

NASFAA's "Off The Cuff" Podcast - Episode 171 Transcript

Justin Draeger:

Hello everyone welcome to another edition of Off The Cuff. I'm Justin Draeger.

Allie Arcese:

I'm Allie Arcese with our communications team.

Megan Coval:

I'm Megan Coval with our policy team.

Jill Desjean:

And I'm Jill Desjean also with our policy team.

Justin Draeger:

Welcome back, Jill. Glad to have you here and welcome back everybody else. Jill, it's been just a few weeks since you've been on. We have... People don't know that we're recording virtually. We have to hook up all these different microphones and then we have to open multiple programs. It's a whole thing. So you just went through like orientation again.

Jill Desjean:

Yeah, I'll probably need it again next week too.

Justin Draeger:

Oh, that's no problem. We'll catch up you up to speed. But it reminded me of... We take these extra steps to try to improve the audio quality for the listener, but it reminded me in honor of... I know Eddie Van Halen just passed away a couple weeks ago. Many of you saw that, but the other front man of Eddie Van Halen was David Lee Roth for a short time. You guys remember this, right?

Jill Desjean:

Yeah.

Justin Draeger:

Okay. Thank you, Jill. I was looking at my age peer over here. So David Lee Roth... And you guys have probably heard some variation of the story, but in the contract it's been famously called the brown M&M clause. And in the contract of all the Van Halen concerts, when they would go, was a clause that said no brown M&Ms in the M&M's that would be in the green rooms before they started. And people often pull that or cite that as these pre-madonnas and they're... What gives?

Justin Draeger:

But David Lee Roth explained... This was later on a VH1 remember the nineties thing... But he explained that no, the issue was it was a test of whether people were actually reading the contracts. And the brown M&M clause was just to see if they had actually read the contract, because if there were brown M&M's, then we would shut down the entire line of production because we did some stunts that were

potentially unsafe. And so we were concerned that if people didn't read the show notes and didn't read the contract, that they were going to miss something else and it was going to be this big deal. So I often think about that because...

Allie Arcese:

That's smart.

Justin Draeger:

Right? I mean, it's not... Yes, these are mega stars in their heyday and maybe some of this was ego, but on the other hand, obviously all M&M's taste the exact same. Psychologically they might... right? Well, yeah, psychologically, it's not like a Skittle or a... Well, I don't know, now that I say that... But it's not like a Starburst where it's clearly different. And it was really about these small details add up to maybe something bigger that could impact something large.

Jill Desjean:

Yeah.

Allie Arcese:

To your comment about being a diva or whatever, I don't know if you guys watched Mrs. Maisel? But when she starts...

Jill Desjean:

Oh yeah.

Justin Draeger:

Yes.

Allie Arcese:

When she starts touring and her manager's like, "Oh, you have to have a weird ask. That's how they know you're serious is when you have a weird ask for your..."

Justin Draeger:

Megan, what's your? When you go on the road and speak at state and regional conferences?

Megan Coval:

I know what I would want it to be. How about that? I would want four water bottles in the room because I never feel like I have enough water in hotels.

Justin Draeger:

Right. And your anti-tap?

Megan Coval:

On the road, yep.

Justin Draeger:

I will say this, I'm also in that mindset. There have been... I remember one time in particular, I think I told you and Karen about this, where I was on the road and I was super thirsty one night I woke up and I'm like, "I'm so thirsty." And there were no water bottles. And I'm like, "ah." And then I was like, oh wait, there's like a whole sink that dispenses water in the other room. I just went in there and drank it. And you know what? I survived, so.

Megan Coval:

Well now when I leave the airport, when I land, I buy the huge water bottle. And then I go down to the gym and fill her up. I keep it for the whole trip. And then I just... Sometimes I use the gym sometimes I don't. That part varies.

Justin Draeger:

Right, because they usually have collagen water.

Megan Coval:

Yeah. So that's a little hack for you.

