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TELEVISION PROGRAM TO "CBS NEWS' FACE THE NATION."



## **August 29, 2010 Transcript**

GUESTS:       JOE MILLER  
                  Candidate for Senate in Alaska

                  REP. KENDRICK MEEK, D-Fla.  
                  Florida Democratic Senate Nominee

                  GOV. HALEY BARBOUR, R-Miss.  
                  Chairman, Republican Governors Association

                  REP. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, D-Fla.  
                  Vice Chair, DNC

MODERATOR/  
PANELIST:     Mr. Bob Schieffer,  
                  CBS News Political Analyst

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## TRANSCRIPT

BOB SCHIEFFER: Today on FACE THE NATION, ready on the right but is the Republican establishment ready for what may be ahead?

An enormous crowd gathered in Washington yesterday to hear Fox News personality Glenn Beck and Sarah Palin talk about restoring America's honor. They said it wasn't political, but will it have an impact on the mid-term elections? We'll talk to Palin favorite Joe Miller who may have toppled a Republican establishment candidate in Alaska, Lisa Murkowski.

We'll get the take of Mississippi's Republican governor, Haley Barbour.

Then we'll turn to Kendrick Meek, the young African-American who won the Democratic Senate nomination in Florida--is he getting the support he'll need from the Obama administration?

And we'll bring in Debbie Wasserman Schultz, the congresswoman from Florida, to see how Democrats (INDISTINCT) to counter all this.

I'll have a final thought on science's need for basic research but first shake-up on the right, on FACE THE NATION.

ANNOUNCER: FACE THE NATION with CBS News chief Washington correspondent Bob Schieffer, and now from CBS News in Washington, Bob Schieffer.

BOB SCHIEFFER: And good morning again.

We're going first this morning to Fairbanks, Alaska, to talk to Joe Miller, who may have defeated incumbent Republican Senator Lisa Murkowski, a member of the Senate leadership, in the Republican primary up there. We have to stress "may have beaten Senator Murkowski" because they are still counting votes; and at last count he was running about seventeen hundred votes ahead. It may be two weeks before we know the final outcome there.

But the fact, Joe Miller, that you ran the kind of race you did and that they're having-- that it's coming down to the wire is fairly surprising, I would say, to a lot of people even those in the Republican Party. But you seem to be or could be kind of the poster boy for these antiestablishment Republicans who are giving the Republican establishment such a run this year.

I guess the first question we have to ask you--and I want to tell our viewers first, there is a delay in the sound reaching you so it will-- there will be some delay between my questions and your answers but it's our audio, it's not because you're sitting there trying to think of an answer. It's just the audio.

How did you do it, Joe-- Joe Miller?

JOE MILLER (R-Alaska): Well, you know, there are a number of factors that involved, of course, obviously Governor Palin's endorsement, Governor Huckabee's endorsement, Lieutenant Governor Lehman, a number of radio personalities here in Alaska, including Dan Fagan, Glen Biegel, and really at the base of it, our volunteer network.

This is a very small state, population-wise, and elections here are determined by the strength of your volunteer network, and we have volunteers that worked day and night. They covered every quadrant of the state. It was just an extraordinary effort.

BOB SCHIEFFER: There is a lot of federal money that pours into Alaska. And in fact I think Alaska ranks about second per capita of the-- the amount of federal dollars that come in to the state, as you say, a small state, seven hundred thousand population.

You've said that we can't afford all that federal money that's pouring into Alaska. Should Alaska get less money from the federal government?

JOE MILLER: You know the government is going bankrupt. I don't think anybody can deny it, sitting at 13.3 trillion in absolute debt. By some estimates a hundred and thirty trillion dollars in future unfunded obligations that we are in any way in a good financial state. And that means that everybody in this nation is going to have to do some belt tightening. I think that's just common sense.

But I think the answer to this is to basically transfer the responsibilities and power of government back to the states and the people. That is really the only answer I think out of this crisis. And for Alaska, that means our resource base. And certainly, the state with its resources could be incredibly independent, incredibly economically powerful.

