

Fact Checking Art Pope and William Barber's Impromptu Debate

FULL TRANSCRIPT

Barber: We want you to join us and help us make North Carolina good. I want to meet with you.

Pope: Do you want to close down my stores so that we don't provide services in the community that we'd have to lay off our employees?

Barber: Oh, we'd love for you to use your wealth and pay your employees more, but here's the letter, if you'll take it.

Pope: We're providing jobs. I'll gladly take your letter. We're providing jobs in the community. We're allowing shoppers an option to shop in their community without having to take a bus to the big box store down the highway. And you want to put a stop to that?

Barber: We want to put a stop to the use of wealth to influence policies in a negative way. That's why it's not a boycott, it's a picket.

Pope: So if I gave to the North Carolina Justice Center and to Democracy North Carolina, instead of to the John Lock Foundation that would be OK.

Barber: No. It's the policies. It's not the giving. It's whether you giving to influence. But let's meet.

Pope: So only if I support your policies.

Barber: No, only if you support the good of the whole.

Pope: I do support the whole. I'm providing more...

Barber: The fundamentals of our constitution, fairness in voting, helping the poor who need Medicare, helping the unemployed. Let's have the conversation. I look forward to you...

Pope: And we are providing more jobs, we are providing more employment than you are after your direct activities...

Barber: Well there's a clear record. There's a clear record. I doubt that...

Pope: ...and we have a record of providing benefits to our employees. Do you realize over one third of our employees are African American? That's store managers and assistant managers, not just clerical employees.

Barber: And the policies you're supporting, sir, are hurting the very people who spend at your stores.

Pope: The unemployment rate in North Carolina has dropped from over 10 percent under the Purdue administration to 7.8 percent. We've seen a constant drop in the unemployment rate in the last two years. That is helping get jobs. That's not hurting them. That's helping them.

Barber: When you cut unemployment benefits to people who lost their jobs, no fault of their own, you deny Medicaid to the folk who need it the most, our own money. And when you undermine the voting process, when you create barriers to voting; that's why we're in court now. We need to sit down. I would love to have the conversation with you.

Pope: And I've supported legislation for bi-partisan redistricting commissions.

Barber: We'd love to sit down.

Pope: It was the federal government that declined to grandfather in North Carolina's unemployment reforms and terminated the benefits.

Barber: But the governor could... We're the only state that has ever done this, that denied unemployment...

Pope: We're the only one that was denied the grandfather clause by the federal administration, the federal government.

Barber: The people have been hurting. The government could've made a request. The people, we are hurting unnecessarily.

Pope: The governor did request an extension of federal unemployment benefits.

Barber: We could spend... The people have been hurt... And I will agree with you that the reason the unemployed benefits are where they are is because of democrats and Republicans in the past. But be that as it may, the people should not be being hurt who lost their jobs, no fault of their own.

Pope: I agree entirely, that's why we're [inaudible] jobs.

Barber: Alright. Let's meet soon. Let's meet soon.

Pope: And provide jobs.

Barber: Let's meet soon.

Pope: Thank you.

Barber: Thank you.