

OPEN NINTH:
CONVERSATIONS BEYOND THE COURTROOM
THE FI\$HKIND FORECAST
EPISODE 57
SEPTEMBER 17, 2018
HOSTED BY: FREDERICK J. LAUTEN

(Music)

>> Welcome to another episode of “Open Ninth: Conversations Beyond the Courtroom” in the Ninth Judicial Circuit Court of Florida.

Now here’s your host, Chief Judge Frederick J. Lauten.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Hello, and welcome to Open Ninth. I’m here today with one of Florida’s premiere economists and financial advisors, Dr. Henry Fishkind. Dr. Fishkind’s career, which spans over 30 years, began at the University of Florida where he worked as an economist and associate professor. In 1980 he became the associate director for programs at the University of Florida’s Bureau of Economics and Business Research. From 1979 to 1981, Dr. Fishkind served on the Governor’s Economic Advisory Board and was a member of Governor Bush’s Counsel of Economic Advisors from 2001 to 2003.

His company, Fishkind and Associates, has provided economic and financial services to Central Florida and the region since 1988. Dr. Fishkind is recognized regionally as one of the preeminent economists in our area and in our state.

So, Dr. Fishkind, welcome to Open Ninth, and thanks so much for joining us.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Oh, thank you for inviting me, Judge.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** So I have a particular interest in growth in the region and how it’s been impacting us in the courts. So I’m wondering if we can start by talking a little bit about growth. I did a little bit of my own research, but this is really your wheelhouse more than mine.

Seems to me, in the last decade or more, Central Florida has experienced a lot of growth, and I’m wondering if you can help us with either numbers or observations about the growth that we’ve had.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Sure. Central Florida has been one of the fastest growing areas of the United States. The Orlando metropolitan area, which is Orange, Osceola, Seminole and Lake Counties has grown by almost 600,000 over the last decade.

Not only that, but job growth has been one of the fastest in the whole country for a relatively small -- less than two million people -- metropolitan areas, we have ranked consistently amongst the top 10 of all areas for job creation in the United States over the last half a dozen years. And so there's been tremendous growth and tremendous pressure on budgets and public services.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Well, we're feeling that particularly here, because we were the first court system in Florida to open a Business Court. Judge Belvin Perry, as Chief Judge, did that 15 years ago. We expanded to two judges handling Complex Commercial Litigation. That idea kind of took off a little bit. Tampa opened a Business Court, Miami opened a Business Court. Ft. Lauderdale opened a Complex Litigation division, so it was commercial cases but also professional malpractice and medical malpractice.

But nonetheless, we started that division, and recently I closed the division, because I'm limited in the number of judges I had and I had to get help to the Family Court divisions.

As you probably know, we haven't had an additional judge in the State of Florida, anywhere in the state, since 2006. And it seems self-evident to me that we've grown a little bit since 2006. And hence our pressure, which is how do we provide the services to our population base when our workforce is at a 2006 level but it's 2018.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Yeah, it's a terrible problem for the courts and it's symptomatic of a terrible problem in our state. Since 2006, the state's population has grown by almost four million.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** What percentage, roughly, would that be in growth if -- do you know?

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** About two-and-a-half percent a year.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** A year.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** A year.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** But year over year.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Year over year over year over year compound.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Gotcha. Okay.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Absolutely. And our state revenue system has failed to keep pace, and so that the state spending, per capita, on a price-adjusted basis has actually gone down since 2006. And so we see tremendous squeeze. And it shows up rather dramatically in the court system, as you have pointed out. And it compromises the ability of our state to provide services, and our courts to provide the services that are needed for a much larger population.

One last thing, Judge, the problem is particularly acute here in Orange County because we've had relatively more growth than most of the rest of the state.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** So are these just policy choices being made by elected officials in Tallahassee that the percentage or the per capita spending is the same or has not kept pace with the growth? It sounds like policy choices.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** It is policy choices. There has been a perception that keeping state taxes very low would enhance economic development and economic growth. And so this pervasive belief -- and it is a belief; it's not an empirical fact.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** All right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** This belief has in part colored the outcomes of what we see out of our State Legislature.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** So we're a state with no income tax, and that might attract businesses to locate here so that the corporate officers, and really all the employees then, you know, benefit from not having to pay state income tax. So we're driven predominately by what type of revenue?

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Sales tax at the state level, which funds the court system, and property taxes at the local government level.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** And how have we been doing in sales tax collection? I mean, is that enough alone to fuel and fund the infrastructure needs of Florida?

