

CBS Mornings

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7:18:44 a.m. [TEASE]

13 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Coming Up; Sen. Raphael Warnock]

GAYLE KING: Coming up, newly reelected Senator Raphael Warnock, the Georgia Democrat, is here to talk about the long — there he is —

TONY DOKOUPIL: Hey!

KING: — hello, Senator — to talk about the long campaign—

SENATOR RAPHAEL WARNOCK (D-GA): Morning.

KING: — to beat Herschel Walker and what's coming next for him. He'll share after the break.

(.....)

7:30:28 a.m.

8 minutes and 22 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Exclusive; Sen. Raphael Warnock Live; Newly-Elected Georgia Senator on Runoff Win]

KING: When Senator Raphael Warnock won his runoff election earlier this month, his victory cemented Democrats' control of the U.S. Senate. The Baptist pastor won his first full six-year term after previously winning a special election to the seat back in 2021. Now, he is the first black American to represent Georgia in the Senate and the first black Democrat elected to the chamber from a southern state. Senator Warnock joins us now for an exclusive interview on *CBS Mornings*. Senator, welcome, and congratulations to you.

WARNOCK: Good morning. Great to be here with you.

KING: So, was Herschel Walker the first call you received on election night?

WARNOCK: I — I didn't hear from him. But listen — I'm — I'm proud.

KING: You haven't heard from him still?

WARNOCK: I'm proud of what the people of Georgia have done.

KING: Yeah. They certainly came through for you.

WARNOCK: Look, my name has been on the ballot five times in less than three years —

KING: Mmhmm.

WARNOCK: — for the same doggone job. Clearly I wanted this job —

KING: Mmhmm.

WARNOCK: — because it allows me to continue what's been my lifelong project, service.

KING: We'll talk about your goals in a second. But the races seemed to be closer than people expected considering your opponent, considering the times. What do you say about that, and Stacey Abrams did not win the gubernatorial seat?

WARNOCK: Well, these races are hard fought.

KING: Yeah.

WARNOCK: And it wasn't long ago, you know, that we were looking at a different situation in Georgia. I'm the first Democrat elected alongside Jon Ossoff in about 20 years to the Senate and so, these races are hard-fought. But we continue to build on the progress that we've been able to make over the years and I'm glad I get to use the influence that the people of Georgia have placed in my hands. You know, I think about this all the time. It's really an amazing thing for the people of your state to say when we think about our families —

KING: Yeah.

WARNOCK: — when we look into the eyes of our children, as we try take care of our parents as they deal with both the blessings and the burdens of aging, we'd like for you to represent us in the Senate. For me, that's a sacred trust. It's something I take seriously and I'm honored to do that work.

KING: Clearly, you keep coming back to the job. Is voter suppression still an issue, though, in Georgia?

WARNOCK: Oh, absolutely. We — we should —

KING: Cause some people could say, look, he won —

WARNOCK: Right.

KING: — that's no longer an argument.

WARNOCK: — we should not assume that because I won that voter suppression is not an issue in Georgia. In fact, I had to sue the state of Georgia so that we could get Saturday voting. They

— they shortened the runoff, and then they said the Saturday after a holiday which was Thanksgiving and another holiday, by the way, that honored Confederatal [sic] — Confederate General Lee —

KING: Mmhmm.

NATE BURLESON: Mmhmm.

WARNOCK: — they said we couldn't have — we couldn't have Saturday voting. I had to sue them. They appealed. It took two additional appeals to secure Saturday voting, and then the people of Georgia showed up. They built —

DOKOUPIL: But Senator —

WARNOCK: — a multiracial coalition of [inaudible] to send me back to the Senate.

KING: So, work to be done there.

DOKOUPIL: Senator, I mean, it's not just some people who could say you won so voter suppression is not the problem it was, it's Brad Raffensperger, who's secretary of state of Georgia. He's got an op-ed in *The Wall Street Journal* out today. He's famed — for many of our viewers — for standing up to Donald Trump's claims of denying the election or that the election was stolen. He's now calling you an election denier, saying you can't say it's not a free and fair election if you got record turnout. What do you say to that?

WARNOCK: I — the fact that people have had to overcome barriers doesn't mean those barriers don't exist. We literally saw college students and seniors in lines that were hours and hours and hours long. Maybe he's happy with that. I'm not.

BURLESON: Mmmmmm!

WARNOCK: I think we can do better than that. Your vote is your voice, your voice is your human dignity. There's nothing more sacred than the right to vote. You can have the right to vote and still not have access.

BURLESON: Mmmmmm!

WARNOCK: And so, that's the work that I've been doing for a long time, long before I ran for office.

BURLESON: Yeah.