But that really is the answer to the price-- the crisis that we're in right now.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well, I mean, are you going to the voters now as November beckons here and say, folks, I've got to tell you, I'm going to go back to Washington and tell them to send us less federal money. Is that-- is that your campaign promise?

JOE MILLER: What we're-- what we're telling Washington, DC, is that we're in transition. What that means is as we continue to tighten our belts because fiscally that's critical for the economic solvency of this nation, we also transfer it to the states more power. And that means more ownership of lands. It's not a-- a situation where you just yank the financial plug but at the same time you're transferring over discretion over the use of the resource base.

In this state, two-thirds of it is owned by the federal government. There really isn't good constitutional basis for that. It's our position that as the money is restricted, the lands are transferred. And so that's the plan that we want to implement.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Now you said no to stimulus money that Alaska should create its own jobs. How would you go about doing that?

JOE MILLER: The resource base is extraordinary in this state. We have a-- a hydrocarbon resource base, a mineral base which is extraordinary, beyond that of any other state. The resources in this state, if only a fraction of them were tapped, would create more than enough jobs for the residents of this state and could be the economic engine frankly of the United States. We are an incredible state with incredible, incredible resources.

BOB SCHIEFFER: You have also taken some fairly controversial, some would say, very extreme positions. First, you say you want to phase out Medicare. You want to privatize Social Security. I have to say there are a lot of people in Alaska who are-- are on Medicare and are

getting Social Security. Isn't that position going to be a problem for you in the election, in this general election?

JOE MILLER: Well, yeah, and I would suggest to you that if one thing said the constitution is extreme then you would also think that the founders are extreme. We just simply want to get back to basics, get-- restore essentially the constitutional foundation of the country, and that means the federal government becoming less onerous, less involved in every-- basically every item of our lives. And what that means is there does have to be some transition.

With respect to Social Security what we've said consistently throughout this race is that if you've paid into the system, if you're dependent on the system, we have got to get the fiscal house in order at the national level, so that we can continue to pay those benefits. But to suggest that there is nothing that can be done that we have to continue as the way things are, ignores the fact that the trust fund is empty, it's full of IOUs. It ignores the fact as of April of this year there are more expenditures or there are more outlays coming out from Social Security than inlays.

And it would be incredibly irresponsible for us to sit back and say that this is something that shouldn't be addressed. There are a lot of different options out there. We have to look at all the options that are out there, including privatization. It's something certainly that Bush championed in his first administration, something that Representative Ryan is looking at.

I believe that it is irresponsible, it is basically part of the crisis of leadership in DC to not look at Social Security and understand that there has got to be a solution posed. We've got to take a look at it and make sure that we create a solution so our seniors aren't left out in the cold.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well, I want to thank you for being with us this morning. I hope we can visit with you again, as we get closer to November. Joe Miller, who may turn out to be the Republican nominee for the Senate, ending a thirty-year period when either Lisa Murkowski or her father represented that state in the United States Senate.

Next, we are going to go south. We are going to turn to the winner of the Democratic Senate primary in Florida, Congressman Kendrick Meek who is in Orlando this morning, and a very different story going on down there, Congressman.

You know, you beat a very wealthy Democrat who had kind of a controversial past or ties to people like Mike Tyson and so forth, stories about narcotics being used at-- at parties that he-- he held.

But the backstory seems to be to your race that some Democrats are not all that happy that they-- that you won because they-- they're worried that you may take votes away from Charlie Crist, the incumbent governor who is running as an independent in that Senate race down there. And Charlie Crist has hinted that he will vote with the Democrats to organize the Senate; in other words, help them to keep their majority. And that could be critical because this is going to be a close election in November. And-- and some Democrats are actually not so happy that you won. I mean, how do you-- how do you deal with that?

REPRESENTATIVE KENDRICK MEEK (D-Florida): Well, those are individuals. Many of whom that are not in the state of Florida. I'm very excited of the fact that I beat a billionaire that spent twenty-six million dollars in falsehood ads and what have you to try to win the nomination.

