

Senate Candidate Catherine Fleming Bruce on The Dixie Dems

[00:00:00] **Bob Gatty:** Hey guys. Welcome to the Dixie Dems, the premier progressive voice in the South. It's part of the Lean to the Left Podcast and comes your way every month. We have a special guest today, so stay with us. With me are Arthur Hill Vice Chair of the Brunswick County, North Carolina Democratic Party, and Robert Thompson, a no holds barred podcaster from Georgia.

[00:00:23] I live in South Carolina and besides this podcast, I run the Lean to the left.net blog and publish Hijacked Nation, Donald Trump's attack on America's Greatness, which is now available at Amazon and Barnes and Noble. Just remember with Dixie Dems, the South has a voice and it's blue.

[00:00:44] Today our focus is the race to defeat Trump boot licker Senator Lindsey Graham and our guest is Catherine Fleming Bruce, who is seeking the Democratic nomination to challenge him. A committed democratic [00:01:00] activist, Catherine nearly won the 2022 nomination for Senate, but lost in a runoff.

[00:01:06] Now she's back and facing another tough race, this time with five other Democrats chomping at the bit to go after Graham, who's sitting on a campaign war chest of more than \$20 million. Already businessman Lee Johnson has dropped out after just two months on the campaign trail.

[00:01:28] Now, as a daughter of the late Sumter County Chair, Louis Fleming, Catherine says her mission is public service, something she's pursued most of her adult life. Now we're going to learn more about Catherine Fleming Bruce and why she believes she can and should win the right to challenge Graham.

[00:01:50] So Catherine, thanks so much for joining us on the Dixie Dems.

[00:01:55] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** Thank you. Thank you for having me.

[00:01:57] **Bob Gatty:** Okay. To start off with Catherine, tell us [00:02:00] about yourself and why you've embarked on this all consuming journey to win this nomination and go after Graham.

[00:02:08] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** I think that the many times that we have said that we are in an existential crisis, and we are facing the most critical election in our modern time is dwarfed by what's happening right now. And all of you are watching, I'm pretty sure are familiar with, and have seen day after day of the onslaught by the Trump administration. Seeing the dismantling of so much that many of us who are activists in the field of civil and human rights have worked to build for decades.

[00:02:46] I believe that those of us who are involved in civil rights and human rights, those of us who are activists, who've been on the ground, are very connected with people in our state, and [00:03:00] we bring the experience that is needed in this moment, which is the mobilizing experience, the collaborating experience, bringing the people together without whom we cannot win a statewide election in South Carolina. And talking to people about why these institutions are important and worth fighting for the institutions that produce Medicare and Medicaid, the institutions that provide rule of law protections and due process and freedom of speech.

[00:03:38] These are the things that we have to protect even as we watch 'em being dismantled. So I bring my experience as an activist. I bring my experience in statewide politics. I have run for statewide office before, and I'm the only one of the candidates in the Democrats so far who has done that. Did pretty [00:04:00] well in that race, I would say.

[00:04:01] And I've also worked in many statewide. Institutions, our South Carolina educational television our state version of the National Endowment for the Humanities. And those are other things that I feel need to be protected right now.

[00:04:19] **Arthur Hill:** Okay. We're thinking Katherine I just wanna interject here.

[00:04:23] I share completely your understanding of how politics should be structured these days with your record of grassroots activism? I think that's the way it's a long term game, but that's the best way to build the kind of coalitions that we need as a democratic party to win elections not just in the South, but or, and not just in South Carolina, but all over the country. And I don't know everything there is to know about your opponents yet, but I've looked at your platform and I've looked at some of the views that you have and I just you're after my own heart.

[00:04:58] I'm I'm a first vice chair of a [00:05:00] local, of a county Democratic party, and we're doing exactly the same thing. I think that's that's wonderful that you're starting that way. And I encourage you to, as your campaign continues, I encourage you to continue emphasizing that because I think that's vitally important to talk to rural Americans and to talk to poor Americans and to listen to 'em and to hear what they have to say and organize around that.

[00:05:21] I think it's terrific. Congratulations for doing

[00:05:23] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** that. Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you. And I would also say that being a party activist as well, I've had the opportunity to volunteer in a number of capacities, as I'm sure you have as well. On a number of different campaigns statewide.