Justin Draeger:

All right. Well, any conferences that invite Megan to speak, water bottles are her...

Allie Arcese:

Minimum of four.

Justin Draeger:

All right.

Megan Coval:

We'll see who's listening.

Justin Draeger:

Well, let's jump in. We've got a full agenda today. Obviously this is election week. We'll talk a little bit about that. I don't think people are tuning into, Off The Cuff for our analysis of who's going to win the presidential race. But we do want to talk about some higher education things related to this. And before we get started, though, any member comments? Are our listener comments out yet?

Allie Arcese:

Yeah. So last week you guys will remember Justin had a very compelling argument against daylight savings time and you gained at least two new followers to your cause. Denise Welsh and Kathleen Write both said they totally agree about daylight saving time.

Justin Draeger:

This, folks, is the power of a movement, okay. It started with an n of one and now we've tripled. We're 300% of where we were last year or last week. So I don't think I convinced any of you and...

Allie Arcese:

Oh no, I'm down.

Justin Draeger:

Oh you're down? Okay, great.

Megan Coval:

Yeah.

Justin Draeger:

All right. Great. We've got five. Jill, you missed it, but just the premise is basically let's just stay on daylight savings time all year round and forget all the clock jumping.

Jill Desjean:

Which ones daylight savings time? Are we on daylight savings now?

Justin Draeger:

It's the one we just came off.

Jill Desjean:

Okay.

Justin Draeger:

It's the one we just came off of.

Jill Desjean:

So it would be darker in the morning?

Justin Draeger:

Right, yeah.

Jill Desjean:

I did enjoy... I was out early this morning and I did enjoy seeing the sun.

Justin Draeger:

Yeah. Well, you and Karen are on the same page, but I do... the nighttime at five o'clock on the East coast is unbearably depressing.

Jill Desjean:

Oh I also find that depressing, yeah. So I think I'd just vote for maybe something to do with moving the sun or something.

Justin Draeger:

You know what's so funny? Okay, so real quick, it's just that... So I have outdoor timers on my lights outside and I kept having my head like, oh man, daylight savings time has changed. I got to go out and change the timers. And I had this in my head. I got to change the timers. And then Monday morning came and the lights still came on at daybreak. And I was like, oh.

Allie Arcese:

They have a sensor, right?

Justin Draeger:

Well, no. I forgot that this is a complete construct. I don't have to go reprogram because the programming was built around daylight, daybreak and evening. Even if the time is off, it was still generally in the vicinity. But this is how mind-bending all of this is. I'm like, oh, I got to go put in the new times. But what I've been doing is changing the times and then adjusting the timer to be the... You see what I'm saying? This is all just man-made construct. Nothing's changed.

Justin Draeger:

All right, moving right along. Let's get into our agenda. First thing we want to talk about, big thing in the news, the election results. Still pouring in is we're taping, Thursday afternoon. We don't have any... At least both in the...for the presidential race and the Senate looks like Democrats will remain in the house. Allie, let's turn to you first. What do you got? Thoughts? Reactions?

Allie Arcese:

Yeah. I mean, obviously election night is kind of exhausting in general, in any year, in any election. I think obviously this year it's even more so because we still don't have the results. I think one thing I've noticed is so many people frustrated. Why can't we have the results on election night? But it's not uncommon at all for votes to still be counted one, two, three days after the election.

Justin Draeger:

Yeah. This is business as usual. This is just... This year we had an unprecedented number of absentee votes.

Allie Arcese:

And it's just so much tighter. The races are very tight and we're focusing on these... I don't know how many... Still six states or whatever, that are still uncalled. But even the states that have been called or projected for Biden or Trump, there very likely could still be some of those that don't have 100% of their votes tallied. They've just been called. Which is the difference, so no one's paying attention to them anymore.

Justin Draeger:

Yeah. In Virginia, we don't actually certify our votes until November 16th. It's not official for another week and a half. It's just mathematically we are where we are in this state, so.

