ellen and Denise cop in the backseat. And I look back, and Denise has got tears coming out of her eyes. And I said, What's the matter with you? She says nothing. She said, It's just that I never thought that anything I ever did would matter. And we listened to the three of you talk tonight, and you all made sense, and something happened. And I thought about that a long time afterwards. And I've come to realize that that's probably the view of the vast majority. Sure, they don't get down politics. And they've thrown their hands up at politics, or because they feel like there's nothing they can do. And the political system really doesn't work for them at all. Amen. And in a lot of ways, they're right. One of the one of the things that always bothered me, whether you go to Washington, or you go to or you go to Austin, is that the halls are lined with corporate lobbyists. I remember going and listening to a hearing one time that that it was over over the idea of, of competition in the power rates. There wasn't a single citizen in that room. That room was totally filled with political lobbyists from power companies. And and I kept thinking, Where is the citizen voice in this? Well, I guess the theory was assistant voice was in was in the the person running the hearing the people person who had been elected, on the other hand, who paid for their election. You know, if I tell you how bad it is, in Washington, they have temporary agencies that hire line standards. What these people are paid to do is to go stand in line at the various hearings, and keep the place for live and lobbyists until lobbyists can get there and take that seat. Whoa. Now, to me, I look at that, and I think you want to know what's wrong with our system? I've got some places to start. Yeah. And you know, you take a look at who paid for their for their election. You know, for just to give you an example, if you take a look at Phil Gramm, who pays for Phil Graham's elections, Big Oil. Yeah, pretty much. And so is it a big surprise that Phil Gramm is 100% Pro Big Oil dollar? I wonder why there's that connection. And so I can see why why people think, oh, there's nothing I can do. There is no hope, big money runs. And yet, that's really not true. When you go to the state legislature. Individuals can make a difference. You have to be savvy enough, though, to know how to do it.

J Jimmy Carper 33:12

Yeah. And that's, I think that's a biggie. We don't know how and we think that it's all there's a big complicated thing. And then it's just impossible. It's

V Vanessa Edwards 33:22

extremely frightening. Yeah, I went up there the first time knowing nothing. I went up there as green as could be. I had one government class in high school. And that was it. That was my extent as far as political knowledge savvy. other night, I voted a few times. And I had the information that the fellows gave us. But I walked in there at the very first meeting, I actually took a lead on to do the lobbying. I fell flat on my face. I just started stumbling stammering and it to me, I thought that was horrible.

S Sarah DePalma 33:54

Welcome to the growth process.

V Vanessa Edwards 33:58

Apparently legislative aide was very, very generous. He complimented Phyllis on our visit, which kind of shocked me, I thought, No, this, apparently he must have told her what had happened. But the thing was that even if you're just out there, stumbling or you know, kind of bumbling your way through this. We are individuals and a lot of the the legislative aides, even though they don't give us maybe as much credibility as say, for instance, a lot of the political lobbyists, it still registers on a different level than what the paid lobbyists.

J Jimmy Carper 34:37

Because if a citizen shows up, that means, you know, if one citizen is talking has this opinion, then there must be a lot more out there who feel the same way if this citizen felt it important enough to go to Austin and make the presentation.

S Sarah DePalma 34:54

Was it hard to paraphrase Arlo Guthrie if one person show up they think he's not and they put him in jail. If two people show up, they figure there are two nuts, but they won't put them in jail. If three people who show up it's a movement, they start to listen to what you have to.

V Vanessa Edwards 35:12

The thing is to get this kind of information out there. That's one of the reasons I sent the some of the tats newsletters to Washington and Austin to some of the friendlier legislators, actually, to Washington senator, even some of the lesser than friendly legislators, but I wanted them to see the picture on the front page of a standing there in front of the Capitol, wanted them to get

a picture of that and to see the number of people that were actually out there. So they knew that well, yes, this is, you know, just kind of a group of 50 people. But these are 50 people that are taking their time and precious few funds that they have to fly across the country and take time out of their schedule their work schedules or you know, vacations or what have you to go up and pay a visit on them. This

