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Leaving Congress

By Representative Tim Penny



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Why am I leaving Congress? Frankly, that is a question that comes up every time I address a new audience. Leaving Congress after twelve years is not the norm. Typically, if you leave in this time frame it is because you are running for the Senate or you are running for governor; you have some other political ambition. Or, if you start your political career later in life, after a dozen years you can leave to a nice retirement. I am leaving after a number of years of doing primarily the only thing I have done since college, serving in public office. And in that sense, it is atypical.

The election of 1982 brought me to Congress as the first Democrat from Southeastern Minnesota in this century. It is not considered a Democratic seat based on that history. Nonetheless, in the ensuing re-election campaigns my re-election margin has been comfortable, to say the least. And I suppose if I had decided to stay, given no major mistakes, it probably would have been a district that could have sent me back for additional terms, especially given the fact that after a dozen years in Congress you can point to your growing influence within the institution.

In spite of all of the reasons that one might stay, I decided, nonetheless, this year to announce my retirement at the end of this term. Fundamentally, my decision was based on a belief that we should not make public service a career. Again, that may sound unusual coming from someone who first ran for the State Senate at age 24, and ran for Congress at age 30. But I ran for both jobs, and I am now leaving this job firmly of the belief that careerism is not a positive aspect or a positive aspiration in America's political system.

Beyond that, it strikes me that if you are going to move on to some other life, this is a good time to make that transition. The longer you stay in Congress, the harder it is to leave, partly because of the power and the influence that comes your way, and partly because of basic economics. If you look at the way the congressional pension system is structured, each passing year, and each ensuing pay raise make leaving Congress and striking out on some other pursuit a less financially attractive alternative than staying in Congress and waiting for those benefits to come your way. To me it seemed better to make the break before anything other than public service clouded my mind.

I reflect on the Founding Fathers and what they envisioned of our Congress, and I think that in most respects they would be disappointed with what they see today. In 200 years of American history, much has changed in our nation, and yet many of the basic constructs that our Founding Fathers made for us make as much sense today as they did 200 years ago. They did not envision the kind of partisanship that dominates public policy-making today. They didn't put the Democratic and Republican parties into the Constitution. In fact, our first President strongly argued against the divisive and counter-productive nature of partisan politics and cautioned against that sort of decision-making within Congress. The Founders warned against the evils of regional or partisan factionalism and conceived of Congress as a decision-making body that would rise above those considerations and focus instead on the overall interest of the country.

Yet today, virtually everything we do within the Congress has partisan undertones. The majority party sets all of the rules of the House; the majority party decides the ratios of committees; the majority party decides the staffing levels within those committees; the majority party sets the rules of

debate. While in one respect that is true to our democratic process of majority rule, in other respects it neglects the sort of respect for minority viewpoints and minority rights that are also very much a part of our concept of democracy.

When I came here in 1983 it took about six months to figure out that Congress was not on the level. I came from a state legislature in which we had a limited session, so there were deadlines. The Constitution in the state of Minnesota indicated that we could not stay in session more than a certain number of days, that we had to adjourn by certain dates in late May; and we worked mightily to meet those deadlines. Within that time frame we also had to suffer through dozens and dozens of amendments offered by minority members, because there were no limitations on the amendments that could be brought forward. The only limitation was the issue of germaneness. If it was germane, we had to face the vote.

When I came to Congress it was immediately surprising to me first of all that we had no deadlines. The start of the fiscal year wasn't even a deadline. If we didn't meet our responsibilities to pass the 14 appropriation bills by the start of the fiscal year, we simply passed a continuing resolution and treated October 1 as a meaningless date. At least at that time, CRs were the norm, and I think through much of the 1980s we had CRs of one size or another virtually every fiscal year.

We not only didn't have deadlines, we didn't have a fair, open process. The rules of the House were such that debate on the House Floor was quite often limited, but I would say in defense of the process in 1983, 1984, perhaps even 1985 that it was much better than what has become of late. Perhaps as few as 30 percent of the rules in that period were restricted or limited; 60-70 percent of the rules have been restricted or limited in the last couple of legislative sessions.

