

Interviewee: Ben Stoflet
Interviewer: Gurpreet Singh
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Abstract Bio:

Benjamin Michael Stoflet (Ben) was born and raised in Eau Claire. After serving four years in the United States Marine Corps he obtained his undergraduate degree from UW-Stout, majoring in pre-law, with an emphasis on history and political science. Ben currently attends law school at Mitchell-Hamline School of Law, where he is studying healthcare law, aiming to provide veterans with legal counsel when they file disability claims with the VA. In this interview, Ben discusses COVID-19 in multiple ways; voicing his opinion on the impact he believed COVID-19 had in personal, professional, and political areas of life.

Gurpreet Singh 0:05

it's 9:53, Wednesday, April 21. My name is Gurpreet Singh. And there's 31,602,676 cases in the USA 592,888 positive cases in Wisconsin, and vaccination rate of 29.7%. Currently. I'm interviewing Ben

Ben Stoflet 0:49

Hello, And then I am 27 years old. I'm from Eau Claire, Wisconsin. I am white, or Caucasian. And I am a male. My ethnicity is basically everything Northern European, German, Irish, Polish. That's about it.

Gurpreet Singh 1:23

got quite a few in there. So what are the what are the primary things you do on a day to day basis.

Ben Stoflet 1:34

My day consists of a lot of schoolwork. I currently attend Mitchell Hamlin School of Law, so I'm pretty swamped with school. Um, it's all online right now. So there's not a lot of room for extracurriculars, per se, but I like to play video games at home. So that's one thing that's nice about the time right now is that you don't have to leave

to play video games. So that kind of worked out.

Gurpreet Singh 2:08

You mentioned that your classes are all online. Do you think that's been helpful during the pandemic?

Ben Stoflet 2:16

Um, personally, I think yes, and no, I think it helps the dialogue in the classroom, because when you're on zoom, you see it in like, kind of like a canvas mode. So you might not get as nervous talking to what looks like 10 people when it's really like 160. So you can see a lot more opinion, like true, actual, heartfelt opinions come through. And we have way better debates and it's all respectful. But the I think the thing that we do suffer from is that the end state goal for us is to be attorneys. And that's going to take place in a courtroom. And if we're not in a courtroom setting, you're going to suffer, even though that the legal field is adjusting to, like zoom sessions and stuff. It's I think it's still gonna hurt us in that aspect.

Gurpreet Singh 3:12

Yeah, I completely agree. I didn't, I didn't really even think about that. So that's it. Like a lot of fields are getting affected by that. And you live in Menominee. Wisconsin,

Gurpreet Singh 3:30

sorry, Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Okay.

Ben Stoflet 3:34

I went to school in Mouni at UW Stout. Okay. And then prior to

Gurpreet Singh 3:39

going to online law school, correct?

Ben Stoflet 3:42

Yeah. So normally, normally I would be or would have moved to like the Twin Cities area already. But actually, I could add that to the last question that that's one advantage. I didn't have to move yet. So that's another advantage from the endemic. And then so like, where

Gurpreet Singh 4:00

do you remember where you are? where you were when you first heard about the COVID cases?

Ben Stoflet 4:10

Yeah, I do. Actually, I was right here because I never leave the seat because of school. Yeah, but honestly, I mean, it was right here and

just internet. And it was honestly just kind of it was more like, on different websites, like in the comment sections. Like it could be Fox, CNN, it could be Reddit, it could be. I mean, y'all ask Yahoo or whatever, it literally anything. People were like mentioning like, oh, get ready. There's like some sickness coming out of like, like, like China. And I was like, I literally didn't think anything of it until I was like, Oh, yeah.

Gurpreet Singh 4:54

Yeah. And it made the wave.