[00:05:41] I've worked on a presidential campaign as well and had the opportunity to volunteer at some of the national conventions, so I was finally a delegate the year that we didn't go because of COVID, which is pretty hilarious. But other, the other times when I [00:06:00] wasn't chosen as a delegate, I went as a volunteer.

[00:06:03] So I went to Charlotte, I went to Philadelphia and I also was called to be a volunteer at the second inauguration of President Obama. We have the grassroots experience and then we have the party experience too. And all of those, I think help us.

[00:06:22] **Bob Gatty:** You ran for a state county chair too, didn't you?

[00:06:26] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** Yes, I did. Yes.

[00:06:27] **Bob Gatty:** Yeah. Okay. Go ahead, Arthur. You're gonna ask something.

[00:06:31] **Arthur Hill:** I, no I just wanted to say that I didn't mean to interrupt, but I, I just, I was taken with, I was taken with Catherine's past and her record, and we've got some experience, Bob Gatty at least, and I have some experience in working at the national level too.

[00:06:44] And we have an understanding of that. But I think these days it's the local, what's going on in the state and local parties that's more important. I've got some questions here, but I just, I was interested in, talking with you or

hearing your views on the health of progressive [00:07:00] thinking and progressive ideas in the south.

[00:07:02] What are you hearing from folks that you're you're campaigning with about your ideas and and what you hope to do if you get elected?

[00:07:09] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** I think that we are in a place as Democrats where we have a wide open situation. Because of our 2024 loss and because we're trying to redirect as a party. And so I think there's more openness to what direction we should be taking. And party leaders, Picking up on the idea that, okay, I need to go out there and put some ideas out. So you see that with AOC and Bernie's tour. That with Connor, who was just here recently.

[00:07:47] One of the members of Congress Andy Beshear here Kentucky Governor, California governor as well. And I know some of that is a prelude to a possible presidential [00:08:00] race, but it's also they recognize that we need to bring everybody in and try to get a direction. I think that we still need to address the issues that hurt people most.

[00:08:17] The economic issues the access to capital, the access to education, having a stable home life. We have to make sure that people are feeling those changes. We can't just talk about what's in our policy plan and say it's there. Don't you know it's there. We have to make sure that people are seeing the impact.

[00:08:39] I think we have to remain committed to a coalition that is diverse and including of everyone. And right now a lot of that is being chopped up by the current administration. And so maybe some folks may say we don't need to talk about this issue. We don't need to [00:09:00] address this interest group.

[00:09:01] We are just going to try to find a middle of the road path. I don't think that's the way forward. I think we're going to have to stand strong on the idea that we must make the American experiment a success. The American experiment of having people coming from every branch of life, people being here from all nations and making that work so that everyone is able to access what they need for happiness.

[00:09:33] So far, we have an opportunity to be the leader in that now. I think we're gonna have people taking different directions. We're gonna have Democrats taking different directions. And so that's gonna be my position. And unfortunately, I think it'll be a while before everybody's back moving forward.

[00:09:57] But there's no greater opportunity [00:10:00] than now. To make sure that we make the correct stand because if we don't, a lot of these changes that are being made are gonna be baked into the fabric of our society and that would leave out far too many people.

[00:10:16] **Bob Gatty:** Yeah, that's for sure. That's for sure.

[00:10:19] **Robert Thompson:** I also wanted to go over here in Georgia and I, South Carolina, the last stat that I saw, the whole population of the whole state is basically metro Atlanta.

[00:10:30] And it's, it is a smaller, footprint, it's a different world. I live in, I admit it. This blue bubble of metro Atlanta. And then we have the rest of Georgia, but I also wanna call out, we have our first black senator, the Rev.

[00:10:44] On Reverend Warnock.

[00:10:45] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** That's right.

[00:10:45] **Robert Thompson:** And he's doing an amazing job. He has survived, two elections urge you strongly to follow his coattails if he is, hopefully willing to answer your phone calls and use his passion. I mean that he, I mean [00:11:00] he's a preacher.

[00:11:00] Yes. For God's sakes.