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Not given the current sales tax structure. The sales have gone up, but the problem is that we exempt more than half of everything that is sold. So our state sales tax system is riddled with exemptions and immunities that have come over the many years. And any attempt to close some of the most obsolete and silly exemptions that are still in the code are viewed as tax increases and therefore --

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** And politicians don't like to run -- or be accused of, I've raised taxes while I've been in office.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Right. Even though we badly need reform, for example.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** There was many exemptions that were, at the time, very well-meaning but are now obsolete; Super Bowl tickets, bottled water, ostrich feed, of all things.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Well, I do know there was a controversy years back about whether we should tax the services that were provided in the state so that lawyers and maybe

accountants and -- I'm not sure who else; I'm not sure if it's doctors but -- should have the services that they provide subject to a sales tax as opposed to raw goods. And that -- you know, that got a lot of discussion, as you can imagine, among the Bar.

Is that one of the problems? Do we not tax particular services like they're the sale of goods, and is that an issue?

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Well, it is an issue. It is a particularly nettlesome issue. But there are much easier ways to fix our sales tax system than to begin to tax services. We have all variety of goods outside of medical and food that are appropriately outside the ambit of the sales tax that we do not tax, again, because over the years just hundreds and hundreds of exemptions have come into the system and it's just Swiss cheese.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Exemptions -- right. You know, and when you say Super Bowl tickets, I think, okay, well, that's a revenue source. But how often does Florida land the Super Bowl and we certainly are a warm-weather state, so we're kind of attracted in January to the --

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Sure. Sure. Right. Right.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** But we don't get it that often.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Bottled water is a big deal.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** But we sell a lot of bottled water.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** We sell a lot of bottled water. We don't sell much ostrich feed.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right. I see.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** But there hundreds of other things like bottled water that would generate very significant increases in our sales tax revenue. So much that the sales tax rate, even, could be reduced a little bit if we would close these loopholes and then we'd have a system

that is more responsive to the growth. Because sales taxes are very correlated with population and employment growth.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Interesting. Um-hum.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** So we could fix the system if we had some imperative to reform the sales tax system, understanding that it's compromising our state's ability to provide very needed services, including court services, health care services.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right. Right. So we're somewhat apolitical in the court system. In other words, I can't run on any kind of political platform. If I ever am challenged, I can't even tell people what political party I'm in. We're non-partisan in that sense.

But in the area of policy choice, and it's -- I don't know how you can separate it from politics -- one thing I hear often, I hear candidates say, I won't raise your taxes if I'm elected, or, I've been serving you and I haven't raised your taxes. Fair enough; that's a policy choice. I respect that.

I rarely hear, though, the second part of, to me, what is an overall equation, which is, but in a state that is experiencing significant growth, if we don't increase our revenue, your services level will drop at some point in time because, with growth, we can't maintain the same level of services unless we collect more revenue.

That's my criticism about policy choices where you're not telling the public the true choice, which is, okay, we can shrink our government or hold it where it is, just understand that if we're a growth state your services will slow down at some point in time.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Well, they erode. They absolutely do. And yes, that's a very good point.

Something else that struck me over the last year or so -- and it just emphasized something that I had known -- when voters are actually presented with a program that they see tangible connection to what they spend, they generally vote in favor of it.

Consider even conservative Brevard County last year voted 300 million dollars of taxes on themselves to begin to clean up the Indian River Lagoon; 300 million.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Um-hum.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Last year in Miami, the City of Miami voters voted 200 million dollars of additional taxes on themselves to combat flooding. So when presented with -- oh, Orange County has supported additional school property taxes associated with particular school programs.

So voters, I think, are much more willing to tax themselves for good services than I think our political leadership recognizes.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Interesting.

Let's talk a little bit about future growth. So today I open the Orlando Sentinel and there was an article in the Sentinel by Mark Wilson. So he's the CEO of the Florida Chamber. And I was fascinated by it because he indicates that there are about 21 million residents in Florida right now. And he says by 2030, we'll have an additional 50 million -- oh, that's visitor; I'm sorry. But we'll still have a population growth from 21 million to 26 million people. So the Chamber is projecting population growth.

And then he cites, of course, to our visitor growth, and we can talk about that for a moment. And also the new jobs that Central Florida needs to create just to keep competitive, and I think he put that number at over 200,000. And his projections were from now to 2013 [sic]. So it struck me that that's a 12-year span from 2018 to 2030.