Ben Stoflet 4:57

But then, But to answer your question better, I think When you're like first like, actual not some guy on a, like, internet thread announcing it like the CDC or something. I was right here, I just I think I read a article and like the washington post or something like that, and I I didn't think anything of it at first. Because a I'm this kind of kind of person that likes to read the Washington Post and watch like, c span and I listen to NPR and I like that. So the things I typically learn about earlier than other people are like, in this case, I just happened to hear early but in normal times, it never really amounted anything groundbreaking, but it in terms of COVID I didn't think anything of it because I figured, like, you know, we've had you know, SARS, Ebola, swine flu, h1, and one, I thought it's gonna be like that. So it's, it's, I would say about mid June of last year is when it really changed my thoughts of like, when they started canceling, like, my fall classes, when they're like, Nope, it's all gonna be online. And now I was like, Okay, and then they're like Wisconsin's leading the country by a lot. Then I was like, Okay, this is this is more than that, because I was inside the whole time anyway. Was school and stuff like that? Because I just ended my semester. So I was taking like, and at that point, is taking a summer class. So I was I was already quarantining. So like I was already, I was already ahead of the game, but so I didn't notice a lot difference. But then, like, I noticed, just talking to other people, I noticed a big difference.

Gurpreet Singh 6:52

So then, like, when the lockdown happened, there wasn't much of a transition for you.

Ben Stoflet 6:59

Know, I'm actually I think, like I kind of actually went in, it was kind of it kind of coincided and actually kind of went hand in hand. Because I started law school. And then like, you take online like, preparatory classes and stuff. So I was already like, in that mode, doing that many hours a day, not leaving my apartment. So when law school

started, and they're like, hey, it's all gonna be online. I was like, Okay, so I'm gonna be doing exactly what I'm. So yeah, I honestly didn't notice a difference. And then also to add to that I am, I used the post 911 GI Bill. So I get a monthly stipend, so I don't have to work. So I wasn't affected in my work. Like, like a lot of people were so like, a lot of times I hear. That's actually a lot of the, the big reason I heard of so bad was with people losing their jobs, especially in like food industry, and like people just shutting down. I was like, Oh, geez, like, shut down the GI Bill.

Gurpreet Singh 8:15

So that brings me to my next question. So you're, you had your income, and everything was coming in. But anybody around you? Were they economically affected by the pandemic?

Ben Stoflet 8:29

Yeah, um, I would say a lot of people. Our age, I not so much people like our parents age and stuff, because a lot of them could do a lot of work from home anyway, at that point, or my it's like, my mom's a teacher. So like, all the teachers had to adjust in a really big way. But like for other people, I would say yes, if they weren't our age, but people our age, yeah, it was. To put it nicely, it was a rat's nest is just Nobody. Nobody knew the question, and nobody knew the answer. So it's just I think it's starting to now kind of untangle

Gurpreet Singh 9:18

a swirl of questions from before, and we're just going to stay at so I'm 26 and your age 27. And so, um, what would you say were some of the biggest challenges that that kind of arise that you didn't have before the pandemic? That you're kind of dealing with during?

Ben Stoflet 9:47

In what way? Like personally or, or like things that I see? Yeah. Are all of the above.

Gurpreet Singh 9:55

Yeah, all of the above if it's just challenges that you see and And other people or in your day to day life or in your routine that have been affected by the pandemic.

Ben Stoflet 10:09

Okay, um, I see quite a bit, I think the number one thing I see is frustration. It's like, come on. I think a lot of people thought how I did in the game, they're like, Oh, this is whatever. And then it's like, Oh, okay. And then it was like, Oh, this will be over by all this will be over by winter, this would be over by spring, you know,

and it's frustrating, you know, just humans are very, very, very, very much. So creatures of habit. And everybody's gotten their habits completely disrupted for the last year. And I think everything personally, politically interpersonally is, you see the effects of that everybody's groove is thrown off. I think you see, I think you see a lot of the worst in people. But I also think you see a lot of the best in people do. You see? Like, for example, church attendance, and church donations are like, through the roof, like record numbers, which is very, very good. And that's people donating their time or giving their time. But then, like the other end of the spectrum, politically, you see just people fighting all the time and being frustrated with each other. And in truth, I don't think anybody knows the answer, the whole thing. And they're just digging their heels in on a non answer on both sides. And I so I'd say the number one thing is frustration.

