



JOE RAND WANTS BILL WEBER'S SENATE SEAT PART 4

BY: Keith S. Shikowitz, Editor in Chief/Investigative Reporter



This is the final part of my interview with Joe Rand who is running to unseat incumbent State Senator Bill Weber. This segment will cover a variety of topics.

Let's look at the idea of homelessness. I know you've had a situation of homelessness in Nyack, and there's homeless all over the place. We have similar situations here in New York where people are just living in tents and stuff under bridges and boxes and stuff. What can you do from the state level to help deal with the homelessness?

"It's all funding. I mean we should be funding more mental health, drug treatment and services that would help these people and get them off the street. Rockland County does not have a shelter. I think Rockland does try. The Rockland County Services have said to me, if there's somebody that needs a place to stay overnight, they'll find them a place to stay. Now they cobble together. It's not like a shelter, but they find hotel rooms here, they find a bed here, a bed there. They make it happen and God bless them for doing that, but it's not a solution."

He says they deal with that problem in Nyack. The people that there are people that come to Nyack who are homeless. These are not necessarily people who lived in Nyack beforehand but Nyack tends to be a place where there's a lot of people, it's dense, there's places to, it's very tough to go into a new city and find a place where you can hole up the way it is in Nyack, so we get some of that and it's something they deal with every day and we're trying to, help every one of those people that come here, we know who they are and we're trying to get them help. He says they have succeeded in getting many of them help.

"One guy, had \$50,000 in Social Security that he had never claimed. The police did a wonderful job OPD. I'm going to commend Sergeant Anthony Palazzolo, I think he's since been promoted so he may have a new title, but he was wonderful. He's no longer the liaison to our village, but when he worked there, he did a wonderful job interacting with people who are at risk and helping them to get what they need. He was the one that helped along with some people from the village to get this gentleman, his Social Security benefits. So it's about trying to help them and get them off the street now."

"What do you do if somebody just won't take the help? That's a tougher issue. What can I do as state senator? Try to find funding to help provide for shelters for people who are legitimately homeless, to try to find money to treat mental illness, drug addiction and also we talked about affordable housing before to provide for more housing so that people who are legitimately homeless, because a lot of people we're

describing, they have a place where they could go, they just don't want to go there because they're in an altered mental state and they don't want to be there.

<https://youtu.be/ziNrweVRZd8>

"Keith, we've got to treat the root causes. We also have to treat the externalities that get created, which is the crime and the vandalism and all the negative anti-social behavior that comes from people if they're not properly treated. You know, the Republicans always want to focus on the law enforcement. The very left wants to focus not on law enforcement but on a happy medium. I try to find a happy medium. So, in our budget this year we put \$40,000 for an extra safety patrol for somebody to walk the downtown because the Orangetown police does not really focus on walking downtown. They're in their cars. They're responding to calls. They do a wonderful job, but they're not walking a downtown beat. We said let's hire what we call the safety patrol to walk the downtown beat. That's the law enforcement side.

According to Rand, they also put \$40,000 into hiring a social worker that would treat the root causes. You don't just do it from a law enforcement side, and he doesn't think it's effective if you only do it from the root causes side, because some people, no matter what you do, they're not going to accept your help and they're going to end up causing a problem, and they need people to go to downtown Nyack. They need people to feel safe going to downtown Nyack, so they have to address that.

"But the old idea of defund the police, I never agreed with that. The concept of it was to put more money into social work and root causes and go talk to a guy who's got a gun on. I think the idea was to go to somebody who doesn't have a gun and so it doesn't escalate, but to defund the police was a bad idea and a really terrible slogan, but it was a bad concept. But the underlying concept is not just addressing everything from a law enforcement perspective but also address it from a what can we do to address the root causes. I think that is what made sense and that's what we did and I and that's what I think we should be doing up in Albany.

One topic that has become very volatile is the transgender idea especially when dealing with minors. I mean, personally, I feel if you're 18 and you want to do things to your body, as they say in, in Yiddish, (translated to English) Go with God, do what you want. If you're, if you're an adult, you can make those decisions. But when you deal with minors who don't even

know what the hell they want to do as a career, but they can sit there and, and have their bodies for those that are against it say are mutilated and we work chemically. That's where I, that's where I draw the line. I don't know where you draw the line on that, but, you know, about with dealing with children and transgender stuff.

"It's obviously a very fraught topic. It's a topic that makes people very uncomfortable as you've described. Here's what I would say. Transgender care is health care. I do not feel that it's my right or obligation, I don't think it's your right or obligation either to make decisions about the healthcare of any individual unless that you know we can talk about vaccines as being a separate issue because whether you get vaccinated or not could have an impact on the outer public, but if it's a healthcare issue that only really relates to you personally. I'm very reluctant to put the force of the state behind making decisions for the individual if it's the individual and their parents, if they're underage and they're doctors. That's a decision they should make." Rand explained.

He says that, now there's other issues that come up with transgender that we can talk about, but he does believe that people have a right to medical decisions. He doesn't think that the state should get involved in them, and we generally do not get involved in them. He believes people should have the right to die with dignity, and if that involves euthanasia and it's properly managed, that he thinks that we should allow that because he thinks we should not be making a decision if that person, if you have certain protocols in place to protect somebody from making a rash decision and they're just depressed and, they really, you have to have like a, there has to be somebody, it has to be somebody who's an intermediary who's neutral and objective that can actually do that.