In the last 12 years we've had no new judge in the State of Florida. And so I thought, if we continue that trend for the next 12 years, we're going to have this expanded population base, this growth in jobs, and the court system, unless it gets judges from the legislature, will be handicapped in providing services to all those employees, not to mention the 60 million visitors we get a year.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Absolutely. And we're seeing longer and longer times for resolution of issues in our court system.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right. And what -- the decision -- you know, I think it's gotten some publicity. But the decision that I made, and I had advice from very intelligent colleagues that I work with, is that we had to get help to families who were in crisis in divorce. And almost every divorce creates some degree of trauma. Certainly -- and usually not a pleasant experience. In the best case, it's financial pressure and the emotional pressure that comes with splitting up. But sometimes it's much greater than that. The children are traumatized, some people are so -- you know, not well-off to begin with, and then when you split their assets in two it's real financial pressure which causes emotional and psychological pressure.

And we -- anyway, we decided that we had to get help to that division because we couldn't ask those families to wait for a decision from us.

Contrast that to a business with some resources. Well, we wanted to serve them in the Business Court, and we love doing it, and it's important, but we had to make a hard choice. And the choice was we've got to get help to families. And businesses with resources, maybe alternative dispute resolution or just delay and hopefully you can settle your dispute internally.

But that's not the optimum system. The optimum system is to serve all the needs of our county. So we're kind of struggling with that in this growth area.

In fairness to my friends in the legislature, I've gone up there to ask for court funding, Doctor, and what I've experienced is I'm in line with seven people, for example. And the first person has their hand out and says, we need money for schools. And the second person has their hand out, we need money for transportation. And the third is, we need money for prisons. We need money for mental health treatment. We need money for substance abuse and addiction. And I get there, we need money in the court system. So I imagine it's fatiguing for a legislature because most of their visitors say, you know, we need, we need, we need, we need.

What are your thoughts about that?

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Oh, I think that's absolutely right. And it also reflects the fact that our revenue system doesn't give them the ability to respond. And one would think at some point in time we would get beyond, well, I didn't cut -- I didn't raise your taxes; I didn't raise your taxes.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Yeah.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** As you said, you know, that just is not meeting our state's needs.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Do you think with the projected growth, and it sounds like you're proposing this, that if we were just to cut sales tax loopholes, we probably could fund even the growth that we're going to experience going forward?

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** We could do a lot better.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Um-hum.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** I mean, we could do a lot better. Florida's problem is not that our taxes are too high.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** I mean, we are one of the lowest tax states in the nation. We have one of the best ranked business climates in the nation. We can do a lot better. We can do better for ourselves and better for our economy and better by our state's residents if we would reform our tax system to make it more capable of meeting the needs of our state.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** What -- do you think an income tax -- I don't know politically if it would ever happen, but would that benefit the state or would that be a detriment to the state, or do you have any thoughts about that?

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Yeah. Yeah. I don't think that Florida needs an income tax. We have a lot of people who use state services -- visitors, seasonal residents -- who would not come under the ambit of an income tax.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** So for a state like ours, income tax is not particularly well suited. We're much better off with transaction taxes. Tourists now pay almost 25 percent of all the sales taxes in the state.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** That's amazing.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Well -- but they rightly should.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** That's good, though. Sure, because they're using the services.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** They use the services. Absolutely.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** So my point being, transaction-based taxes are better for us.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** We have documentary stamp taxes --

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** -- and other real estate related taxes that relate to transactions.

And so it's that transaction-based system that I think suits the structure of our state's economy better than a wealth-based tax system. What we need is the political courage to begin our reforms and to recognize that, like anything else, you can have too much of something and too little of something.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right. Right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** You know, Goldilocks kind of had it right. And it's just a helpful, useful way to think about things.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Sure. Right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** And we clearly do not have enough resources at the state and local levels to meet the growing needs of the state.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** You mentioned something and we hadn't really delved into it. So just economic growth in the region is going to put pressure on services. But then we have this sort of unique situation in Orlando, which is we get 60 million visitors a year, and we just started talking about that. So when we go to the legislature and they look at our population base, we often had -- that's all well and good, but understand that we get 60 million more people here. Some of them are injured while they're here. Some of them, unfortunately, are the victims of crime and end up in our court system; not as residents with the kind of problems that long-term residents have, but as -- short-term visitors put demands on our court system too.