Gurpreet Singh 11:46

And to follow up on that, because you raised a really good point, do you think the pandemic has been really politicized? In a very Damn,

Ben Stoflet 11:56

absolutely. And so I've been muting myself every time you ask a question, and I know, I missed the click. Absolutely. And unneeded, needlessly, I don't think you can really take a political stance to like the flu. Yeah. But you, but if, if if you can talk about it, humans will politicize it. And now, that's not say either side is right or wrong, because both sides are right and wrong, or have good and bad points. I think it's a lot more nuanced. And a topic that's got a lot more gray area that none of us know what we're talking about. yet. We're the ones saying the most. And that's, and that actually kind of annoys me, because I'll be the first guy to tell you, I have no idea. And there's nothing wrong with that. And people like to dig their heels in and like take a stance, even though they don't. Not only they not know, they don't care to know. So

Gurpreet Singh 13:00

that's a that's a very valuable point. Like Socrates says, "All I know is that I know nothing." So yeah, I mean, that that makes sense with your law degree background.

Gurpreet Singh 13:14

So do you think do you think COVID is going to have an effect on lawyers?

Ben Stoflet 13:21

With SLA? Yes, 100%. It

Unknown Speaker 13:23

already has rooms being shut down? Okay.

Unknown Speaker 13:25

It already has, you're seeing a lot, a lot. So like the law field, one of the biggest problems, they seemed like the legal profession is x, it's called access to justice. So and that can be anything from a minority, low, it can be socio economic, it can be education, most people don't know the things that they should get a lawyer for in the first place. And then Okay, can you pay for it? Okay. How will the justice system treat you if you have the other two answered? So that's a big issue. And on the other end, it has helped in some ways. Like, for instance, if you're my client instead of like, let's say, socioeconomically, so you couldn't afford to drive to me? Well, now we can do this. And you can get, like encrypted networks that have that can keep the attorney client privilege but I would say though, that the biggest challenge is the amount of cases is overflowing, especially at the trial and appellate court level. There's, you don't have enough zoom hours in the day you don't. The logistics logistically, it's just it's it's a nightmare and it sounds bad, but either people are going to give up are going to die before a lot of the cases that are should be being litigated right now, before they actually make it their way through the courts, because it's gonna take so long to smooth out that that influx of cases, and and not to mention that COVID in itself in like political or personal, just how many cases came up from COVID. So, yeah,

Gurpreet Singh 15:18

that kind of the kind of bottlenecking that's happening, just this.

Yep. Dismiss accumulate.

Ben Stoflet 15:25

Yeah, and it hasn't been patented. And the way I would kind of explain it is, it's a bottlenecking. But it's not going to, like, open up like into like a balloon, it's not like it but yeah, everybody gets access to justice, it's gonna be like a, like, those poppers that you like, pull the string, the funfetti it's just gonna, it's, it's all gonna go through a tube and Scott blow up. But, uh, one more good thing I get to add to it. You seen a really, really amazing quality of humans to adapt. And that includes in the legal field, like, just the technologies that are coming out or, or just the way to use technologies. A lot of there's a lot of theories going around right now that instead of having to go pay a lawyer, and this actually hurts lawyers, by the way, um, a lot of tears, like instead of going to pay for a lawyer for like, questioning about a case, you just have like a, like an Alexa, but on your phone, or like, just Hey, Alexa, what's the Minnesota state statute for you know, 540 point one. And then they

walk you through instead of having to, you know, like, hire a lawyer to tell you and cost you a lot of money, which is good for especially those in lower socioeconomic groups, you pay \$1.99 for an app instead of 400 bucks an hour. So that's, that is one positive.

Gurpreet Singh 17:00

That's an interesting point that you bring up at COVID has kind of essentially accelerated this technic technology as technology, technical technology, technology in the aspects of

Ben Stoflet 17:15

necessity breeds creativity.

Gurpreet Singh 17:17

There we go. Yeah, so did when, you know with the two key issues of like self isolating and flattening the curve, and now we're down on the cusp of people?

Ben Stoflet 17:35

Sorry, what was the first part? Oh, well, we started out with self isolation. Okay, mass, and well, the mascot, I gonna recommend it to continue even after vaccination, and beforehand was just flattening the curve. So we don't over overload our ICU units, kinda like what's happening with the court systems.