Allie Arcese:

Yeah, I mean the vote tallying in the days following the election is nothing unusual.

Justin Draeger:

Right. I guess what's unusual is we live in a 24 hour news cycle, right. And it's sort of like, we want to know exactly what happened. Here... So it looks like, I mean, I don't know for sure, but it looks like Joe Biden at least is looking pretty good right now. If you're in the Biden... a potential Biden administration. Your Biden campaign, things are looking good. On the Trump side, they're filing all sorts of lawsuits. I'm going to leave the presidential thing aside for just a second and turn the House, which will stay in democratic hands. Although it looks like they... Republicans did pick up a few seats. On the Senate side though, I...people were projecting sort of this blue wave. And if you look at the presidential votes, yes, the popular vote, Joe Biden, I think has gotten more votes than any Democrat in history.

Allie Arcese:

I think any candidate ever.

Justin Draeger:

Any candidate ever. And I think he's leading the popular vote by 3 to 4 million. I'll leave that debate aside and just say on the Senate way...side, that blue wave did not quite materialize as pollsters had predicted, or at least said was leaning. It looks like the Senate might stay in control. So I think there is something to be said here for... It looks like divided government might still be the order of the day. Republicans controlling the Senate. And if you think about the Senate, that's where you have all the presidential nominations that have to be confirmed. So if you were thinking about things like an Elizabeth Warren, secretary of treasury, I just don't know how likely that is in a Republican controlled Senate.

Justin Draeger:

Now who knows for the department of education, because I just haven't heard, I mean, I haven't heard any legitimate speculation at least released publicly. But divided government looks like it could very well be the order of the day here.

Allie Arcese:

Yeah. I don't know how likely this scenario is, but I did see a little bit about the potential for it to be actually 50:50 or...

Megan Coval:

Oh, the electoral votes?

Justin Draeger:

Where the Biden administrate... Where Kamala Harris would be the...

Allie Arcese:

Tiebreaker?

Justin Draeger:

Tie-breaking vote.

Megan Coval:

Okay. Yeah because they have to pick up three, only three if Biden gets it. So right now it's 48 Republican, 47 Dem at the time of our taping. But it's looking like it's going to swing.

Justin Draeger:

Pick up three and defend all their seats. And they've already lost one in Senator Doug Jones, which brings up something we've been talking a lot about. FAFSA simplification was primarily championed by Senator Lamar Alexander who's retiring and his co-sponsor on the democratic side with Senator Doug Jones who just lost his election bid. That's not to say FAFSA simplification still won't come. Bobby Scott on the house side, who's chairman of the house education, but he's still a big believer in FAFSA simplification, but would do it as part of a larger reauthorization bill. Unlike Senator Alexander was really pushing for this separately. But the two lead sponsors aren't coming back in January.

Megan Coval:

It's just... The whole thing... It's just remarkable how close it is, isn't it? Just... I mean, I guess I'm going back to the presidential election now, but just that in of itself, the fact that we had record voter turnout. That... And we were in the middle of a pandemic. I mean, there's just a lot of crazy things I think about this election.

Justin Draeger:

Yeah. In terms of just... we have a divided electorate in a lot of states it's closely divided. The people that I thought might be really actually... If you end up with a Biden administration and a GOP controlled Senate, you know the people who come out as sort of victors in all of this, would be the never-Trumper Republicans. The Republicans who never supported Donald Trump. Like the Lincoln project people who left and still very much support like GOP traditional principles, are conservatives, but never really latched onto a Trump administration. They would have sort of the candidate they wanted out, out and they would still have control of the Senate. So to me, if you're looking for people who would be claiming victory, to me it'd be those disenfranchised Republicans who never latched on to Donald Trump. Those would be the people who I think would be most pleased with these results.

Megan Coval:

Yeah. And I mean, even those who kind of stuck with him, I think it's going to be really interesting to see over the coming days and weeks how they come out publicly.

Justin Draeger:

Right.

Megan Coval:

I don't know.