Voters are not as concerned as Members of Congress about who wins or who loses. It may be messier to allow more amendments to be offered. It may result in outcomes that are less predictable. Much of what holds us back is the sense that certain committee prerogatives should not be overruled by a vote on the House Floor. Consequently, we will undertake a rule that includes a king-of-the-hill process, whereby the product of the committee is given favored status: two or three other options are given a vote, but a meaningless vote given the fact that the final vote, even if it is cleared by only a one vote margin, it is going to be the last say. This process would not make sense to most Americans. If you consider what people want to see from their Congress, it would shock most of them to see how limited debate has become within the institution, and part of the reason is that we have closed down so many rules and limited so many options as a way of pre-determining the outcome on issues.

There are other structures that I think we need to address as well, such as the constant overlap of our work within Congress. We don't have any sense of agreement between committees as to who meets when. And consequently, if you serve on more than one committee you are always distracted, making brief appearances at each committee to cover the bases, but not really participating in the full sense of the word. Committees also meet at the same time that we are conducting debate on the House Floor, which has resulted in Floor debate being primarily an exercise involving perhaps as few as 20 Members of Congress, while the rest of us are unavoidably detained at some committee somewhere else on Capitol Hill.

Reforms of the operation of Congress designed to get us back to a deliberative process would have to include a down-sizing of the number of committees so that we would eliminate the likelihood that Members would be required to be two places at the same time. We should also reconcile the schedule of committees with the Floor schedule, so that when we are in committee we are in committee, and when we are in session we are in session, and the two do not compete with one another for the time and attention of the membership.

Some of the more senior Members who are leaving today reflect on a time not too long ago when they actually felt that Floor debates mattered, and that most Members of Congress were present for Floor debate. Getting back again to the intent of the Founding Fathers, it would be a healthy thing for us to return to a schedule on Capitol Hill that would allow for more interaction among Members. Right now, frankly, we look forward to a vote on the House Floor frequently, because it is the only time during the day where we can interact with other Members, the only time where we can sit down and talk to them about NAFTA or health care or some other pending issue. Too often Congressmen are divided and treated as if we are islands unto ourselves, and the whole sense of coming together in Washington, D.C. to work on the nation's business is somehow lost. While we are all in town, we are never in the same place at the same time and don't interact in the fashion that our Founding Fathers envisioned.

Among the other changes that I think are critically important is to bring Congress under any law that we pass for the private sector. And this is the one change that I believe the reform commission, the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress, is going to take seriously. When I was on the Education and Labor Committee during my first three terms in Congress, we had several labor measures move through the committee, and I voted in each instance to apply those policies to Capitol Hill.

I do understand and have some appreciation for the separation of powers argument, and yet it seems to me that we ought to be able to come up with some autonomous enforcement group to make sure that the laws we apply to the private sector are fairly and evenly applied to Capitol Hill. The system we have in place today is one in which a group of Members compromise the labor review board for Capitol Hill. I think that is not distance enough, and ought to be replaced with a more autonomous, independent entity to enforce these laws on Capitol Hill.

The reason I argue this is two-fold. First, I think the public would be more respectful of Congress and the work of Congress if they know that we don't hold a double standard. But second, I am firmly convinced that if we know that these policies have to apply to ourselves, we will be more sensitive to the private sector in terms of the regulations and requirements that are placed upon them. It is just a matter of practicing what we preach.

These are among the changes that I think are in order. The Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress has been tasked with the responsibility of recommending changes to the legislative process and is wrestling with whether they can finish their report before we adjourn. Even if they do, I think the understanding is that we will not vote on their recommendations until sometime early next year. The Senate has announced a list of reforms that I think go beyond what many of the House members of that reform commission are likely to support, and it may put us in a position where there is a bit of a public dispute between the House and the Senate about the degree to which we reform the institution.