And so I think we're -- they don't come here to get divorced. But certainly if they slip and fall, you know, on vacation property, then they might sue and be here in our court system to take our services there.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Sure. Sure.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** So that's another 60 million, and I often have to remind people that we have that.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Well, there's that, and also the business transactions that it engenders, and therefore the business controversies.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** We have much more of that.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** And that shows up in your caseloads.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** You and I talked about the caseloads. So it's not just that we're falling behind in terms of judges per person, we're falling way behind in terms of judges per case and the types of cases.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right. Right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** And it, again, is particularly acute here in Orange County because of all of the business activity.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right. Yeah. And, you know, we've heard over the years that -- well, commercial attorneys, but even politicians, can say to companies who are thinking of relocating -- and I know that's a big issue for our Governor and our Mayors, that, well, in Orange County we have a Business Court so if you have a business dispute you're not going to have to wait forever to have your dispute resolved. I doubt that anybody decides to locate here for that single reason but all of the reasons; good schools, good transportation, a healthy court system. And we want to serve that group because, after all, they bring income and revenue into our state. And, you know, a healthy economic environment, I'm sure -- I mean, this is your livelihood --

that makes the whole region stronger and better. So we want to serve those needs. We've just got to get some help from the legislature to do it, and I'm hoping maybe this year that they'll listen to us.

So what would you tell your children that their adult future in Central Florida might look like?

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Well, there's going to be tremendous job opportunities. It is a very affordable place to live, relatively speaking. The service levels are okay; they're not great but they're okay.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** And the local governments, I think, are being very good stewards of the development process. Keeping development more urbanized; they've recognized that we shouldn't just sprawl out to the other side of the Econ; I mean, started a real public transportation system with Sun Rail. So there's a lot of very forward-thinking things that have been happening over the last decade that give me some confidence.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right. We'll have autonomous cars; that will be different.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Oh, yes, we will. It will be dramatically different.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Seems to me, one of the pressure points in our region is affordable housing, and I read that frequently in the paper.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Yes.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** What are your thoughts in that area?

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Well, interestingly, much of our problem is policy related.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Help me with that. Elaborate on that for me.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Sure. Well, now I'm going to put on my developer hat.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Okay.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** I don't think I've shared this. I, in my career, have started two publicly traded home building companies.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Okay. Didn't know that.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** I've built thousands and thousands.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Congratulations. Okay. I didn't know that. That's interesting.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** I work now with Lake Nona on their developments.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Great.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** So, anyway, that's something I know a great deal about.

So what we have is excess demand for housing at the affordable price point. So we have a market failure, and it is failing in large part because of a number of things that we have done on the policy side.

First of all, many areas view density as a four-letter word. In order to get the price for housing down, we need to allow more housing units per unit of land, especially around our transportation nodes. So we need land use policies around the Sun Rail stations, just to pick an example.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right. Sure. That makes sense.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** That would allow a lot more density.

Secondly, we need to be able to have smaller unit sizes. If -- it costs \$100, more or less, a square foot to build a box with air conditioning.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Okay. Right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** \$50 to build a garage, \$100 to build a box, and \$150 to \$200 a square foot to get it all furnished into an apartment.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Okay. Gotcha.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** So if we have standard size apartments at 1,000 square feet or larger, it's going to cost \$200,000 to build that thing.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** If we cut the size down to 750 square feet, we've made a 25 percent reduction.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Interesting.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** So if we allow smaller unit sizes and more density, we can make a big change in the supply of affordable housing.

We also have to understand that we have impact fees and connection charges that are too high for affordable housing. The combination of water and sewer impact fees and connection charges, and school impact fees, and all the other impact fees, that adds 20 to \$25,000 per housing unit. That's before any land. That's just --

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** So all those regulatory costs --

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Yeah. And we want growth to pay for itself. I mean --

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Sure.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Sure. But, you know, there are certain kinds of growth that more than pay for itself; most of the commercial.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right. Right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** And there's certain growth that will not ever pay for itself, but we need to provide for it.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** So our policies need to be differentiated, so a lot of this gets to policy, if we would provide impact-free zones. Why do we need a transportation impact fee for an affordable housing unit that's at a train station?