Gurpreet Singh 18:00

So but to bring you back to my point. How did you feel about the vaccines? Was there a certain one that you wanted? or certain kind and what was your What was your attitude when they first started to come out? I know, it's been some time since they started being administered.

Ben Stoflet 18:22

Um, I personally don't really have any thoughts on the vaccines. It's kind of just like, and this isn't to like, D legitimize it but I mean, I'm going to compare it to a flu shot. And that's because flu shots save a lot of people every year. Um, I don't have an issue with people not getting it. I don't have an issue of I didn't get it. I don't have an issue with questioning it. Because it's not saying like the vaccines are bad, but as a whole, but there's a legitimate reason for a lot of people to question the government giving you medicine like the Tuskegee syphilis experience. legitimate question, especially for minorities. Yeah, that's some messed up shit. And I can see why people don't want to take it especially when everybody's like, Ronald Reagan said, the scariest words in the English dictionary is Hi, I'm from the government and I'm here to help. I get why people can question but like to me, I think if you do your own research, and you can come to a

conclusion, you can make a backup your argument with at least a you know, sound argument, that's one thing, but like what I was talking about before, with people digging their heels in just taking a stance on some you can't take a stance on people take a stance on vaccines as a whole, which is stupid, you should take your stance on one of them after you do your research. each one individually, everything's an individual thing in itself. So I i didn't see anything different than the vaccine or the flu vaccine, the flu is going around, you should probably get a flu shot. Even if like, for instance, a lot of people our age, basically anybody, not a senior citizen, or with severe health, or severe health risks, let's be honest, they're not dying. Most of them are senior citizens, or people with severe health risks. Now I can see why a lot of people would like with them, why do I need to? And then I see their other other arguments. It's like, yeah, it's so you don't give it to them. So we don't overload the hospitals. And so I get both arguments. I personally, I actually just got my second shot. Today, I got the Pfizer vaccine, both, I believe both ends. Check your shirt once again. Yeah, it was both times Pfizer, and um, I didn't have any side effects or anything, which is anecdotal evidence, but I just saw it as I'll get it, and then I'll have to worry about it. Now, I don't know if masks after that is really gonna do anything. Because at first remember, they're like wear gloves everywhere. And people were being dumb and wearing them in grocery stores. When if you ever go to a hospital, nurses literally put on those gloves. When they touch something, put it in a different spot, and then remove them and then switch gloves. It's not to touch everything. So it's, I think a lot of information and a lot of different ways happened with this thing. And that's not say the mask could help after. I'm just not saying like not let's not take that as gospel. Now. I also think with the herd immunity, if I think enough people will want to get or will eventually get vaccinated, where the people that don't want to will be protected by herd herd immunity. Now, I think beyond that, beyond the personal choice, ads, it's pretty unnerving hearing, talk about like a COVID, or COVID of vaccine passports is that's that's a fancy way of saying I'm going to put citizens on a list. And I don't agree with that. I, I, if I could break down in simplest terms, I think you should personally get the vaccine, because it's the smart thing to do. But if you don't, I think that's your choice. And I'm not going to argue with it, I'm actually going to defend you to not do it. And I also don't think the government should be in placing laws to force people to do it. So that was a long winded way to say, I'm not sure.

Gurpreet Singh 22:52

No, I I apologize. And no, those are all important points. And I'm sure they're going to be in the news and in discussions in the future for quite some time.

Ben Stoflet 23:05

I asked. Actually, you just made a good point that I think in this day and age, we have so much data available to us right now, that when medical experts, especially when you're facing a new pandemic, they know the best up to that point. If they're wrong A week later, that doesn't mean they're wrong. That just means they didn't have that data yet. A lot of people conflate those two there, I asked you these experts were wrong. What do they do? No, that's not ever right at the time. There's a consensus. But I also think, in general, we are taking too much of a not like not like carte blanche. But like. And this isn't the fault of anybody, I think a lot of the data. And a lot of the methods we use to combat it, in hindsight, are going to be like, really wrong. And I think there's gonna be a lot of lessons on the COVID. And the thing I worry about the most is because the death rates are so low. I don't want to say the next time there's actually a pandemic, because this is a pandemic, the next time there's a deadly, like high high death rate, endemic. People aren't gonna believe it because there was such a low death rate and COVID. And then they're not going to do the mess. They're not going to get the vaccines because they're like, Oh, they cried wolf last time. And then we're going to be absolutely screwed. And that's actually my biggest fear out of this is that people didn't trust the data when it came out. Because data takes time to collect. So they were they were wrong to not frost it or they were wrong to not let it develop. But then they'll also at the same time, I think some of the political decisions we made, were made in a reactive way and not a proactive way which you can It'll be proactive. But I think we're gonna learn a lot of lessons from this. And I hope people pay attention. Yeah, and I don't even know what those are yet.