[00:11:02] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** Yes.

[00:11:02] **Robert Thompson:** And, and being able to deliver that message to both sides of, there's gonna be a primary, but, coming down to, Lindsey Graham and Flip Flop Lindsey and all the stuff that he, will never, come out of his mouth because he's just silent.

[00:11:17] Because he knows that he is gonna piss off, some of his base if he says something bad about this administration. We also had a a guest was it John Vincent, right? Yes. Bob. So

[00:11:26] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** he's yeah, I saw some of that. And he's a good buddy.

[00:11:28] **Robert Thompson:** Yeah. And, I'll share the same tips.

[00:11:30] I just went out to fec.gov and looked at this \$20 million that Lindsey Graham is sitting on. Where did that come from? It came a lot of, rich people. It came from a lot of companies like at and t and, these large companies, BB and t Truist is the current name. And you just see, month after month, quarter after quarter, just those donations rolling in, call 'em out.

[00:11:53] If these corporations are able to put these thousands and thousands of dollars to the expenses, and by the way, they're not paying [00:12:00] taxes on it, I'm sure, to, to influence these elections, call them out and press record. When you call them up and say, flip flop, Lindsey did this and you gave him money.

[00:12:10] Why? And, if, silence is as good as, complacency, right? I urge you, with a a small campaign to go up against a war chest. Like again, flip flop Lindsay, or Lady G as some people call him, get out in front of it. Unfortunately the, the three of us do this monthly and, we just have our short viewership.

[00:12:30] But you have to get out and you have to do something drastic to get in front of all these other headlines that get, stay at the top of the list there.

[00:12:38] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** Absolutely. And. I did have the opportunity to come to Georgia because after my primary in 2022, I worked with a group called Swing Left.

[00:12:51] And they're really fantastic. They provide a platform and a network for people to support candidates in [00:13:00] battleground states. So we had done that with a number of, you pick the candidates, and we had done that. Then we got a call saying, Hey, we have Senator Warnock in this runoff and we need you to come down if you have other people come down and help with that.

[00:13:17] So I was able to bring 11 people from South Carolina. Three sitting legislators came down with us. We knocked the doors and participated right in Gwinnett County contributing to that win.

[00:13:31] I

[00:13:32] **Robert Thompson:** can see that

[00:13:32] county from my office window. Yeah.

[00:13:34] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** Oh yeah. So we're very thrilled about that.

[00:13:37] And we're also thrilled and we emulate the many grassroots organizations that do voter engagement and training and provide opportunities for people to, get more people registered and more people engaged. So Georgia is a great place for that. We're, I'm working with a number of groups here that, that do the same [00:14:00] thing, so that's gonna be a big part for me is making sure that we have as many people as possible who are assisting with the elections, who are poll watchers, who are poll workers, who do the legal part of it.

[00:14:15] To make sure that when the elections happen, that they are, that they have the confidence of the people of our state. So that's gonna be very important to me as well. And I also want to make sure that once we focus on that, that we have the ongoing engagement. If I win the primary, I really want to come to Georgia.

[00:14:41] Whatever time I could spend helping make sure that we have a Senate majority, because if I win, but we don't have enough senators and we don't have a Senate majority, it's not gonna work. If Ossoff wins and he doesn't have a majority. Same thing with Roy Cooper. We need to [00:15:00] have that.

[00:15:00] So I'm gonna be very much working on that. And finally, I'm gonna address the issue of money and I will say that I won the first round of our primary, even though we were outspent four to one by the campaign that was opposing me. So not as I, I know we have to raise money, but I'm not especially afraid of people who have more money because we've seen, in the Jamie Harrison race how much money he raised. We see people raising a lot of money and that doesn't always give them the victory. So we have to do the work on the ground that's gonna give us the victory, and I intend to do that.

[00:15:39] **Bob Gatty:** I think that's absolutely true. And John Vincent's doing that in his congressional campaign.

[00:15:44] He's going to every corner of the eight counties that comprise his district, the seventh district of South Carolina. And I imagine you're gonna be doing the same thing covering the state. Oh yeah,

[00:15:55] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** yeah. Already started doing that after this call. Got two visits [00:16:00] today out of my county, okay. Yeah, we are already on the run there.