WARNOCK: Because the vote for me, as I often say, is a kind of prayer for the world we desire for ourselves and for our children, which is why I'm focused now as a legislator on passing voting rights in our Congress.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Exclusive; Sen. Raphael Warnock Live; Senator on the 2024 Election and a Biden Second Term]

BURLESON: Speaking of elections, you mentioned during the commercial break there is a fascination with the next election.

WARNOCK: Sure.

BURLESON: Do you believe that President Biden should run for re-election in 2024?

WARNOCK: Oh, I think if he chooses to run, I will support him. But I do think we spend so much time in our country focused on the next selection that we're not thinking often enough about the next generation.

BURLESON: Yeah.

WARNOCK: I was doing this work long before I ran for office and I think that the people are well served by politicians — are not well served by politicians who make the politics about them.

BURLESON: Of course.

WARNOCK: It ought to be about the hard-working people of Georgia who are trying to keep the promises that all of us make to our children.

DOKOUPIL: Are you excited?

BURLESON: Are you running for the president of the United States?

WARNOCK: Look, my name's been on the ballot five times in three years. And so, after that, I'm finally focused on being able to do the work the people of Georgia have elected me to do. In addition to that, I've got two children at home.

KING: Yeah, little guys.

WARNOCK: Six and four.

KING: Let's talk about —

WARNOCK: I promised them a trip to Disney world.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Exclusive; Sen. Raphael Warnock Live; Senator on Recommended Charges Against Fmr. President Trump]

KING: — well, I think you can deliver on that. Let's talk about the January 6th committee, who's ready, it seems, to recommend that Donald Trump be prosecuted — to be held accountable. What

do you think should happen there? I know it's a recommendation and it's their decision, but what do you think should happen?

WARNOCK: I think we are a nation of laws and not of men.

KING: Uh-huh.

WARNOCK: And so, it's important that we protect our election system. Again, the people of Georgia sent me to the Senate alongside Jon Ossoff, the first African-American and the first Jew on January 5. On January 6, we saw the most violent assault that we've seen since the War of 1812 on our Capitol driven by the big lie.

KING: We all saw it, so you think he should be prosecuted?

WARNOCK: I think that this committee has done excellent work, and I've been happy to watch them do that.

KING: That's a yes or no question, senator. Yes or no?

WARNOCK: I'm — I'm saying that we, as they refer it to the Department of Justice, it will allow the Department of Justice to do its work.

KING: All right.

WARNOCK: And no one should be above the law.

DOKOUPIL: Yeah.

WARNOCK: Nobody.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Exclusive; Sen. Raphael Warnock Live; Senator on Emergency Migrant Situation at Southern Border]

DOKOUPIL: On the border right now, the administration is warning of a potential increase in the already increased numbers of people showing up because of Title 42 expiring. Title 42 is — allows the government to expel migrants for — for public health reasons. Do you think it's a mistake given the lack of resources on the border, given the crush of people coming, to let it expire? Do you think we need Title 42 to control the border?

WARNOCK: I think it's important to secure the border which I've always said, and I think it's important that people have a dignified, orderly path to citizenship, which I've always said. We are a nation of immigrants and I think it's only politics that creates this false choice between securing the border —

BURLESON: Yeah.

WARNOCK: — and giving people a dignified path to citizenship and, by the way, doing something about the DREAMers for whom this is the only country they've ever known, and those who are dealing with temporary protective status right now. I think we can do both things at the same time. We need comprehensive immigration reform in this country.

KING: I know we've been saying that.

DOKOUPIL: Yeah.

KING: We've been saying that for years and years and that never changes. Can you imagine — well, so far it hasn't changed. Can you imagine a scenario where we say, I'm sorry, we just can't help you, we don't have the resources, we don't have the spaces, we don't have the manpower to help? Can you envision that?

WARNOCK: I think we are a nation of immigrants, and we always will be. We are great not in spite of our diversity but because of it.

KING: Mmhmm.

WARNOCK: And again, we can secure the border, we have to make sure that we don't make a humanitarian crisis at the border worse, while at the same time we can forge a path — I believe a bipartisan path —

KING: You do?

WARNOCK: — to getting immigration reform done in our country and people who are in business, farmers, folks in the agriculture sector, and other sectors know that we've got to do these things.

BURLESON: Yeah.

WARNOCK: And I remain focused on it.

DOKOUPIL: Senator Warnock, you don't have to run for anything now for six years unless you choose otherwise.

WARNOCK: I'm running to Disney World with my two little [inaudible].

BURLESON: There it is!

WARNOCK: But before that, I'm going to take a nap.

DOKOUPIL: All right. We got a comfortable couch there —

WARNOCK: [Inaudible] time.

DOKOUPIL: — in the green room.

KING: Well deserved.

DOKOUPIL: Senator, thank you so much. Appreciate it.