

RUSSERT: And obviously Democrats are quick to attack. Richard Trumka of the AFL-CIO was saying that Walker entering the race is a national disgrace. You also have Hillary Clinton who just said this. Let's play the tape.

CLINTON: Republican governors like Scott Walker have made their names by stomping on workers' rights, and practically all the Republican candidates hope to do the same as President. I will fight back against these mean spirited, misguided attacks.

RUSSERT: Chris Cillizza, Hillary Clinton calling him out by name! I'm sure Walker probably likes that at the end of the day.

CILLIZZA: There's probably, I was going to say, a roar of applause going off in Walker headquarters when that happened. Look, Hillary Clinton mentioned three Republican candidates by name today, Jeb Bush, Marco Rubio and Scott Walker and I would say that looks to me at least like what the Clinton people think the top tier of the Republican field looks like and I think they're right. Look, any time Hillary Clinton mentions you by name as Scott Walker, who is not as well known frankly as Jeb Bush, and is largely as well known as Marco Rubio, it's good for him.

The more he can paint it as a "she's worried about me" so she's talking about me, all for the good for him. Same thing with being attacked by organized labor. All of those things bolster the image as a guy who has stood up, fought and won, which is the message in his video that he released this morning and I think you'll hear again in his speech tonight.

RUSSERT: And Molly Ball, he has won three governors' races in four years, surviving that recall and has put together quite an impressive coalition of support, doing well in union households that no one thought to be possible.

What I've heard is that if he in fact makes it through this primary process, his focus is really going to be on the Midwest, sort of son of the Midwest. He's going to try to compete in Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, states where Democrats have done very well at the presidential level over the last few elections. Gonna' focus on this older whiter electorate in those states as opposed to the Colorado, Virginia and Florida.

Walker, it's a heck of an experiment, a heck of a gamble, but if it turns out to be right, it's a heck of an opportunity for this GOP to completely rebrand themselves in the Midwest.

BALL: Absolutely. I think as a matter of political strategy, I think the Midwest is Republicans biggest opportunity. It's the place where the demographics are changing the most slowly. A lot of these states are older and whiter and losing population, as opposed to the other states that you mentioned that are rapidly becoming more diverse and growing in population.

Scott Walker's got a couple of obstacles getting through the primary however. One of them is that even though he's got that winning record in Wisconsin, Wisconsin isn't too fond of him right now. He just barely got through this very tough budget battle, just signed the budget yesterday. We're pretty far overdue with a lot of flack coming his way from Republicans in the legislature who've previously been loyal to him.

His approval rating is pretty low and part of that dissatisfaction is that people feel like he campaigned on one thing to get reelected and now that he's on the national stage they don't really know him any more. They don't recognize the Scott Walker who sort of took this very pragmatic line in order to keep getting elected in Wisconsin.