[00:16:03] **Bob Gatty:** Yeah. I was just wondering about the money thing because this guy Lee Johnson, who was a candidate for two months, he put

500,000 of his own money into his campaign, and then after two months quit. You're in it for the long haul, right?

[00:16:20] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** Absolutely.

[00:16:21] **Bob Gatty:** Yeah. Absolutely. Why do you think you can pull it off if he, if after two months after spending all that much money, he decided he couldn't make it and felt like there needed to be a coalition of Democrats around, around a candidate why do you think that your candidacy would be any different?

[00:16:40] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** I believe in the primary process for one thing. Okay. So I believe that it's important for the voters of South Carolina to be able to choose their person and to have choices,

[00:16:55] to listen and think through those choices and think about what's needed in [00:17:00] this moment. I think it's very important to make sure that those choices are there.

[00:17:05] With regard to why I'm gonna stay in the race, I have been someone on the ground working grassroots for many years. So I know people around the state. People know my work. People know that I stand for justice and human rights and, specific engagement they know those things about me.

[00:17:28] And I think that when I go into these rooms and you say you're for Lindsey Graham, the excitement that you get back, people need that sense of hope.

[00:17:40] **Bob Gatty:** Yeah.

[00:17:40] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** That we're not giving up on the electoral process. And that we're making sure that there are diverse voices who are going to bring different parts of the progressive agenda to the fore and let people argue about it.

[00:17:56] **Bob Gatty:** Yeah. I wanted to ask you what you thought about Trump's attack on [00:18:00] DEI.

[00:18:01] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** I actually, since undergraduate, I worked on programs that were at that time called Multicultural Awareness.

[00:18:10] I don't know if you remember that?

[00:18:12] **Bob Gatty:** Oh yeah, sure.

[00:18:13] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** That dialogue at the time. But I had the opportunity not really the opportunity, but there was some money that was really set aside for faculty to do programs, and I as a student, applied for that money. Got it. We did a year long program bringing these different cultures in and talking about these issues back in the eighties.

[00:18:31] So to me this is part of a continuum of that argument and dialogue about why these things are important. So now you know, we actually have a state Supreme Court case where NAACP is suing about some of the policies that take certain things out of the classrooms certain historical parts out of the classrooms.

[00:18:56] And I do history, I do historical preservation. I've [00:19:00] worked on building of civil rights leaders and I've actually published a book on civil rights preservation. Okay. Yeah. So these are things that I understand the meaning, but also understand what people are trying to do when those things are taken away.

[00:19:18] So I'm very committed to continuing to have the argument about that.

[00:19:23] **Bob Gatty:** Okay. Great. Thank you, Catherine.

[00:19:25] **Arthur Hill:** Catherine, lemme ask you this. You've got four opponents in the primary now. Yes. There's five of you running for the nomination. What does that say about the Democratic party in South Carolina?

[00:19:38] Is that a you say you want to instill hope in people? Is this a hopeful sign for the Democratic party that that there seems to be a real competition for the

[00:19:47] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** nomination? I think a competition for what the party is about is always a good thing. I think more people are going to come out when there's an active [00:20:00] primary and a lot of different voices in the race.

[00:20:03] And so I think, yeah that's excellent. When people want to participate, when people want to serve, I think that's terrific and I think it's nothing to be afraid of. So our job as candidates. Is to help people define, okay

what is happening in this moment? What is needed from the person who's gonna be in leadership?

[00:20:27] That the person that we're sending to Washington, and actually that person may not even end up facing Lindsey Graham. Why do you, we talk a lot about Lindsey Graham, he may end up getting ousted by one of the people who are challenging him for his seat.

[00:20:42] **Bob Gatty:** That's true. He's got what, three opponents already?

[00:20:46] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** Yes. Two. No, I think he has, I think he has four. And somebody named Murphy There.

[00:20:51] **Bob Gatty:** They're coming outta the woodwork and one of 'em is the former author of Project 2025 Paul [00:21:00] Dans,

[00:21:00] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** right? Yeah.

[00:21:01] **Bob Gatty:** What do you think about that?

