



## TUE PM Update -- 2 June 2015

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**From WisPolitics.com ...**

**-- Obama strategist David Axelrod said today in Milwaukee that he regards Walker very seriously as a presidential candidate, calling the gov a "very practiced and accomplished politician."**

Still, he added it's early in the race and Walker "has a lot to prove."

Axelrod told an overflowing crowd at a Marquette University Law School's "On the Issues" program that Walker has "thrilled the GOP base with his unrelenting war on unions" and by emphasizing his roots as a pastor's son, which appeals to social conservatives.

He noted that the Koch brothers "are smitten" with Walker and that in today's world, extremely wealthy people are able to influence politics in a way not seen since the Industrial Revolution's financial giants, such as J.P. Morgan and the Rockefellers.

But, he added, "running for president of the United States has more dimensions to it than running for governor of Wisconsin" and that Walker has yet to be tested on many presidential issues.

Afterward, Axelrod told reporters, "I think (Walker) has some prospects in this race, more so than some of the others who are running."

But Axelrod expressed warnings for Walker as well.

"I think there are a lot of unanswered questions, and they'll only be answered as he goes through the gauntlet of the campaign," Axelrod said. "It's a far more complex exercise than running for governor. You can outsmart yourself by trying to pander to your base to get the nomination and render yourself unelectable in the general election."

**-- Axelrod, who stayed to sign copies of his new book, "Believer: My Forty Years in Politics," told the audience that "politics at its best can really make a great deal of difference, and that's why I'm a believer."**

He said Barack Obama will be remembered in 20 years as a president who made deep differences even at the expense of personal popularity.

"He'll be the president who led us through the deepest economic crisis since the Great Depression; he'll be the president who finally tackled the issue of health care in this country; he'll be the president who wound down two wars," Axelrod said. "He'll be the president who changed the way we deal with our gay and lesbian citizens."

As a senior adviser to the Obama administration, Axelrod said he nearly tried to talk Obama out of pursuing the Affordable Care Act.

"Seven presidents had tried, seven presidents had failed," he said. "Frankly, it concerned me."

But he said Obama was determined to "push through," telling Axelrod he never forgot a 36-year-old woman from Green Bay, who told the president in 2009 that she feared her stage 4 breast cancer would leave her family bankrupt.

"Every time it looked like we were done on health care, he kept us going," Axelrod said of Obama. "I'll never forget what he said. He said, 'What are we supposed to do, put our approval ratings on the shelf and admire it for eight years? Or are we going to draw down on it and do things of lasting value to the country?'"

**-- Axelrod told reporters that the 2016 presidential campaign will boil down to voters' search for someone to fix the nation's sagging economy.**

"The defining issue of our time is about the economy and whether we're going to have an economy that lives up to our fundamental value that in America, if you work hard, you can get ahead," he said.

Axelrod assured reporters that "America is ready for a female president, absolutely," but at the same time warned that presidential candidate Hillary Clinton "is being hurt right now by her sporadic press appearances."

"You want to be in the regular routine of campaigning," he said. "It's important that she gets there and gets there quickly."

"The great trap for Republican candidates" is their failure to win over millennials and minorities, Axelrod said.

Too many are following the example of Mitt Romney, Axelrod said.

"By running far to the right on immigration reform, by running far to the right on birth control and

women's health issues, he walled himself off, not just from minorities, but from a lot of young people who had much different view on these issues," Axelrod said.

By Kay Nolan