Gurpreet Singh 25:11

So that was greatly put. I wanted to circle back. And if you could give us a little background on your military experience, and also if did they prepare you for, like any, any types of infectious diseases of the sort that you might encounter?

Ben Stoflet 25:30

Yeah. So they prepared us by having us line up, put her roll up our sleeves, and then we just walked down a line of ttttt. So that's how they prepared. You don't really have a choice.

Gurpreet Singh 25:44

Okay. elaborate on that one?

Ben Stoflet 25:47

Oh, yeah. Okay, sorry.

Gurpreet Singh 25:50

Personally, so there's, that's immensely interesting. So

Ben Stoflet 25:53

they basically have like, seven or eight people. Like, they're called. In the Marine Corps. They're called corpsman. They're medical personnel in the Navy that helped Marines. And they'll have shots like, because remember, you have to you're only as strong as your lowest baseline. You have to remember there's recruits from all over the country you got guys that are only vaccine to guys have never been to a dentist. Like, everything in between. So they give everybody every shot, even if you've ever like got it, like so you just like literally walked on the line with your like, sleeves rolled up getting all these shots, the only one I didn't have to get let's call it Peanut Butter shot, because apparently it feels like a ball of peanut butter going in your butt. But I'm allergic to penicillin. So it was a penicillin shot. So I didn't take a pill. So yeah, you don't really have a choice. And then before I deployed to Afghanistan, they gave me malaria pills. And then they gave me a tuberculosis shot, which, again, they just like, put us in a tent, and they just Alright, what which I think the only choice you have a switch arm.

Gurpreet Singh 27:09

Or at least there's a choice right there.

Ben Stoflet 27:11

I think I think the only thing that was affected COVID was from that was you get like a little like a little bubble, like the tuberculosis shot kind of bubbles up and it leaves a scar. And apparently, you're not supposed to get shots there again. So I had to get it on my right arm for COVID. So that affected me.

Gurpreet Singh 27:29

You do think they might add the COVID vaccine once one of them get adapted the

Ben Stoflet 27:38

military? Yeah, no, no, actually, the military is one of the lowest rates of vaccinated people right now actually, the Marine Corps, specifically, because it's not required because it's not. Which is which there's a reason for that. Um, so the stuff they vaccine for your it's like stuff like measles, like stuff we've known for a long time. We could be right or wrong about all the COVID vaccination, so they're not going to make the whole military subject to it yet. Until they are like, yep, let's test it on everybody else. And then see if

it makes sense in like a business decision wise thing. Plus, the Marine Corps just has an inherent distrust of the government. I mean, like look at the, the malaria pills, the mefloquine. A lot of studies are coming out now that like that messes you up, like, straight up,

Gurpreet Singh 28:29

like the ones that were given to you.

Ben Stoflet 28:31

No, I don't remember what I had. I didn't have that. I believe I took I believe I took doxy cycling, which is so far, so good. But uh, but there's a lot of guys. I mean, there's a lot of guys that. I mean, the military has had a history of testing out things on their own guys in the Marine Corps bears the brunt of a lot of that, because we're pretty disciplined. So like when I say you just walk down a line and get your shots like, so when they actually have a choice of like, can you get the vaccine? They're like, nope, I've already had enough.

Gurpreet Singh 29:07

Now, I know the military. When it comes to like quarantining and stuff like that.