[00:21:03] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** I think that there's no better time to talk about 2025 than now, so yeah.

[00:21:08] Let's do it. Yeah, that would be, all of these, all these pieces are. Where is the Republican party heading? Where is the MAGA party heading within that, and what is that doing to the safety net that people need?

[00:21:24] So now we have the campaign telling people that the one big, beautiful bill was great.

[00:21:31] They're doubling down on that, I'm seeing that in the ads and how was such a great thing from Lindsey Graham's office and Tim Scott's office. That's what we're seeing now. So we really get to get into the meat of, okay, so what's great let's look at the projection. What is really happened in your community as opposed to what we need to have happening.

[00:21:55] So they're bringing the opportunity for a great debate in South Carolina. [00:22:00]

[00:22:00] **Bob Gatty:** Let's say that you do run against Lindsey Graham. So what would you be attacking him on?

[00:22:08] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** One of the things would be the war. And his enthusiasm for supporting and investing in all of these wars that we have around the world.

[00:22:20] I think that would be one of the big things. We certainly have had President Trump say they need to just finish off Gaza, but you also have other people, other, other people in the Congress and you have other nations now looking again at what's happening with the starvation tactic that's being used to dismantle, what's left of Gaza. So that would be one thing that we talk about, but we also talk about investment at home versus investment abroad. How do we balance that out? We need to be involved globally, [00:23:00] but all the money is being taken out of the safety net here, thanks to the bill that he supported and when they signed the bill, he encouraged everyone around the table to do the thumbs up. I don't know if you saw that. Yeah. On there. But that's one of the things that he encouraged. So slashing our government supports that create a safety net versus all of the investment that's going overseas to support wars.

[00:23:29] That's gonna be one of the things that we see. What is the proper foreign policy right at this time?

[00:23:34] **Bob Gatty:** For example, Medicaid. I mean that this big, beautiful, ugly bill that Trump pushed and the Republicans passed guts Medicaid in a lot of ways. Yep. It hurts a hell of a lot of people, including poor people in South Carolina, who no doubt voted for Donald Trump.

[00:23:54] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** And so we're gonna see our institutions that provide medical care [00:24:00] receive hits. Some of them are already receiving hits. There's a program in South Carolina called the Eau Claire Community health Centers. That provide healthcare for low and moderate income people. Some of, and they went from one small office to about three or four counties.

[00:24:19] So there are about 10 of those offices. So we are hearing that in August, some of those offices are going to have to close

[00:24:27] **Robert Thompson:** low to middle income, that's something that Republicans just, you know. That they're gonna pander to 'em for votes, but then when, the pen hits the paper, that, that's gone and yeah it's, unfortunately, I think just gonna take these realizations that something that was there is no longer there.

[00:24:45] I don't know how else that is gonna change votes, and unless they're just creating votes out of thin air I don't know.

[00:24:51] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** We're gonna, we're gonna have to provide people with assistance or help them see how they can get assistance once these things are taken away. So that work will be [00:25:00] there for us to do between now and the election, but drawing that line so that people understand the connection is gonna be critical, especially when.

[00:25:10] Politicians are doubling down on, Hey, the bill was great. It's doing all these great things. It's helping the economy, it's putting tax money back into people's pockets. So they're just saying whatever to defend, and we're gonna have to be front and center to help people understand the reality that's going to hit them and why that reality is there. So we already have some of our health centers, our community health centers that are losing their capacity at the end of this year. Those people like myself who are on the affordable Care Act plans, those are gonna become more expensive.

[00:25:48] The hospitals are going to. We'll see all these rippling effects. From what's already happening. Yeah. And that includes what's happening with tariffs. Okay. So helping people to understand [00:26:00] what in their corner of South Carolina is being changed or not invested in because of this decision.

[00:26:09] And there's so many other parts of it that people don't understand how many hospitals will be closing. We're on a list. We have five of our hospitals in South Carolina that are on the list. Foreclosure at risk of closure because of this. So I was in Charleston no. I was in Carlton County a year or so back, and one of the residents that was telling me that he had an hour to drive to get to a hospital.

[00:26:37] And I down because it's gonna be life and death.