What I do know is the fact that a-- a supermajority of Democrats, some twenty-plus percent more voted for me than my opponent. I am the nominee. I don't believe that I'm in a position to say that I will be the one taking votes away from Charlie Crist. He decided to bail out of the Republican primary when he noticed that he was not going to win that primary. I stuck in my primary and fought. And that's what I am going to do as a United States Senator. I'm the only candidate in this race that has won by a popular vote in a-- in-- in a contested primary. I look forward to capitalizing on that because there's vast differences between myself and other two lifelong Republicans that are in this race.

I'm the only pro-choice candidate in this race. I'm the only person that stood up to oil companies in this race before and after the BP spill with a hundred percent environmental record. And I'm the only person that fought against higher credit card fees in Congress and stood up for veterans.

So, I-- I think as this race moves on, we will see more of an equalization of the polling numbers. And I think Democrats, those that-- those individuals, opinion-makers, that are out there will see that I am the individual that can win and will win this Senate seat here in Florida. But I'm glad that Floridians count me in.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Congressman, have you-- have you gotten any assurances from the White House yet that-- that Barack Obama is coming to Florida to campaign for you? Or in fact do you want him down there?

REPRESENTATIVE KENDRICK MEEK: Well, and that's another interesting piece. President Obama came down like seven days before the primary. He didn't have to do that. We went to a sandwich shop together to show his support of my candidacy. He's always said that he's supported my candica-- candidacy for the Senate. President Clinton did three rallies here in Florida. He looks to do more. I'm pretty sure the President will be coming back. We welcome him to come back. I think the relationship of knowing that we can count on support nationally is so very, very important.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Let me ask you this. The reason that Charlie Crist is running as an independent is because the Tea Party candidate Marco Rubio looked like a shoe-in for the Republican nomination, and in fact he got it. Now, we had a lot of people here in Washington yesterday at this enormous rally. It wasn't bill-- billed as political but a lot of folks from the Tea Party were there. What did you think of that rally yesterday? What's your take on it? And do you think the Tea Party is going to be a major factor come November?

REPRESENTATIVE KENDRICK MEEK: I think-- I think that the Governor and Marco Rubio will be fighting for the Tea Party vote. I believe that this is America. Folks can come together and rally any time they get ready. But what I do know, here in Florida, majority of Floridians feel that both of the candidates in this race are far right of the positions that should be taken here.

We have to move to a cleaner transportation system here in Florida. We have to make sure that we create green jobs and not just use them as a talking point with tax credits and supporting local governments like St. Lucie County here in Florida where GE-- GE is seriously considering relocating their solar initiative here in Florida that will create blue-collar jobs and white-collar jobs.

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): All right.

REPRESENTATIVE KENDRICK MEEK: So, I'm very, very excited about where I am and where the other two candidates are because it's a clear choice. And I have a forward lean towards growing Florida's economy.

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right. Congressman, we're going to have to stop it there just because of time. Thank you for being with us.

REPRESENTATIVE KENDRICK MEEK (overlapping): Okay.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Hope we can check in with you down the trail.

And we'll be back in one minute with Haley Barbour and Debbie Wasserman Schultz.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

BOB SCHIEFFER: And we're back now with Republican governor of Mississippi Haley Barbour, he's in Biloxi this morning; and Democratic Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz, who joins us from Miami.

Well, Governor Barbour, I have to say if there is such a thing as an establishment Republican, I would-- I would nominate you for that-- for that title. Here you were, chairman of the Republican National Committee. You were a long-time lobbyist here in Washington and now you are the popular, I would also add, governor of Mississippi.

So, I want to start with this. If-- if Joe Miller does win in Alaska, it will be the second time this cycle that an incumbent Republican Senator has been denied his party's nomination to the Senate, the other being Bob Bennett of Utah. Is this a little bit scary to the establishment types like you?