I would only hope that at the end of the day we would be allowed a fair opportunity on the House Floor to look at alternative reform proposals. If the commission suggests that we cover Congress under all laws applied to private sector, that is fine. If they suggest that we limit the number of subcommittees that individuals can serve on, that would be a fine and welcomed proposal. But if they don't recommend a down-sizing of the committee structure, I think that in fairness to the membership we ought to have a Floor vote and debate on that issue. If they don't recommend reconciling the jurisdiction of committees to eliminate as much of the overlap between committee jurisdictions as possible, I think it only fair that we be allowed a debate and vote on that sort of reform. It just strikes me that it would fly in the face of this attempt at reform if at the end of the day Members are basically put in a position where the commission's report is brought to the Floor under terms that are biased against other reform proposals. It might be the best signal that Congress does get the message and is willing to look at reforms if in addition to the recommendations of the Joint Committee,

Congress would be given a full opportunity to debate a series of proposals that would take reform several steps further.

I would only hope that if given that opportunity that we could make adjustments to the operations of the Congress that would free up more time for serious deliberation, that would reduce some of the overlap in jurisdiction, that would down-size to some degree the bureaucracy on Capitol Hill, and that would establish a fairer process under which legislation would be considered, such as a basic understanding as to how many amendments might be allowed, and how many might be presented by the minority party. Reforms such as these would, in many respects, return to our democratic roots, and return to the vision of Congress that I think was established by our Founding Fathers.

Questions and Answers:

***Q:** I was interested by your discussion of the problem of careerism in American politics today, and I wonder if you favor any legislative measures to prevent careerism, such as term limits?*

A: I feel strongly that 10 or 12 years is enough. I think, in any event, I would have been inclined to honor that personal commitment to leave public office after several terms. I have not formally endorsed a term limit amendment to the Constitution, but by majority vote we can do a couple of things that I think would at least end some of the advantages of careerism. One would be to limit the time that you can serve as a committee chair. Everything in Congress is geared towards seniority, and seniority has its place, and clearly in many instances those with the most tenure ought to be placed in positions of leadership; but it shouldn't be as a kind of lifetime tenure. Today, once you reach a chairmanship, it is yours until you leave or die. I think that we ought to limit chairmen to perhaps no more than six years. A couple of the best committees on Capitol Hill right now are committees in which the chairmanship is limited—the Budget Committee, the Intelligence Committee. I think it can work. If you are talented enough, we simply move the talent around. But if there are other reasons that you shouldn't retain a chairmanship after several years on the job, it gives the membership an easy opportunity to replace you with someone else without the fear factor: that if you vote against an individual for chairman it becomes some kind of a problem for you in terms of your relationship with that committee in the future.

A second way to discourage careerism is to either eliminate or greatly modify the congressional retirement program. I personally don't believe that you should get a pension for elected office. If I had my way, I probably would reinstate the ability for people to make money outside of Congress, as long as it is fully reported. Not that I could make a heck of a lot of money, but there are others who could. By establishing a pension for Members of Congress, you treat it like any other job, rather than as public service. Other than basic Social Security, or maybe a very modest pension program, I just don't think that you ought to get that sort of benefit for serving in elective office. You do this by choice. The pension is one of the factors that gets harder to ignore the closer you reach retirement eligibility.

***Q:** You said that the House leadership efforts to limit debate have become more prominent in the past few years. Can you give some examples? I am thinking particularly of environmental issues.*

A: It is tough to get environmental issues on the Floor. And part of the reason there is such a delay is an effort to control the outcome. Frankly, legislating is never a process that looks neat and clean. It is by nature a messy process. There are lots of compromises. But in some ways we are

afraid to just kind of let the process work. If, for example, we were to take up an environmental bill and the outcome doesn't turn out to be quite what the committee chairman or the Democratic caucus wanted it to be. You can come back at the issue in another way. You can try to deal with it in the Senate. You can come back with other legislation. You can come back with substitute amendments. You can address unexpected results in other ways, instead of saying on this bill we are going to allow two amendments and they are not going to address the heart and the soul of the bill. I think a more open process may not satisfy those who are trying to predetermine the outcome, but it would at least get the fight behind us. If we know where we stand, and if we aren't happy with the outcome, we can regroup and find some other way to address the issue.