[00:26:39] **Robert Thompson:** Literally. I know I don't know what else it's gonna take for these people to realize that it ain't a working.

[00:26:46] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** And I but to be honest I live in Columbia and I live in downtown Columbia where, many, we have facilities in walking distance, but at the same time, we still have some of the same disparities [00:27:00] for healthcare that you see in other places.

[00:27:04] So we need to have proximity to healthcare, but we also need access and affordability. So these are the things that are Hurting people right now are gonna continue to hurt people.

[00:27:17] **Arthur Hill:** Meanwhile, we have recent announcements by Ford that the price of a new car on the average is gonna rise \$2,000 as a result of these tariffs that are being imposed.

[00:27:31] And we have major food companies announcing. Or heard of one that said they were gonna announce that they're announcing price increases for 1000 of their food products. And inflation seems to be ramping up again and growth is going down. We're, we're trending in exactly the wrong direction on just about all the economic issues and, it it's all self-inflicted. It's all because we're imposing these horrible tariffs on the imported products. And that's gonna affect the same people who aren't gonna be able to [00:28:00] have access to healthcare. So they're not gonna have access to healthcare they're gonna starve to death.

[00:28:05] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** Death. And there's also some people have ridden by fast food places and seen signs that say there's no lettuce. Yeah. Because the people who have been harvesting our lettuce and our tomatoes and our other produce are being snatched up and sent to detention places.

[00:28:28] So all of these things, demand of us that we ask, what is it that we need our governments to be doing?

[00:28:38] **Bob Gatty:** That brought me, that brings to mind this question Catherine, Nancy Mace has said that she'd love to see alligator Alcatraz built right here in South Carolina. What do you think about that?

[00:28:51] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** Absolutely not. Absolutely not. Isn't that disgusting? Probably

[00:28:56] **Robert Thompson:** She wants to turn it into a slave farm is probably what she [00:29:00] wants to do. It's ridiculous the stuff that comes outta these people's mouths.

[00:29:03] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** Oh and I,

[00:29:04] **Bob Gatty:** and she wants to run for governor,

[00:29:06] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** right. And we'll hear that.

[00:29:09] I'm sure we'll hear that announcement very soon.

[00:29:11] Yep.

[00:29:11] **Bob Gatty:** Yeah.

[00:29:12] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** We we want a society, I want a society where people can come here and not be in fear, so that's one of your basic principles that we want to have is to be able to come participate, pay taxes, be part of the society and not be afraid to speak your language, not be afraid to, be out because your skin is brown. I think people are going to be hearing more of that. I'm just not even going to go anywhere. Yeah. I'm gonna stay home because I'm afraid I'll be disappeared if I leave. Yeah. But all of those things impact our economy as well.

[00:29:52] **Bob Gatty:** Now, I wanted to ask you one thing. You've been a college professor, you've, you must have a sense about where young [00:30:00] voters are today. How do you plan to address their concerns? Now, many of them are economic as we've been talking about. And it's disturbing that so many young male voters switched over to support Trump in this last election.

[00:30:18] How do you intend to reach out to younger voters gen X, and so on to get them to be supportive and also to be involved in the process?

[00:30:30] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** Yeah. I think that we want to reach out to the young people who are college people. And to the young people who are not college people.

[00:30:39] We, we think by going to the colleges, we will get everyone, but so many are not taking that educational path.

[00:30:48] So we need to make them a part of our dialogue. We need to encourage them to talk to us about what it is that they want. Career [00:31:00] wise, access to career, access to opportunity, that discussion will probably be different than what the college student has.

[00:31:08] But the college student is going to be worried about student debt. Those who are currently in college and those who are considering it, we're seeing a lot of changes happening. So some of that may not even be available for them.

[00:31:22] So they would probably want to have a dialogue with me or their senator about when 2027 comes 'cause this is when we will be in the office.

[00:31:35] What will we be able to stop? So I think that we want to be in a position as a US Senate where we can stop some of these bills and repeal some of the bills. So if we focus on having a Senate majority that's Dem and maybe some independents and a House majority that's [00:32:00] the same that we can reverse and stop some of these things and get some things passed that are going to help our young people.