Justin Draeger:

So Megan, I wonder with where we are today, what does this portend for some of the things we've been watching between now and the end of the year, lame duck, in terms of funding for the student aid programs and, I don't know, dare I say another CARES Act Stimulus bill?

Megan Coval:

Yeah. So it's interesting. We'll have about six or seven weeks of a lame duck Congress and majority leader, Mitch McConnell, who was reelected. He was in a close race, already came out and said that he is interested in getting a COVID Relief bill done. And he sort of came out and said look, this was really hard to do during an election season where there are really heightened partisanists and passionate... Passions across the aisle. And so he says he wants to get something done, but I don't know.

Justin Draeger:

Well, it's certainly a change of tune from where Senator McConnell was prior to the election when he said he couldn't get anything passed Republicans in the Senate. And I guess leading up to the election, the feeling was they would be accused of being fiscally irresponsible.

Megan Coval:

Yeah. I think that's the concern. But the question is just how much are the Democrats going to want to play ball knowing they have... If Biden wins that they have a democratic administration coming in. And then also on the flip side, if president Trump does not win reelection, how willing is he going to be to even engage in these negotiations. Willing to give something on the way out the door? I don't know.

Justin Draeger:

Yeah. Something tells me that... But just personality wise, I mean, president Trump may not be willing to play ball given if he's lost an election. And then the other piece is if he's on his way out the door, would any Republican president want to be signing another to \$2 trillion of debt tacking that onto our existing national debt? And I just don't know. So it sounds to me like Megan, you're saying that Mitch McConnell might have come around to the table, but we might have some other complications that just don't make this a reality between now and January.

Megan Coval:

Yeah. And also I think a lot... This is all assuming they just have a nice six or seven clean weeks to work with and depending on how the election turns out and in what ways that it is contested. Just like we've talked about all the other things that have kind of muddied the water and sucked up time this year, this could be another one of those things. If the election is not fully resolved, the clock still ticks on the lame duck Congress and...

Justin Draeger:

Current funding for federal programs goes through December 11th. You want to call the odds for us getting something done there what's the willingness on behalf of congressional leadership to come together before we have an expiration.

Megan Coval:

Yeah. So with... Majority leader McConnell also came out and said that he wanted to get all of the funding wrapped up by the end of this Congress. And I think there is little to zero chance that that will happen just because it's a massive endeavor. They didn't make a whole lot of progress on it this year. So sometimes when we get to this late in the game, they've already kind of wrapped up several individual appropriations bills and really just have a few tough issues to tackle. But they're just not far along in the process at all. And it just doesn't...to my point earlier, it doesn't seem even kind of like mathematically possible to get through all of it. And it just... Certainly, I don't think can do that and the COVID Relief bill, so...

Justin Draeger:

Right.

Megan Coval:

But I don't think there's going to be a shutdown. I mean, they'll just probably pass another continuing resolution or maybe wrap up like a couple of them and an omnibus spending bill, so.

Justin Draeger:

That would be the reasonable course of action. Again, I just think president Trump has behaved so unexpectedly in so many ways. It's really hard to say what a contested election might lead to for every... I mean, this is...

Megan Coval:

Well, that's true. I shouldn't have said they'll have government shut down.

Justin Draeger:

Well, I just, I just don't know. Look, president Trump has said before that in other policy arenas, he says that... Like with the impeachment, he said that before he would negotiate on certain things during the impeachment hearings that he wouldn't negotiate until the house decided to drop the impeachment. It didn't. They voted to impeach. But I just don't know what this president... Where we'll be in December.

Megan Coval:

Yeah. And the other thing we'll keep our eye on is FAFSA simplification and Senator chairman Alexander, making his kind of last push before retirement to get his FAFSA Simplification Act through. And we talked about this before, that there's a chance it could get attached to some other piece of legislation, but I think there's a whole lot that has to happen there in order for that to occur. Not the least of which is getting the house on board and working out a deal with leadership. Because when you're talking about these other packages that... Spending bills, COVID Relief, are giant pieces of legislation that leadership would have to approve getting this tucked into. So we'll keep our eye out. But I think we can expect to push.