Ben Stoflet 29:19

It'll make them less effective in the short term, but more effective in the long term, because let's say it's not even COVID next time when they have to quarantine a bunch of guys. They're getting everything the military does, they're getting training out of it. Even if they don't think they are like God, we're stuck on a ship for three months Well, in the future that might prepare you for something else. Now. If I have one, if I have faith in anything that the military will do, it's whatever they decide they're gonna do it way overboard. And for better or worse, that's about all I Especially the Marine Corps, they're gonna they're either gonna go make everybody get COVID. So it's like, if everybody's got it, nobody's got it kind of thing. Or they're gonna like, forced vaccinations. I honestly, I have no idea what the Marine Corps will do. And it sounds bad, but I'm kind of excited to see. Cuz I don't have to do it.

Gurpreet Singh 30:23

We've been talking about the future, a lot, this interview. So I just want to end on. And on that note. You've already I guess, you've already told us pretty much what you think might unfold in the future. But is there anything specific concerning maybe like local government, state government, federal government, that might change? in the future?

Ben Stoflet 30:49

Yes actually on all all the levels, in good ways, and bad. So I'm trying to think of the case. So I was talking to

Gurpreet Singh 31:07

it during one of our classes where I was talking to a guy that works for governor Newsom in California. He's the governor of California. And they were talking about like, there's restrictions and bans on gatherings for worship services. And I asked the question, what's to stop the government from? Let's just say as demographically, this demographic gets it, and they just happen to belong to this sect of religion? what's the what's the what's to stop the government from banning and outlawing worship of that religion, because it's in the name of public health. And he said, that was a good point. And they're actually losing those cases in California because of a case called the Church of the Lukumi Babalu. I versus the city of Hialeah, in Florida. It was a Santeria church, and they were sacrificing animals, and there's a local ordinance of like food consumption, I think. And they said, Well, no, you can't do that, because that's targeting worshipers of Santa Maria. So I think you're gonna see, hopefully, you see the First Amendment gets strengthened on this, and I actually see a lot of churches fighting back and winning. And I think what also helps them is that they're like, like, I got vaccinated at a church, you're, you're seeing churches help out a lot. Um, usually the churches don't come out as the good guys, but I think COVID they will. Um, I think what's scary is you saw a lot of legislators quickly revert to authoritarian measures, reactive, and I don't think it's because that's their nature. I think it's because, like I said, before, everything we see in the news, we see it now. And we want results. Now, even though that's not the best long term solution ever. You see a lot of these leaders like, Oh, I need my poles here, whatever, for reelection, because political figures, obtain power and want and seek to stay in power. And you see them reactively legislate, and that is not good, ever. That's how we got the TSA. And now on a local ordinance. I think beyond I don't think there's gonna be much change because a private business can kind of do what a private business wants unless it steps on like the 13th 14th or 15th amendment. Now, when you get to the state and federal government, state governments have a little more leeway. It depends on the legislators of each state. Like in Wisconsin, for instance, you saw the governor institute a mask mandate, but then the Supreme Court shut that down. So you're actually in a weird, weirdly good way with all the political battles going on. You're actually seeing federalism work. You are seeing our country designed or working the way it was designed to. Not too fast, not too slow in any way. It might not be the right answer now. But we'll get there eventually. I think Winston Churchill said, America

will always do the right thing after we've exhausted every other option. But my point is, is that you are seeing the checks and balances in our government right now. So it whether you agree with your political leaders or not. You're seeing Push, push and shove on both sides and I think that's actually a healthy thing. I think it just looks it is ugly, but it looks way worse on like social media and news and stuff like that. But I think I think one thing, first amendment that might get weakened, though, is like vaccinations for public schools, and stuff like that, I can see that being weakened. Or I could just see everybody agreeing to mandate it. So I'm not really sure how that will go. But I think a lot of the executive powers, especially in the offices, offices of the each individual governors of the states, is where you saw the most power, used and abused. Because like the president, United States, yeah, he doesn't have that much power. But the governors of each state can do a lot. And especially in a state like Wisconsin, without like our line item veto and the Frankenstein veto.

That COVID bill, they sign, edit, or veto, in effect, a lot of people and if they're acting reactively that can either help if they get lucky, a lot of people are screw over a lot of people. So I think I think you're gonna see executive power grow out of this. I really, I really do. But I also think you're gonna see I think you're gonna see harder lines in the sand drawn between the legislative branches in this in the judicial and executive branches of the government. And I don't know if that's a good thing yet. I think everybody's getting firmly entrenched. And I don't know, for that part, but politically, I guess, I guess we'll find out.