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Sarah DePalma 36:00

is something that means that much to him. It's not just a mere vacation, we were up there working. Yeah, it was a very strange thing for me to go from being the 60s anti war, rather radical activist. You know, the person who had gone south to be a freedom writer, it was a very strange experience, to go from being that person who worked outside of anything to working inside of it. And it's happened the other day, now I'm really going to show my age. But in the 60s, it was in a rock group called country Joe in the fit. Oh, yeah, yeah, well, country, Joe McDonald, who at the time, came up with some of the most interesting anti war lyrics, you can say, you can't see in the air. recently ran for Congress in California. Shooting. Wow. And it shows you how much the times have changed. Okay, when when, when this guy who writes, you know, the ultimate anti war song, the fixin to die rag, goes from that to running for Congress, and he ran a close race. He didn't lose by much he lost in a Republican sweep out there. So it was not entirely his fault. But again, it shows you how that indeed, the times have changed in that today, if you want to get it done, you really do have to do it from inside the system. Now having said that, then, but when you go back to why bother? Why would you Why bother to do any of this, because this makes a difference in your life.

J

Jimmy Carper 37:32

Sure does.

V

Vanessa Edwards 37:33

It's very, very miniscule, you don't see it. And it's very gradual, you won't notice it. But you only notice it when you look back over the course of years. It's kind of looking at, like looking at a photograph. That's a good analogy, you look at a photograph of who you are in what you look like now. And then think of a photograph of you from three or four years ago, when you first began your transition.

S

Sarah DePalma 37:58

Hmm. I burned the pictures of my early

V

Vanessa Edwards 38:02

I still got them. Unfortunately, in fact, one I'm just recently popped up in a GCTC photo album. So scary, but it at least gives you some kind of Oh, a touchstone as to how far you've actually come. Because otherwise, you don't really have any kind of way of measuring this.

S

Sarah DePalma 38:20

And for those people who are sitting out there and say, Well, you know, I could never do any of this. You know, I don't have the time. You know, that's not true. For example, the League of Women Voters has breakfast, from time to time a sort of get to know your legislator breakfast, you can make one of those, they're free. You can get to talk to 30 or 40 legislators here in a matter of a couple of hours, one person can make a difference. And one of the things that we've we've found is that when we go as citizen lobbyists, as citizens activist, they will give us a lot more time than they will to professional, because we are rare. And we are the voices that got them elected. Yep. That really does make a difference to them. And it didn't seem to matter whether that was in Congress, or whether it was in Austin, the fact that we were in they would ask sometimes ask us, you know, what lobbying organization are you with? And we say, well, actually, we're with the citizen based organization. Do we have no paid people, and we changed their whole attitude, that this was a totally volunteer kind of thing. And we were there only because this issue was on our mind. And even people who disagree with our points of view, with very few exceptions, people would say to us, I really disagree with your view. But I respect your courage for coming here and doing this. So that even even if you didn't get when anyone over, you hadn't made an enemy either. And the next time the vote came up, they would remember that, gee, this person came in and talk to me. And all we ever hoped for this last time we went to Austin, was that they would see us as human beings, and it would make it harder to legislate against us. That's all we were trying to do. And I think we succeeded that. In the process, we gather a whole lot of useful information, so that we will know how to do things more effectively in the future. But there is no reason why any individual person can't be involved in some capacity government. You know, you city council, whether you're talking about your own city council. Yeah. One person who shows up the talk counts for 50. Voters. Yes. So anybody who doesn't think that you win you that you have a voice is sorely mistaken. And the same is true of you'll send a personal letter, not these form letters where you got a million signatures because those thrown in the trash. But if you send a personal letter, and you sign it, that's viewed as 50 votes, by those people in Washington or in Austin, that almost 100?

J

Jimmy Carper 40:59

Well, some large factor, you know, a whole lot more than one. So

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Sarah DePalma 41:03

yes, exactly. So for those people who see out there and think they have no voice or that their opinion doesn't matter, nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, because you're not a paid lobbyist, your voice and you and your voice matters more. Mm hmm. It's true. I mean, that really does make a difference. One of the things they point out in this article, and I found to be the case, too, is that when a person goes in talks to a legislator, the legislators are always surprised, but what the people know. I thought that was really interesting believe that a lot of legislators are of the view that the people really don't know diddly squat. And it's always an education to find out that the people are a lot smarter than the year before.