"When it comes to TransCare. Am I really going to tell this, this young person, no you can't do this, even though every fiber of your being says that you are a male and you're in a female body. You've got to wait till you're 18. You've got to wait another 5 years, 6 years, however long it is. You've got to wait to do that because I'm not comfortable with you making this decision even though you

want to do it and your parents are okay with it, and the doctor thinks that it's appropriate.

A lady who I've seen on various news shows on both sides of the networks that transitioned and regretted it and now is back and, and she did it because she was told things by doctors and stuff like that. So, she did it. She de-transitioned and now she can never breastfeed a baby.

"Let's just stop there for a second. That's a horrible situation you're describing. It's heartbreaking. It's tragic. It's obviously a failure in the system. But we don't base policy on the outlying situations like that. Here's the thing, can we afford to have more of that coming out? They say, well people talk about suicide rates and things like that. I'm not sure on those numbers that they put out. The whole thing comes down to let people grow up and make a decision.

"The problem is that, is that if they do not, as I understand it, and I'm not an expert in this medical area, the later you wait, the more problematic it becomes to try to transition, that it's easier to transition younger. Now I'm going to agree with you. Are there people that have made a mistake and they regret it? I'm sure. I'm sure that there are people that regret all sorts of things they did when they were younger that they now have to live with."

"Again, I come down to it, Keith. I don't have a right to tell that kid what to do, and you don't have a right to tell that kid what to do either. The state definitely doesn't have the right to tell that kid what to do. It should be up to the doctor, the parents, the kid."

<https://youtu.be/Xq0WoniwNsQ>

All right, last topic, then we'll get to the summary. the no bail laws. That is something that since 2019 that has been a major controversy. There's been attempts to reform it but there's been very little reform in it.

"It was reformed once." Rand said.

But it didn't do a lot. They were more cosmetic reforms than actual reforms to the system. Keep in mind, this whole bail reform was set up by defense attorneys only. The police weren't involved, prosecutors weren't involved. Nobody on the side of the people were involved. Your house gets burglarized and the way this law is set up, the person who burglarized your house can come back into your house to check out the crime scene. I'm sorry, that's victimizing somebody twice. I'm going to give an agreement on that for those that say it needs to be reformed, and it did. There are things people need, but they swung the pendulum way too far to the other side. What would you do to help?

Going back to the way it was wouldn't be starting from scratch. I say go back to the way it was, at least we have something in place and then. Then start from scratch. This is what we see is wrong here. We'll fix it this way. This is what we see is wrong here. Take it in, but take the entirety of the community, sheriffs, police, prosecutors, not just defense attorneys.

"Agreed. Let me address this. Let me start by saying that bail reform was one of those things that remember we talked about good intentions well-intentioned efforts to address a real problem, and the real problem was that bail laws impact disproportionately people who are impoverished people. We don't know if they committed a crime yet. They haven't been convicted of anything. They've been just accused of committing a crime. The argument was that people who have been accused of a crime but have not yet been even tried for that crime. That putting them in jail and making them come up with money that they don't have to get out of jail led to lots of abuses where people would languish in jail for months without getting an opportunity to get their day in court."

"Here's the thing. You've come up with a couple of times with here's the outsized example of somebody who is, the things that happen in immigration, things that happen in transgender care or whatnot. Well, there are situations where innocent people get arrested and get sent to Rikers and spend months there and in some way, at least one case I know died there and never got their trial and it's horrible. This was an attempt to say, well, let's not require people to pay up to get released. However, very quickly after it got done, it got revised, and I don't even know what the revision was, but it did get revised. I do agree with you that I have a similar discomfort with the idea that people can literally you can witness them committing a crime. They get a desk appearance ticket. The police come and give them a desk appearance ticket, and they're still standing there in front of you. They commit an assault on you. They don't get taken anywhere. They get issued the appearance ticket right there and the police are very frustrated."

He said that as a mayor, as someone who's responsible for the, you know, he doesn't run a police force, but he's ultimately responsible for the security and safety of the people that live in Nyack and for the well-being, for things to eliminate anti-social behavior. It's very frustrating to him he sees people who do awful things and they're back on the street in hours, and that's a problem. They're out before police finish the paperwork that got them into the place.

"That is a problem. I believe that you're right that there needs to be, we need to find a balance that we can distinguish between people for whom there is some element of. You have to balance someone's ability to pay. You can't say to somebody who really doesn't have any money, we're going to put \$10,000 of bail on you, because then what you're doing is you're sentencing them to jail without giving them a trial. At the same time that's one side. On the other side, I don't love the idea of letting somebody who just punched me in the face. Basically, and I'm still out there they come waltzing down the street again. I've been punched me in the face because the cops couldn't take them away."

There were 400 crimes taken off the bail requirements, including stuff around schools, pornography around schools, prostitution around schools. You're exposing kids. The whole thing was, was ill-conceived.

"If I have a voice, which hopefully in January I will. I will be a voice for some moderation in the bail reform because I do believe that we have to balance the rights of the accused because they haven't been convicted yet and the rights of the people who are too poor to pay cash bail against the rights of victims and basically the interests of society to have law and order and to have an orderly society, I think there's a balance to be drawn. I think that the way things were pre-bail reform, I think they were they were too tilted to one side. I do think that bail reform might have tilted them too much to the other side, and I think that there's got to be a medium and everybody who's involved in this, victims groups, groups that deal with the with the incarcerated, groups that deal with people who are mentally ill and the social problems, and then prosecutors and police and attorneys and everybody should be at that conversation and they should work to try to find a solution so that if someone punches you in the face, they at least spend the night in jail."

So why then should people say, you know what, Bill Weber's been in there a couple of terms, been doing a good job. Why vote for Joe Rand?

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