In this session the Rules Committee did give us open rules on most of the appropriation bills. The one appropriation bill where there was not an open rule, or anything near an open rule, was legislative appropriations. And the defense was that this was the one bill where we were the most vulnerable to real cuts, and so while there were half a dozen amendments made in order, it was a closed rule and the amendments focused on very small sums of money. Had they been allowed, votes on larger cuts could have driven some other decisions. An additional five percent cut in legislative appropriations may have forced decisions about the size of some of the legislative branch agencies, or the committee structure, or the number of subcommittees. But when you are denied a vote on larger cuts, then your only real choice is to vote yes or no on final passage. That bill is a recent example of where we certainly had a number of amendments filed. While it is not maybe the biggest issue around, I think it stands as an example that applies more often than not on legislation that comes before the House: you have to work your will on relatively few amendments, and then your choice is to take or leave a bill that didn't even give you a chance to address several issues you would have preferred to vote on.

Q: Could you discuss the influence of outside money on Congress? Wouldn't allowing outside income increase special interest influence?

A: Earn money, like real money. Right now, if you earn money on savings or investments that is O.K. If you earn money because you have a farm, and you are not directly involved, but have somebody managing it, that is O.K. But if you go and work at a gas station on a weekend and you get paid a wage, that is not O.K. I think that is absurd. People say that today the world is more complicated, the government is more complicated, and therefore we need to be here full-time. I don't think so. I think we easily can get our work done in six months. It is just a matter of setting deadlines and getting it done. You know, whatever the deadline is, we are always backed up to the midnight hour of the last day. It doesn't matter if that deadline is Thanksgiving or October 1 or the Fourth of July. I think that we can be out of here part of the year, and there might be more of a sense that we should actually go home and make some money. And of course, all outside income should then be openly reported.

Q: Working in a gas station is less common for Members of Congress. What about making speeches?

A: I don't have a quarrel with eliminating that sort of income, because I think speechmaking does sort of trade on your work here. But as long as outside income is fully documented, I don't see a problem. If you want to go home and do family practice law, how does that conflict with what you are trying to do on Capitol Hill? It doesn't. As long as you honestly report at the end of the year that you made these sums of money doing wills and other family law for 100 clients, there is no problem in my view. If you want to be an accountant and do taxes, if you can some how manage that while we are in session, I don't have a quarrel with that. It makes you rely on more than

just this job. It gives you another life. I am speaking as someone for whom this has been my life since college, but I have never felt that it is right. I think it is the wrong mind-set. I want us to be part of the real world. Too much we are just a part of the Washington world, which is not real. People have real problems out there. I think we are too much wrapped up in what the Republicans refer to as the iron triangle. There is some truth to it. We are so busy listening to one another, listening to ourselves, listening to the bureaucrats who run the programs, and the beneficiaries of the groups that benefit from the programs that there is really no one left here to speak for most of the Americans who pay the bills. I think that allowing outside income, while protecting against maybe certain types of income that could be viewed as compromising, would not be a bad thing. Now, not everybody would have to take an outside job, but at least they ought to have the option to do so as long as income is fully reported.

Q: You and Congressman Kasich have put together a package of budget cuts. What is your attitude about the reform of entitlement programs, such as Medicare and Medicaid? We have had some success in limiting or shrinking discretionary spending programs, but we haven't made the hard decisions on mandatory programs, and they are growing at an astronomical rate. Is this a problem that the Congress can tackle?