Justin Draeger:

I hear you. And the more political, sometimes things become, they want to pass a very... It sort of narrows the bills that they can pass. So if they do a continuing resolution, like you talked about earlier, they don't want a bunch of riders on that bill. So we'll have to see what happens there. Of course, NASFAA will stay attuned to what's happening and we'll continue to support.

Megan Coval:

And a new chair.

Justin Draeger:

Yeah. Well then there's the jockeying, right? For who's going to be the new chairperson of that entire committee. So more to come.

Megan Coval:

Yeah, lots to look out for.

Justin Draeger:

All right, sticking with what's going on potentially in this lame duck session of Congress, we sent a letter up with our colleagues over at the Institute of College Access and Success and our friends and colleagues over at the American Council on Education to secretary DeVos, urging them to continue borrower benefits. Megan, you want to catch us up here?

Megan Coval:

Yeah. So we sent this up last week and just as a reminder of the current borrower benefits, including the biggies of automatic payment suspension and interest rate suspension, accrual of interest, expires on December 31st. So that is coming around the pike very quickly. So we joined our partners to ask secretary DeVos and the department of education to extend those borrower benefits basically through September of 2021 or until we get to a place economically where the stimulus is not as painful.

Justin Draeger:

Yeah. And so for people who were interested, we define that as, what? The unemployment rate below a certain percent for three consecutive months is... So if that happens sooner, then great.

Megan Coval:

Yeah, 8% I believe is what... Yeah.

Justin Draeger:

Yeah. So we will see what happens there. But as a reminder, the last time the department did this, it was in August and benefits were expiring in September. So if we're sticking to that timeline, we'd hope to see something announced from the department of education in the next week or two that would extend this beyond December 31st.

Megan Coval:

Yeah. Really quickly, hopefully. And then also, I mean, going back to our earlier conversation, if Congress does get some sort of relief bill through before the end of the year it's also of course possible that they could address this issue and handle it through legislation. So a couple avenues here, hopefully.

Justin Draeger:

Right. Well, we'll keep our fingers crossed and keep pushing for those extension of benefits. For those... Wherever you're at on sort of the COVID scale right now, we're turning in record level highs every day. It's sort of being overlooked because of the shadow of the election. But I think we reached a new daily record as a country yesterday with over a hundred thousand. So we're clearly not out of the woods yet.

Justin Draeger:

All right. Let's move on here. One of the things that we sometimes do Jill is, as we come to the end of a presidential term is sort of do a retro facing... for some reason I keep thinking of, isn't that a Sarah McLaughlin song that's like "I will remember you." This is not... I'm not saying this in a partisan way. I sort of feel like maybe we should have that overlaying, but a look back at the last four years of the Trump administration. I would play the song even if it was the Obama administration. So this isn't

partisan, but let's take a look back for those who everything just sort of runs together, Jill, some of the highlights of the last four years, catch us up here.

Jill Desjean:

Sure. Yeah, so it's funny just thinking about the past four years, I feel like 2020 has been so eventful when I looked back to see what happened in Trump's first year of his presidency. I'm like, that was 4 years ago? It was like 20 years, I don't even know what, but yeah. So hopefully this will shock you as much as it did that that wasn't that long ago.

Jill Desjean:

You might recall when Trump first took office, one of the first things he did that created a lot of... caused a lot of stir was the Muslim travel ban. What was colloquially known as the Muslim travel ban where he'd banned traveled to the US from seven Muslim countries. And that was something that wasn't obviously aimed at higher ed. It was a broader policy thing, but it did impact institutions of higher ed pretty seriously because it impacted international student travel from those countries. And it was at a strange time. And then it was sort of between... with traditional calendars sort of between the winter and the spring semesters. And so I heard of many international students being stuck at home in their home countries, or even getting to the US and getting stranded in airports and having to get sent back and things like that.