GOVERNOR HALEY BARBOUR (R-Mississippi/Chairman, Republican Governors Association): Not to me. When I was chairman of the RNC, Bob, as you mentioned in the last decade, we never took sides in primaries. We did not endorse incumbents over challengers. Same way, I'm the chairman of the Republican Governors Association today. We do not take sides in primaries. And here's why, the-- the Republicans of Alaska have the right and should pick their nominee, and they don't need somebody (INDISTINCT) who's sitting in Mississippi to tell them who ought to be the Senator of Alaska.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Debbie Wasserman Schultz, we had this big rally here yesterday on the anniversary of Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" Speech. I talked to those two candidates that you just heard about it. What's your take on what happened here yesterday? Is-- does this suggest that the Tea Party is a major political force now, because a lot of these folks were members of the Tea Party?

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ (D-Florida/Vice Chair, Democratic National Committee): Well, it's certainly clear that there is a raging battle going on within the Republican Party for the-- the heart and soul of the Republican Party, and Tuesday was yet another example of that.

Really it's hard to know where the Republican Party ends and the Tea Party begins. They-- they've struggled to elect and actually, have not been able to successfully elect their moderate candidates, the mainstream candidates. The Tea Party candidates seem to be winning because

the Tea Party Republicans are energized in their primaries. So, it's really caused I think, a-- a pretty difficult problem for them going into the November election because they have candidates like-- like Miller, who are on the extreme right-wing fringe, who want to end Medicare. As we know, it yanked the rug-- the-- the safety net out from under our senior citizens.

I mean Americans really are going to have a very clear choice setup in November between moderate Democrats who are centrists where the country is, and Republicans who are really off on the right-wing fringe. And there's countless examples of that across the country.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well, let me-- let me ask to Governor Barbour about that.

What about that, Governor Barbour? Because you just heard Joe Miller, who may wind up as the nominee for the Republicans up in Alaska, saying he's going to go out and campaign on less money for Alaska, less federal dollars coming in. He-- he has taken--

GOVERNOR HALEY BARBOUR (overlapping): Bob--

BOB SCHIEFFER: --several controversial stands like that. And I must say to his credit, he didn't back off of them, when I asked him about it this morning.

But isn't that going to make it harder for some of these Republican candidates to get elected? Because down in Kentucky you have Rand Paul, who's got the nomination for the Senate, they're talking about; well maybe we ought to rethink the Civil Rights Acts of '64 and '65. You've got Joe Buck, who won the nomination up in Colorado, who's talking about bicycle pass being a-- might lead to you in control or something other? It seems to me that you-- you do have kind of an exotic crew out there this time.

GOVERNOR HALEY BARBOUR: The Obama administration and the Democratic Congress have taken the biggest lurch to the left in policy in American history. There've been no-- no Congress, no administration that has run this far to the left in such a small period of time. And there is a reaction to that. Those hundreds of thousands or hundred thousand, however many they were on the Mall yesterday, were reacting to that. They are very concerned about where our country is being driven by the Democratic majority.

And as far as talking about less money, look, my budget this year in Mississippi is thirteen percent less than it was two years ago. I cut spending 9.7 percent last year. And frankly, nobody much noticed the difference. We were able to continue to provide services. People weren't kicked off Medicaid. The fact is the country is going to have to spend less money. And if Joe Miller was trying to say that in a-- in a different way, he-- he is right if what he's saying is our country has got to spend less money. We've been on a spending spree that made drunken sailors have a bad name.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Congressman Wasserman Schultz, what do you think the overriding issue is going to be? I mean, I-- I guess the conventional wisdom is that all other things aside, a lot of this is going to hinge on what shape the economy is, come October.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: There-- there's no question about that. And, you know, I mean Governor Barbour, I-- I-- I know is certainly an advocate for his state but it's hard to look at states like my home state of Florida, like his state of Mississippi, and look at the graduation rate where we're near the bottom or at the bottom when it comes to graduation rates in public education from high school; when it comes to spending on taking care of the

neediest in-- in America. These are-- are questions that-- that-- that any governor should be fighting for but, when it comes to jobs and the economy that's the driving issue for-- for the November election.