A: That is a huge problem, and I think that we have demonstrated in the past that the only way we come close to dealing with this problem is on a bipartisan basis. We tinkered around a little bit with entitlement spending in 1987 based on a bipartisan task force that the Administration and Congress put together. We tried to do some things with entitlement spending in 1990. In fact, the first budget deal did more than the second budget deal to address entitlement costs, and it was shot down in part because we had Republicans who balked at the modest taxes that were in that plan; and Democrats who ran for cover because Medicare was on the list of cuts. And those cuts were really modest, there was nothing terribly painful about the cuts being proposed there. A lot of those Medicare cuts applied to providers, and not to the beneficiaries themselves, but the headlines said, "Medicare Cut," and the phones started ringing off the hook and we ended up scrapping the first 1990 budget deal and coming up with one that was probably better from the standpoint of liberals in the Democratic party, but was not as tough in terms of dealing with the underlying problem. What Kasich and I attempted is to put together a package that is serious, but not draconian. This \$100 billion in spending cuts over five years does not solve the deficit problem, but it represents the sort of balanced package that is needed if you are going to address the problem. Half of the cuts we propose would come out of entitlements; the other half, out of the discretionary account. And that is the mix that has to be at play if you are going to deal with the deficit seriously. We do some things in Medicare that have been talked about for a long time, but have not been done simply because of the politics of the issue. We apply a means test to Medicare Part B premiums. That has been talked about for a long time, and yet we never get it on the voting line-up because of the sensitivity. We are basically saying, for those who make \$75,000 or more per year, they ought to pay a larger share, and ultimately 100 percent of their Medicare Part B premium. They can afford it. They are not going to like it, but they can afford it. And the alternative is to continue to have the rest of the taxpayers subsidize 75 percent of their premium, which doesn't make sense. So that is in our plan.

We also go after federal retirement programs, gradually raising the minimum retirement age to 65, knocking out early COLAs for military retirees. These are not fun things, but none of these programs are actually sound. And I am not even sure they will be after these reforms, but at least they come closer. These are unfunded liabilities that are going to catch up with us down the road. We have to do something about rolling back the costs of those programs. I don't think in the future we can promise public workers retirement five, ten, and in some cases even 15 years earlier

than the rest of America's workforce. I don't think we can continue to promise military retirees a COLA from the minute they leave active duty. It just gets out of control. These may be painful and controversial choices inside the Beltway, but there is not a coffee shop in America where people would find these to be outrageous ideas. It is just a matter of getting them together in a package that can pass this institution. And we believe our package, while it has some controversial elements, has enough substance to it, and is serious enough in terms of the size, that it will be more saleable than efforts in the past. I guess we won't know until the votes are in, but I shudder to think when will we ever deal with the deficit seriously if this package of \$100 billion, which doesn't really gouge anyone, is rejected. On the discretionary side of the budget we basically lock in the President's promise of a 250,000 workforce deduction, so we are not doing anything new there, either. There is a lot of money involved, but we don't think these cuts are going to do in the package, I and others have several cuts that affect our own constituencies—the farm cuts, the REA cuts, that is rural Minnesota. But I can go home and sell these cuts on the basis of these cuts being part of a larger objective. And I think that is the only way you can sell a package of cuts around here. See what happens during the appropriations process, where very little gets cut out of the budget because everything seems to sell pretty well on its own merits. And even when you do knock something out of the budget, as is the case with the Supercollider, you knock the program out, but you don't knock the money out. I think the only way you can get real money out of the budget is with a package deal of this sort. So it is worth a try. The President and the leadership were good enough to assure us that we would get a full vote on the package before adjournment, and I haven't heard anything of late that indicates that deal is being changed at the last minute. I think maybe the end of next week, once the President's rescission package and reinventing government proposal both make it through committee, we will have an up or down vote on our amendment. They may allow a few other amendments, that has not been determined yet, but we have every indication that our amendment will be given a free-standing vote with no substitutes and no king of the hill compromising sorts of policies that would undercut our ability to get a direct vote.