Jill Desjean:

So that sort of set the stage for higher ed under the Trump administration. We saw also in that first year, Trump's proposed phasing out of DACA, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, and again, broad policy issue, but something that had a very direct impact on higher ed. Nearly half a million college students are DACA students and were left sort of fearing deportation or worried about what might happen in their future. The Supreme Court ultimately ruled against the Trump administration on that, but...

Justin Draeger:

Ruled against them on administrative, on their... How they went about it.

Jill Desjean:

Exactly, right.

Justin Draeger:

And if they... They said if they won... If the Trump administration won the re-election, they would go back through the... What is it? Administrative Procedures Act requirements, and make sure that they filed again. So they clearly have signaled their intent to end the DACA program in the second term.

Jill Desjean:

Right. And doors that close to you once you try to do it again, based on what the Supreme Court decision was. And other broad policy things that happened in the Trump administration that also affected DACA students just this year in 2020, DACA students took another hit when the Department of Education established these Title IV eligibility rules for the CARES Act higher education emergency relief funds. You guys will remember that the CARES Act did not include any restrictions on student eligibility,

but the department came out a little bit after the CARES Act was signed, about a month later, and said that students needed to basically meet the same eligibility requirements as they would have for Title IV funding, which is under section 44 of the Higher Education Act. And one of those is essentially being a citizen or a permanent resident, which DACA students are not.

Jill Desjean:

And Trump administration has been pretty active in the student protection space as well. You might remember the bathroom bill. The Trump administration removed the Obama era protections for transgender students at public schools and colleges that had allowed previously transgender students to be able to use the bathroom of their choice. We saw the repeal of the Gainful Employment Rule in 2019, which had big impacts on student protections as well. We saw big changes to Title IX new guidance from the department on how colleges can handle campus sexual assault allegations. And of course this year in 2020 as well, we signed new borrower defense rules that make it harder now for students who've been defrauded by their higher education institutions to get relief by way of loan cancellation.

Justin Draeger:

Right. What's interesting about all those elements and yes, I do sort of forget that those all happen over the last four years. If you were to look at the Biden administration, if we have a Biden administration and you look at sort of their regulatory priorities, you'd see some of the exact same topics, which means we might be re-regulating the same sort of broad set of regulations for going on 10 to 12 years at this point. So gainful employment will certainly be on tap in a Biden administration. We would certainly see them revisiting borrower defense regulations, if not... At least processes, if not the entire regulatory package there and Title IX will certainly be revisited.

Jill Desjean:

I'm tired already thinking it. Whether good or bad for students, the process can be quite painful either way.

Justin Draeger:

I see more... The good news is, Jill, that you guys... We can just dust off our negotiated rulemaking notes and just keep churning out the same...

Jill Desjean:

That's true, our opinions haven't changed. So yeah.

Megan Coval:

I feel like you always make this point, Justin, and it's such a good one. It's like, this is a consequence of not that all of this stuff would be addressed in a reauthorization, but when we can't... When Congress can't get things done, then you're just sit there every four to eight years.

Justin Draeger:

Right? I think people say that... I think sometimes people misunderstand and think we're passing the buck to Congress when we say, instead of re-regulating...or constantly re-regulating gainful employment, let's have Congress weigh in on institutional eligibility. Now NASFA has certain opinions about it. I just think it's a hard thing because administrations don't want to wait for Congress. We're 12

years since the last reauthorization, but traditionally speaking institutional and program eligibility is a congressional responsibility and we wish they would just settle the issue so that we can move on.

Justin Draeger:

All right. So we will stay tuned. Thanks for that look back. Jill, as we've been wanting to do in the last several episodes, it seems like we're always trying to revisit questions that are being asked of our Ask-Regs specialists. What do you got for us this week?