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right. Yeah. So both for people who are near to experiencing homelessness, or people in the employment sector where minimum wages are their source of income, these regulatory barriers increase the cost of housing and make it unavailable to them. And then density issues, which make a lot of sense to me.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Yeah. Sure.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** And then other policy choices that have to be made.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Sure.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Those are ways to address the scarcity of affordable housing.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Yeah, absolutely. The private market would produce a ton of affordable housing if it was profitable.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** And it can become profitable. It doesn't need Section 8 and a lot of other things to make a huge difference. And I'm not saying Section 8 and other housing policies aren't important; don't get me wrong.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** I get it. Right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** But they're not nearly enough to deal with the problem.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right. That's right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** So we've got to get the market to be incentivized to produce the product.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right. Interesting.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** And it will, if we give it half a chance.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Yeah. So housing is an issue, obviously, for our future. I imagine transportation.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Yes. Transportation -- as you said, we're going to have a huge technological change with autonomous vehicles. It's going to change the world. Think of all the parking garages that all of a sudden become surplus real estate.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right. You know, if these cars even improve automobile safety by 50 percent, and they might improve it more than that, we'll eliminate a lot of personal injury cases, you know, in the court system.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Oh, yeah. Yes, we will.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** And then the demands on medical providers, too.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Sure. Absolutely.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** So transportation. I imagine schools.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Yeah, education is a real big deal and --

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** -- from the very youngest to the very oldest. And we need to do a lot better at that in this country and in this state.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** And particularly here, I think, an aging population is going to present demands everywhere, even in the court system.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Yes.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** But the whole service system --

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Yes. Oh, yes, absolutely. And we can see it and feel it.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** On the other hand, all of these problems, you know, if you label them problems, are kind of good problems.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Yeah.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** I guess there are good problems and bad problems.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Yeah.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** A bad problem would be, you have a highly taxed state that's spending more money than it's taking in, and then you get a real problem like maybe California or Illinois. So even though I'm complaining about, you know, providing the revenue to fund basic services in Florida, that's probably better than saying, there is no place to go anymore; we are near bankrupt as a state.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** That's absolutely right. Or to be in some of our rural communities that are losing population and have almost no economic activity; you don't have to look too far. We have -- more than half of the counties in the State of Florida are what are called fiscally challenged. That is to say their tax base is so small that they're at the 10-mil cap, and they can't provide basic services.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Cap. Right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** And we have half our counties that way.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Half of them?

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Half of our counties.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** It's amazing. We visited a courthouse in courthouse security, and we were talking about, you need more security, and it was Liberty County, and they said, we're at our 10-mil cap; we can't hire another deputy; we just can't do it.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** That's right. That's right.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Yeah, that would be really strenuous, stressful.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** These are serious, serious issues in our state.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** And so even within our state, there are parts of our state that just don't have money and don't have economic activity.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** I want to end on this note, and ask you a question related to all these policy choices. It seems to me that running for public office today is maybe different than it was 40 years ago, and it's such a rough, tumble, contact sport. It gets personal, the attacks are personal. But we really do need to raise youth to see public service as a service to the community and politics as not an evil. Because we're going to have to have informed leaders really wrestling with these choices and these issues in the next generation.

What are your thoughts about -- how do we encourage thoughtful people to get into the policy-making arena?

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Well, I think we need to have some public service early on in people's lives. We don't require young people to be in the military or to do any public service. Other countries require that. And it builds up esprit de corps, it builds respect for service, the need for service. So I think we need to think seriously about some public service requirement for everybody.

I think also, as we continue to have dramatic technological change -- the cars.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** We're about to put 100,000 truck driver -- long-distance truck drivers in this country out of business with autonomous driving trucks, and we don't have any plan.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Yeah.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** We need to protect everybody with public service. And part of what we could do is make sure that there are meaningful things for everybody to do. They're our fellow citizens. And so it's not just at the younger level, we haven't imbued it in older people either.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Interesting.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** And it part, I think it stems -- and I see the world through an economist lens, so --

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right. I see it through a judicial lens, but --

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Of course. Of course.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** That's who we are.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Yeah, yeah. Exactly.

So when people then feel at risk, it makes them more troubled, it makes them less civil because they feel threatened.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** And I think that if we would take better care of our society, we would get the threat level down, we would see civility a little better. And we need more public service.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Well, let's end on that note. You know, Florida has challenges. I think the problems we have are better than the problems in -- some other states have. And we need to encourage young people to look at a lifetime or even a small segment of their time in public service as valuable and part of being good citizens in America.

I appreciate you joining us today. This was fascinating. And we're going to have you back, maybe in a year or two, and say, let's see where we are now.

Thank you so much. We're really grateful to you.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** Thank you, Judge.

>> **JUDGE LAUTEN:** Appreciate it.

>> **DR. FISHKIND:** A real pleasure.

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