***Q:** If you allow legislators to work part-time, don't they have an unfair advantage? Wouldn't everyone want to come to them?*

***A:** You have to bear in mind that state legislators who are accountants have only so much time that they can devote to that business, and so more people may want to come to them; it is not as if they are going to be able to take all-comers. It works at the state level. There are very few state legislatures in which service is considered a full-time job, and these people do go home to another life, and it works out. You have teachers that return to teach in the fall quarter who are legislators during the winter and spring. It can work. And I am not saying it is for everybody. I am not saying that federal legislators ought to be required to work in another job, I am just saying that the policy that allows millionaires to earn investment income and also their congressional salary doesn't make sense when most of us aren't millionaires. I don't think that as long as we honestly report our income and are then accountable for how we make our money that we ought to be denied that right. I also think that there would be more the sense of "Why don't we get out of here on time?" if we actually had something else to do.*

***Q:** The lecture flyer said you felt moderates had been frozen out of the policy process by liberals. Is that accurate? What can be done about it?*

***A:** I think those of us in the middle of the political spectrum, have no home right now. I shouldn't say right now, I think it has been that way for a number of years. Both political parties have their*

own constituency groups. Those groups generate the money that supports campaigns. They generate the interest groups, and they generate most of the pressure that is brought to bear when we make public policy at the national level. If you are 50 percent with the Chamber of Commerce, or 50 percent with the AFL-CIO, or 60 percent with Friends of the Earth, or any of these interest groups, there is really no reward for having that sort of an independent outlook on these issues. I think to too great an extent this system drives politics to the right and left, and folks in the middle have a difficult time getting their perspective brought to bear in the debate. One of the reasons that CDF has been around for all of these years—Conservative Democratic Forum—is because it gives a home to a group of 50 or so Democrats who have a more conservative outlook, at least on budget issues, to some degree on defense issues, to some degree on social issues. And they have a strength in numbers, that they don't have individually. Often times, when you see a Stenholm amendment on the Floor, it is a given fact that he has enough Members who would vote against the rule if their amendment isn't made in order, but what if your group is only 30, or at least only 30 as of today? What if it is not a group that is willing to vote down a rule in order to make an amendment in order? It basically means that you don't have the same clout. And so moderates in both parties, I think, are sort of left out of the equation. I describe it in these terms. You may have a majority of the Democrats who are liberal and would like less deficit reduction, let's say, more investment spending, a more liberal policy on abortion, whatever it might be. And consequently, they can pass a rule that sort of drives the debate in that direction. They may be a majority in the Democratic party, but they are not necessarily representative of a majority of public opinion. The only way you get to that majority is to reach the middle. And yet, in this system, too often the middle is marginalized. I think most of us would be less frustrated if we at least had what we perceive to be a fair fight on some of these policy options. I think that may even be true of Republicans who may offer some mischievous amendments from time to time. That is just the nature of this business. But at least if Republicans didn't feel like their rights were being violated because they didn't get any amendments on a given issue, I think it might improve the tenor of our relationship within the institution to have a fairer process in which not only the Republicans, but maybe a minority within the majority party had a fairer say and a fairer opportunity to present their proposals. Those of us that are in the middle feel like our proposals are frequently not given a fair day in court.

***Q:** Given the interest group problem you mentioned and the lack of constituency for moderates, how do you get from here to there?*

A: There was some discussion in *Roll Call* recently about a policy that would allow, not a wide-open process, but at least a guarantee on legislation that Republicans would have more than a motion to re-commit. They could actually determine for themselves which three or four amendments they wanted to offer, or that their leadership wanted to approve, which is a different way of screening amendments. Right now amendments are screened by the Rules Committee, which is controlled by the Democrats, and so as long as Members stick with party lines, there is no guarantee that any Republican amendments will be made in order. This new proposal indicates that we would have to face three or four amendments in every bill from the Republican side of the aisle, and it would force the Republicans to screen and determine their own list of amendments. It at least opens the process up to some degree, benefiting the majority party. I think that it also ought to be understood that several other amendments should be made in order, either by having certain thresholds that a proposal meets in order to be considered, or, I suppose, if moderate Democrats feel like they don't get their fair fight within the Democratic Caucus, they could actually go to the Republicans and see if Republicans could make that amendment in order. It at least gives you another avenue to make your case. I don't know if there is a perfect solution to this, because so many of the interest groups are going to score you based on their agenda. But it may be more dif-