Jill Desjean:

Yeah. So this week, our TRA team updated a couple of Ask-Greg's articles based on some new information that we got from the Department of Ed. And these have to do with applying the R2T4 Waiver that was announced under the CARES Act that allows schools to not have to return funds for students who withdrew if their withdrawal was due to COVID-19. And so the question was, can a school choose not to apply the R2T4 Waiver under the CARES Act and return unearned Title IV funds anyway. So could a school decide not to exercise that waiver even if... For any reason really. And the answer used to be, we think so, the answer is now definitive no. We had based our previous answer on information we'd received verbally from the Department of Ed, but the answer has since changed to no. If the student withdraws because of COVID, the school has to apply the waiver. And that is based on... The Department came out with a electronic announcement on October 6th and they also updated some FAQ's. And so that... They have...

Justin Draeger:

So if the school knows that they withdrew for COVID-19. If the school doesn't know, they could still... They could be generous and say, if we don't know why a student... We could assume that they withdrew for COVID-19. But if they don't know, they don't have to apply their waivers, is that correct?

Jill Desjean:

Exactly. Right. So they do still have some wiggle room because they always could choose to use this sort of assumption method, which was if a student withdrew in a payment period where the institution had some kind of a disruption due to COVID. If they switched to remote learning, if they closed their dorms, they could say every student who withdrew during that term... They're just going to assume that's a COVID related withdrawal and apply the waiver consistently for all of them. They can alternatively not use that assumption and say that students, if they want the waiver, if they don't want their funds to be returned, that they have to sign an attestation that says that their individual withdrawal was COVID-related. But the school is not required to seek those out. The student needs to come to you and attest that they had a COVID-related withdrawal. So there is...

Justin Draeger:

And there are some long standing principles around this. The school can't be held responsible for what it doesn't know.

Jill Desjean:

Exactly, right. Yeah. If they did know they've got to treat it like a COVID waiver, but if they didn't know, they're not required to go out and dig it up.

Justin Draeger:

All right. Thank you very much for that clarification. Let's wrap up here. I have a question for you guys. There seems to be, as I look at my friends on social media and family that I talk to, they're two types of people on election night. Okay. So on Tuesday night, some people completely check out. They don't follow. They do something else entirely. And then there are others who are completely glued to the screen. They want to know blow by blow what's happening. And I was thinking about you all and wondering which side of the aisle you fall on. So I want to start with Megan. Don't tell us Megan, but Allie, Jill, what do you think? What do you know about Megan? Is Megan the type of person that pops popcorn, watches the election results come in, stays fixed to the commentary that's happening on all the different news networks or is she someone who completely checks out and does something else? Allie, what do you think?

Allie Arcese:

I think Megan would be pretty engaged up to a certain point. That's what I'll say. I think she would be tuned into the polls and the results. And... But at some point there's a breaking point.

Justin Draeger:

Yeah. I went back and forth on Megan because Megan pre-children, I think would have tuned in the entire time. Now post children's a little different, but Megan has young children. So they go to bed early, before the polls start closing. So I'm going to say, Megan, you stayed in touch with the election. What was it? What'd you do on election night Megan?

Megan Coval:

Yeah, in touch is a good. And I think Allie, you got it right too. We watched, we did pop popcorn, ate the Halloween candy. Kind of made it a thing, but we were falling asleep by 10:30 and I was definitely not motivated to lose sleep over it. So yeah, in the middle.

Justin Draeger:

So, you stayed in touch?

Megan Coval:

In touch, yeah.

Justin Draeger:

All right. Now, Megan and Jill, given what you know about Allie, what would you guess about Allie? Did Allie stay in touch or did she completely tune it out? What do you think Megan?

Megan Coval:

I'd say she definitely didn't tune it out. I'd say, in touch. Thinking about her... Just her role here and knowing that, but also I know that... I know Allie cares about politics, and so yeah.

Justin Draeger:

What about you, Jill? What do you think? What line did Allie fall in?