We-- we have a lot of-- a lot of evidence that the economy has begun to turn around. We have a long way to go. And we've got to make sure we continue to push hard. But the American people are going to make a choice in November between right wing extreme Republican candidates who want to take us back to where we were when President Bush was in office, backslide toward the Bush era, change Social Security to a privatized program that invest the money in the stock market, where would we have been--if-- if we had done that in the last few years, voucherize Medicare and-- and-- and essentially, change our tax-- tax policy to one that is again, focused on the wealthiest two percent of Americans.

We gave-- we gave Americans-- ninety-five percent of Americans a tax cut, so I-- I don't know how giving the-- the overwhelming majority of Americans a tax break is-- is a lurch to the left. It-- It's certainly been moderates and centrists and focused on trying to make sure that this economy gets a jump-start.

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): Let me-- let me--

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: We've got a long way to.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Let me just ask Governor Barbour. One of the big things is going to coming up here in the fall is whether to extend the Bush tax cuts. Is it your position that all of them ought to be extended or just those for the middle class?

GOVERNOR HALEY BARBOUR: We-- we should not have any tax increases. Tax increases in the height of-- Congresswoman says that the economy's recovering, well, I can assure you eighty percent of the people who are watching us on TV right now know the economy's not recovering. There's no recovery on Main Street, I can tell you that for sure.

And in a re-- in an economy like this, we don't need to be raising anybody's taxes. And if you want to know why there was this outpouring yesterday and why the numbers are so bad for the Democrats, you ask what's the issue? The issue is jobs, jobs, jobs, jobs. Yet, for more than a year, the Democrats in Congress and the administration were totally focused on the health care reform bill that's going to increase the cost of our health care and the American people wanted to be talking about jobs.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Congressman Wasserman Schultz, I'll give you twenty seconds to just respond to that because we've run out of time here.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: Ab-- absolutely. If you look at the month before President Obama took office, we were bleeding seven hundred and fifty thousand plus jobs a month. Fast forward a year and a half later, and we are adding about a hundred thousand jobs a month in the private sector. We've-- we've made the auto industry profitable, we've turned things around. We have a long way to go and we're going to continue to push hard. But the November election is a choice and the American people are going to continue to support Democrats because they want to continue to move in the direction that we've been going, not backslide toward the Bush era.



BOB SCHIEFFER: All right. The clock has just run out. Thanks to both of you for an enlightening discussion.

GOVERNOR HALEY BARBOUR (overlapping): Thank you-- thank you, Bob.

BOB SCHIEFFER: I'll be back with the final thought in just a second.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

BOB SCHIEFFER: Finally today, last week, two people I know were diagnosed with colon cancer, one of the deadliest of all cancers. Because my wife and I are cancer survivors, because my mother died of cancer, because she was afraid to go to the doctor, I've come to know a little about the disease. My friends have a serious illness but there is a path to recovery that was not there, not so long ago.

As I talk to them last week, I was again struck by the remarkable progress science is making to give them that path. Being told we have cancer no longer means we've been given the death penalty. Like all scientific breakthroughs, advances in cancer research began and depend on basic research, science's ability to go not where doctrine or tradition dictates, but where research takes it.

Ironically, my friends were diagnosed about the time a federal judge issued the injunction, placing limits on stem cell research, an area that holds the greatest possibilities for medical breakthrough since penicillin.

I have the greatest respect for those who disagree, but to me, putting restraints on stem cell research is not far from those who refuse to look through Galileo's telescope because they believe their doctrines and tradition had already told them what they would see. Their beliefs, too, were deeply held. But where would the store of knowledge be, had their view prevailed?

As we again try to untangle the arguments over stem cells, let us also consider this--no civilization, no society has survived if its people came to believe they knew enough and needed to know nothing more.

Back in a minute.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

BOB SCHIEFFER: That's all for today.

FACE THE NATION will be back next week, same place, same time.

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