difficult for the interest groups to have the last say if you are given choices that are in the middle of the spectrum. If you have to vote yes or no on an issue that is important to the interest groups, but you also have another option that at least satisfies some of those concerns, you can go home to your district and say that while you weren't scored perfectly by this group or that group, you weren't totally insensitive to the issue because you supported an alternative that was sort of in the middle of the spectrum. You have to take these interest group ratings as they come, and there is not much that you can do about them, but I think there is a lot you can do about the way the process works on the Hill. One friend of mine on the Rules Committee indicated that he didn't believe that it was the leadership, so much as the committee chairs that were pressuring for these limited rules. That makes sense, because obviously bringing a bill out of committee, you have a strong sense of ownership over that issue and you like to see those policy choices preserved as the bill moves through the House. So in many respects, this does pit the larger interest of the House against the narrower interest of the committee that clearly wants to preserve the product of its work. But why have the House of Representatives if the committee's work is to be treated as sacrosanct? All of us are supposed to be here to reflect our own views, the views of our constituents, our vision of what is right for the country on these policy questions. And while we certainly are to give a certain degree of respect to the experts on those committees who develop legislation, we are entitled under the Constitution to disagree, and I am just asking for a process that allows for a fair and open debate on alternate policy choices.

Q: How do you feel about PAC influence? What do you plan to do in the future?

A: I would like to see PAC influence diminished. I don't subscribe to the theory that we ought to eliminate all PAC money. By and large, it is just a different way of bundling. We've talked about how certain contributions are bundled because somebody in the law profession or some other profession will solicit a donation from individuals in that firm or in that industry and then donate those to a given candidate. PACs are a different way of bundling. It just allows people with a particular interest to pool their money and support candidates who are more inclined to agree with them. Where I think the danger exists is if too much of your campaign budget comes from those sources. I think at least half of your money ought to come from individuals within your own district. How you raise the other half is less of a problem to me as long as you are raising most of your money from individual constituents. If you want to put a cap at 30 percent PAC money, I guess the percentage isn't magical as long as it is lower than 50 percent. If your labor friends and all of labor comes in with significant contributions, and if that adds up to 60 or 70 percent of your total budget, then I think that that could be perceived as a problem. By limiting PAC contributions to less than half the budget, I think you protect against those interests being sort of a deciding factor in your campaign. You buy yourself a little independence the more your budget comes from individual contributions. That is why I think at least half ought to come from individuals in your own district.

Q: Can you comment on how the National Performance Review might reduce the power of the Appropriations Committee?

A: The NPR recommended bi-annual budgeting, and they're talking about both the budget and the appropriations bills being two-year documents. I think that is viewed as a threat by appropriators, because it eliminates the opportunity to come back and adjust the entire budget on an annual basis and shift priorities on a twelve month basis. I am not so nervous about that. In an awful lot of states they have two-year budgeting. Even with the one year budget we have a supplemental spending bill every year. And usually the supplemental is simply designed to spend more in some area, because our original projections were short or because some emergency cropped up. Most of the supplementals we undertake today aren't really designed to shift priorities, they basically are

designed to just spend a few billion more on something we didn't think of earlier, or something we overlooked earlier, like food stamps. We had a habit in the 1980s of deliberately underfunding food stamps, which then became the premise for a new supplemental every year. But my point is that whether you have annual budgets or two-year budgets, you are going to have supplemental spending bills. So I don't think that is a total violation of the appropriator's ability to come back and make some corrections on an annual basis, because they will still have an opportunity to do a supplemental spending bill. So, I tend to favor a two-year budget. I don't think it is a cure-all, but I really think that it would inject a little more stability into the federal budget. It might protect against the kinds of increases that are built into the budget today because everything is inflation adjusted. I would like to think that if you don't increase the budget every year, that you might have somewhat less generous inflation adjustments driving the budget than we do at present. I also think that if you have really high priorities that need to be addressed, you can come back on a pay-as-you-go basis and address that through a supplemental. I also know that there are hundreds of bureaucrats in Washington, D.C. that do little else than testify before the committees of Congress. We could probably save a little money, or maybe free them up to do something more productive if they only had to come before the appropriate committee every other year, instead of annually.

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