Jill Desjean:

I landed where Megan landed too, because I know Allie is very conscientious and I know that they had to run something in Today's News the next day. And so I thought Allie probably knows better than to stay up all night watching this. And yet part of her job responsibility is to make sure she knows what happened. And so I feel like she probably did some staying up.

Justin Draeger:

All right. Allie, what did you do election night?

Allie Arcese:

Yeah, the Comm Team doesn't have the luxury of tuning out the elections. We ordered some burritos, ate those. I have a... since I've been at NASFA for the last five years, I have a different election night routine than I did when I was a reporter at US news and stuff because obviously I had to stay up all night then, but I stay up as long as I can while still being coherent. If I could still write a coherent article, then I'll stay up. Once I pass that point, I go to bed and I set an alarm for 3:00 AM and then I get up and just check my phone really quickly to see if anything crazy happened. If nothing is really changed, then I'll go back to bed and then get up really early. I mean, we get up early anyways to send the newsletter every morning, but get up a little earlier just to make any changes that need to be done before we send out the newsletter. So that's my routine.

Justin Draeger:

All right. Given what you guys know about Jill, what do you think? Allie, what do you think Jill did? She stayed in touch or was she checked out?

Allie Arcese:

I feel like Jill stayed in touch, but in a nontraditional way. Maybe some form of watching the election results through satire.

Justin Draeger:

So she went down some Twitter rabbit holes or something like that. Instagram.

Allie Arcese:

Yeah, getting news from memes, I don't know.

Justin Draeger:

Megan. How about you? What are your thoughts on Jill?

Megan Coval:

I feel like Jill probably was out of touch. And not in a bad... I feel like Jill is very good at protecting her time and self care and going to bed early, maybe Jill, I'm telling too much about your life here but I feel like you were not going to let an election interrupt your routine and reading your book before bed. I don't know, do you do that? This is how I imagine you.

Justin Draeger:

Jill, remind me, are your kids learning at home or are they actually back in school?

Jill Desjean:

They are learning at home. Well, they're doing something at home. I don't know if learning's happening.

Justin Draeger:

Okay then, I'm going to amend my answer and say Jill was disconnected. Jill, what were you doing?

Jill Desjean:

Jill was disconnected. You were all a little bit, right? Yeah, Allie's right. And... I don't know how to use my TV to watch network shows. So that was not an option for me.

Allie Arcese:

That's not what I meant.

Justin Draeger:

So Netflix does not have a live option, is the point we were...yeah.

Jill Desjean:

Yeah, but I did make a decision to Megan's point that I was just like, you know what? I'm not going to learn anything tonight and I'm going to waste a lot of my time. Just worrying, thinking too much, going down Twitter rabbit holes. And so I just was like, went to bed. Didn't sleep super well, was up a little bit, but was not tuned into the election.

Justin Draeger:

Yeah. That's interesting about the sleeping thing, because at my house, Deanne is... My wife is an engineer by trade and training. And so she has not been big into politics until recently. So we actually are on a Curb Your Enthusiasm kick. So I've never watched and we're going backwards. So we watched the last season then season nine, we're in season eight. So we watched Curb Your Enthusiasm, checked in before we went to bed, I slept like a rock. And Deanne was up at 3:00 AM. She leaned over and was like, "I can't sleep. So I'm going to get up. And I'm..." I'm like, yeah, okay, just do... You do whatever you have to do right now. And I went right back to sleep and Deanne was up in the middle of the night, just kind of checking in, see what was going on with the elections. That's very unlike her. Yeah.

Allie Arcese:

Pascal stayed up later than me too. And he's also an engineer. So I don't know maybe this is their year.

Megan Coval:

yeah, it's hmm... This is interesting.

Justin Draeger:

Interesting indeed. All right. Well, people can send us their comments. Tell us how you spent election night. Give us something creative. Give me something I can glob onto in future election years. Thanks everybody for joining us for another edition of Off The Cuff. Remember to subscribe, tell a friend and we will talk to you again next week.