Gurpreet Singh 36:52

Well, those are, those are a lot of valid concerns. Well, thank you, Ben, for all this information and your, your perspective,

Ben Stoflet 37:04

are welcome. I have actually one more point two of politically, let's go for immigration. This could affect people either emigrating or immigrating by like, oh, if you, you know, because they could, essentially any government could arbitrarily ban or require things just due to medical history, which I think, um, I don't know yet if that's wrong or right. I lean towards this wrong, but and then also, um, you might see HIPAA get strengthened out of this. Just because of like, if the government does require that, what is that a HIPAA violation, you know, and so on, and so forth. Um, I think I think the worst thing politically out of this is that you're gonna get more of the herd mentality that we already have from, you wouldn't even need COVID to have that. It's just, if you're on one side, you're

right. And if you're not, you're wrong, when there's a lot of gray area and not a lot of people see that and it I don't want to say everybody else is wrong for not thinking like me, because that's exactly what I was trying to say. But yeah, they're wrong now. But uh, but yeah, that's, that's my concern is I think it's just politically entrenched people more than they needed to be when you don't need to politicize something like this. So, I in to add on that free speech, I think kind of takes a hit because of the mob mentality. So yeah.

Gurpreet Singh 38:56
Any any other thoughts?

Ben Stoflet 38:59
Yeah, I'm just trying to I'm just trying to piece them together in a way that will make sense or not be like having herd mentality before pre pandemic, so yeah, but what's better herd mentality or herd immunity? I'm just kidding. But yeah, there I was. I was gonna say there already was like a us versus them kind of weighed everything. You could take any issues. Nobody nuances. It's just right or wrong when I'm like, No, this is right. This is right. This is right, this. And I think a lot of people they either want to it's not so much they even want to be right anymore. It's that they just want to make sure that the other side's wrong. And that really bothers me or is punished. And I think that's worse. Um, like punitive legislation is probably the worst kind of legislation outside of racist legislation. Because then you're just taking revenge on people. And I think you're gonna see some of that. But like I said before, I think the checks and balances gets solidified a bit. But then again, I could be completely wrong and everything could be reversed and end up in the same end state. Or it can be so much worse. I have no idea. I think it's refreshing to hear that to hear it take. And I think you know, as it does open the door, though, to see inside the leaders. Actually, President Trump is a great example of this every issue before he would, for better or worse, he was in a comfort zone, where if he couldn't negotiate with it, he could either flip the argument to try to get what he wants or get what he wants. But you can't negotiate with a pandemic. And I found that interesting. I found that to be President Trump's like Crux. He, I would say since March, and I actually think COVID is probably why he lost the election more than anything else. If you go back to like may or April of last year, he was like in a funk. You could tell he's not him. So I think that, and then President Biden has the same issues in a different way. Not that he tries to negotiate with everybody. I think it just proves the point. It's hard to be a leader at the sun. And not to forgive authoritarian or overstepping governmental authority. But I can at least empathize with why they did it because they're like, Okay, my constituents need this now. Let's give it to him. I don't I hate that the pandemic will play a large part in a lot of people's political pasts presents and futures, when I think they should get like a little bit of a grace period for it. And I like all of them, everybody on our side, because there's nobody's got the

answer. And it it if you're relying on the head of state, to fix the pandemic, the whole system's just like, I would welcome the pandemic at that point. So, I don't know if that added anything. I think it's I think everybody's in a hard spot. And nobody knows the answers and people need to just be a little nicer, just be the neighbor that Mr. Rogers always knew you can be.

Gurpreet Singh 43:01
Oh, that's a beautiful quote there.

Ben Stoflet 43:03
There we go. That's that. You could have just ask me that first question. This would have been over.

Gurpreet Singh 43:13
Oh, thank you, man. So much. That was a perfect quote. And thank you for your time. Thank you for your service. And thank you for the interview, man.

Ben Stoflet 43:24
All right. No problem school Vikings

Gurpreet Singh 43:28
Packers

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