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J Jimmy Carper 41:50

I actually never thought of that. Yeah,

S Sarah DePalma 41:53

well, but but it's really true. In in sometimes it works out in odd in odd ways. I'm getting an opportunity to speak with Barbara Jordan one time. And you talk about talking about the voice of God, Barbara Jordan is like the voice. And I remember asking her, you know, does she pay attention to the letters that she gets? And she said, not only does she pay attention, but she quoted them in congressional hearings. Wow. Now, I thought that was pretty interesting may explain why Barbara Jordan was the way she was. She wasn't

J Jimmy Carper 42:25

incredible that out now. Now there was a woman or a person in in government who I thought was was above everything else. I went to her for anything. When she when she spoke other other other senators, other representatives.

S Sarah DePalma 42:45

Listen, I was in Congress. One day, Kimmy, I was in the in the Congress. And there was a debate going on over hunger program. I'll never forget it. And the debate was whether they should put money in missiles or in food. And I'm Barbara Jordan had hadn't been there long. She was actually bring more than Mickey Leland bills forward. And so there was this huge discussion about this. And finally, Barbara Jordan, just you know, she got disgusted and stood up and the whole house of representatives got quiet. It was like they she admitted along, but the word had gotten out about this woman. And she turned to this other Congressman, I forget him where he's from now. And she said to him, Have you ever been hungry? And he says, Well, no, not really. She's well, I have you ever been dirt poor? No. Well, I have. Have you ever had people come to you and say I have absolutely no money and I have kids to feed tonight. What am I going to do? He says no, she says then you don't know what you're talking about. Sit down and shut up.

J Jimmy Carper 43:43

She would do that. Yeah, he did. Yes. He did.

V Vanessa Edwards 43:51

Impressive. I like her.

S Sarah DePalma 43:53

I turned her I looked at her a lot. I thought I think I'm gonna like this. Yes.

V Vanessa Edwards 43:58

She definitely she had a presence though. Oh, there was something about her oratory skills. Yeah, just her style.

S Sarah DePalma 44:05

She was the most amazing person I'd ever met next to Bobby Kennedy. She was the most amazing person I've ever met in my entire life. When you talk when you talk to Barbara Jordan, she had this, these piercing eyes. And when she looked at you, you knew it. And I guarantee she turned your head you can? Oh. She just she had it. And Bobby Kennedy had the same thing. He was the first person I'd ever worked for an ad campaign. In Bobby Kennedy. I remember him coming around thanking these campaign workers. And he walked over and shook my hand. And he looked me right in the eye and honest to god, I thought, Oh my God, I don't think I can breathe. He just had that whatever it takes to be a leader. He had it in you know if that was an ironic thing, Jimmy the night that that he was assassinated, I was on the air. No, I didn't know that. Yeah, and I could not say it. I mean, I couldn't say it because Bobby Kennedy was like a real person to me. And it was just, that was one of the worst nights of my life. I think. I just couldn't. And I, you know, you're supposed to be on the air and be a news professional and read the story and I absolutely couldn't do it at totally wiped me out. Wow. You know,

V Vanessa Edwards 45:17

somewhere Pat Robertson was thinking, you know, the Bible locates this

S Sarah DePalma 45:21

water No, I think even I think even pat robertson would not have done that.

J Jimmy Carper 45:26

Well, it's time for the news. And I've got a couple of songs I need to play. Okay. We've had requests for music, little Adrian in Friendswood. And Matthew in the Galleria area have both requested music and I happen to have what they requested.

S Sarah DePalma 45:42

And I want to I want to encourage everyone to stay with us through the news and through the music. Yes, when we come back, we're going to replay a large portion of the show that we did with D McKellar and Ray Hill. And this is especially interesting for transgenders but not just them about what to do if you get in jail. And I got four will tell the story now I guess is a tease is just as a tease, as a result of our playing the show a person who will, Danielle will go on named

what's happened to have a fist full of parking tickets in her car, and as a result of the show decided she would go down and pay those tickets, because she discovered she could be sent to jail for it. As luck would have it. Two weeks later, she got stopped. And the cop said to her well, we have all these outstanding warrants and she put it in the drawer and she pulled out these receipts is no you don't anymore. So stick around and listen to the show because it can very easily keep you out of jail.

 Jimmy Carper 46:42

You're listening. You're listening to after hours queer radio with attitude on KPFT Houston and ke O 's College Station. I'm Jimmy Carper, Sarah and Vanessa will be back