[00:32:10] So if we don't do that, if we don't have that majority, it's gonna be much more difficult. Making sure we connect with them and finding out what they need, but also making sure that we're in a position in 2027 to stop, block and pass the things that are gonna help them.

[00:32:28] **Bob Gatty:** Now president Biden did a lot of work to try to reduce the stu student debt burden on people.

[00:32:37] And he's blamed for not doing enough, but he was blocked at every step of the way by the Republicans. Yeah. Now, how do you feel about what should happen about student debt for these kids, these people, not kids?

[00:32:53] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** We had PBP loans. For business folks that were forgiven.

[00:32:59] [00:33:00] So I, I don't see why we can't do everything that we can to try to help them into the forgiveness lane.

[00:33:08] And we do have those who are working in medical fields and in nonprofit fields who have access to the forgiveness. I think that should continue.

[00:33:18] There is a current effort to make some changes and reduce the number of people who are able to get that. So I think it's important to have it in the undergraduate and the graduate level, right? For people who are seeking education and may take a little longer so that they can teach or going to law or medicine or other fields that take more education.

[00:33:42] But we certainly ought to have the option to gain access without the burden of a lot of debt.

[00:33:50] **Bob Gatty:** Okay. Alright, great. Arthur, Robert, anything else?

[00:33:55] **Arthur Hill:** Yeah, just let, lemme I got one more question more on this subject. Do you think that there's [00:34:00] any federal role for programs that help graduating high school students or college age students who don't want to go to college but wanna develop a trade, wanna develop a skill. I don't know whether there's any direct federal support for those kinds of programs now, and probably not any in the horizon either because of what's going on with the Department of Education.

[00:34:21] But do you think that there's a federal role there for that kind of support and aid to young kids?

[00:34:28] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** I am hearing there's an excellent program that a lot of us are familiar with called trio, which is a first year, first generation educational program that helps shepherd these students to successfully go through college.

[00:34:46] That program is under threat to being cut.

[00:34:49] The entire role of the federal government with regard to education, There's an interest in dismantling that and we see them on the road to doing that. So I [00:35:00] would say given the history that a lot of our communities have faced where opportunities for them have been blocked, that we need to have inroads into career paths that receive support from the federal government. So training, access, we need to make sure that's happening. So yes, the federal government, I think, should have a role in making sure that our young people are successful. Whether they go to college or not.

[00:35:32] **Bob Gatty:** Okay. Alright. Robert got anything else?

[00:35:37] **Robert Thompson:** You had mentioned earlier that you were in Charleston and I can't help but see the similarities of what's going on down in Florida when it comes to climate change. Have you had any particular conversations with folks over on the coast? South Carolina's got quite a long coast, even all the way up into Myrtle Beach.

[00:35:54] Not only that it's hitting him in probably for insurance purposes. Florida [00:36:00] is basically becoming unaffordable because the insurance companies are for-profit businesses and they're looking at it and they're like, why would I insure this property when and with the likelihood of the next five to 10 years or even longer that it may be underwater?

[00:36:15] Are you hearing anything along the coast to hit this home and this, the current administration has zero interest in doing anything to combat the climate crisis. But I'm curious in your travels down to the coast there.

[00:36:27] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** Certainly it's a disaster what's happening with the ability of people in Florida to get a home and keep it because they don't have insurance and they have all these other changes happening. Here in South Carolina as well we see that energy policy that doesn't link with what we know is happening with climate.

[00:36:50] And we also have a dysfunctional perspective from the federal government about FEMA [00:37:00] and certainly there in Florida on the coast of North Carolina, here in South Carolina, we've seen, increased impacts of climate in these natural disasters. Just a year or two ago, hurricane Helene and, that impacted the whole state.

[00:37:18] I lived I lived when the thousand year flood happened, that took out a lot of dams and destroyed a lot of some of our public water facilities and our utilities. So these are the things that we have to grapple with. What is our federal government supposed to do for the people? And what is our sense of public good? So public health, public education making sure that we are ready for an emergency and can respond federally to an emergency to a natural [00:38:00] disaster. And looking at these global issues, the pandemic is one where you have to have global cooperation. Climate is one where you have to have global cooperation and also trade.

[00:38:13] So we need to have people in the federal government who understand why these things are important, who can communicate that to the voters, and be in dialogue with them about why that's important, make those connections, and then make sure those things are there. Because if we don't have that, and it's, it's being attacked to the extent that people are trying to sue and are seeing that being turned back in some cases because of the people who've been put in place by the Republicans.

[00:38:50] So we don't have a lot of time to work to save these particular ideas, public education, public health, making sure we have a [00:39:00] climate that we can all breathe in and putting the policies in that are going to reverse what is happening now.

[00:39:09] **Robert Thompson:** I, not to interrupt you, but I look at, some of my family members that have had children, these children are gonna live to the year like 21 25.

[00:39:18] Yeah. I don't even know what in the world this is gonna look like. And I'll be long gone by then, but and we just have a dog. But it's just you're choosing to bring children into this world, but yet you go to the voter box and what are you leaving them?

[00:39:35] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** Yeah.

[00:39:36] **Robert Thompson:** Are you gonna have to get on a spaceship and leave this earth because we destroyed it.

[00:39:40] Good luck.

[00:39:41] **Bob Gatty:** Yeah. They just announced EPA just announced that they were getting rid of all those environmental regulations that the Democrats and Biden worked so hard to get in there in order to combat climate change. And now they're bragging about how that's the biggest deregulatory effort ever.

[00:39:57] And they're gloating over that. And [00:40:00] they're and that's just a disaster for not only for the climate in the United States, but the world.

[00:40:06] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** Absolutely. A disaster.

[00:40:07] **Bob Gatty:** We only have one earth.

[00:40:09] **Robert Thompson:** Yeah. And I just don't see, I don't know that I guess what we always get labeled these what is the elite liberals I guess we're supposedly being smart is a bad thing.

[00:40:20] Okay. Then, I'm here telling you're gonna have a child that's gonna live to the year 21 25. You tell me what this earth is gonna look like in that year, 21 25. Yeah, that's for sure.

[00:40:30] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** That's for sure. It's absolute, absolutely right. So it's not. I think what we have to communicate to the voters is that it's not something that's gonna be solved by one person in one election.

[00:40:44] We're gonna have to have a broad attitude and perspective toward what we're doing electorally in 2025 and 2026, and we have to rebuild our partnerships. We have to build, rebuild our [00:41:00] alliances, and we have to move. Many pieces at the same time. So I think you need someone with that kind of big vision to be able to do that and have those conversations, join forces with other people.

[00:41:14] And that's going to be the saving grace of our democracy and of our world.

[00:41:24] **Bob Gatty:** Catherine Fleming. Bruce, I wanna thank you so much for being with us on the Dixie Dems. It was a great conversation. Best of luck to you in your race. Is there anything else you'd like to add before we close up?

[00:41:38] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** I'd like to point people to ways that they can connect to our campaign. Okay. Ways that they can donate. I'm always getting fussed at 'cause I don't say that enough. Okay.

[00:41:48] Our website's pretty easy. Catherine Fleming bruce.com. And the donate button will be there at the top. Alright? You can also do act blue and put my name in Catherine Fleming [00:42:00] Bruce, and it will come right up.

[00:42:01] Okay? So please give what you can, \$5, \$10, whatever. But make sure you do that. I'd like for folks to follow me on social media,

[00:42:11] okay? So

[00:42:11] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** you can follow me on Twitter at tno vsa so you can follow me on Twitter, tno vsa. I'm on Facebook, Catherine Fleming. Bruce, I'm on Instagram, T-N-O-V-S-A and I'm also on Blue Sky at Bruce four, so look for me there as well.

[00:42:31] Okay. Okay, great.

[00:42:33] **Bob Gatty:** Alright, thanks very much. Guys, you got anything else you'd like to add before we close up? Good luck in Godspeed.

[00:42:39] **Arthur Hill:** Yeah, thank you and great talking with you. It was a pleasure and good luck to you.

[00:42:43] **Catherine Fleming Bruce:** Thank you so much. I'm so excited about this year and what we have the opportunity to stand for, so I hope all of you will join me.

[00:42:51] **Bob Gatty:** Thanks so much.