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BIPARTISAN MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH:

The Honorable Alan Butkovitz (D)

174th District

Philadelphia County

1991-2004

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Transcribed by: Heather Deppen Hillard and Erin Miller

Heidi Mays (HM): Good morning.

The Honorable Alan Butkovitz (AB): Good morning.

HM: I'm here today with Alan Butkovitz who is a former Representative who served the 174th Legislative District from parts of Philadelphia County. I appreciate you taking the time to be here with me this morning.

AB: I appreciate the opportunity to do this.

HM: Thank you. I wanted to begin by asking you about your childhood and your early family life and how you feel that prepared you for public service.

AB: I was interested in politics from an early age. Mostly, my grandmother had an interest in public affairs. She had emigrated from Russia and, in fact, the way I learned to read was by reading biographies, a lot of biographies; Franklin Roosevelt [32nd President of the United States, 1933-1945] and Winston Churchill [Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, 1940-1945 and 1951-1955] and David Ben-Gurion [first Prime Minister of Israel, 1949-1953 and 1955-1963]. And I would sit on a little red stool while she would make dinner Friday night and read those things. And she was a very passionate supporter of President Kennedy [John F. Kennedy, 35th President of the United States, 1961-1963] when he was running in 1960, which was the first election that I have any consciousness of when I was eight.

HM: So, your grandmother raised your awareness in the political arena?

AB: Right.

HM: Do you think you always had political aspirations?

AB: Well, from about twelve years old, anyway.

HM: And what, what happened at age twelve?

AB: Actually, I think it was President Kennedy's assassination that was the – I think there was so much attention to government and public policy, and he was really – he was an icon, particularly at that time.

HM: So, that sparked your interest in politics?

AB: Right.

HM: Interesting. Was anybody in your family involved in politics prior to you?

AB: No.

HM: You were the first?

AB: Right.

HM: So how, how did your family react to you wanting to be involved in politics?

AB: I was kind of beyond the scope of their experience. I mean, my mother was supportive of it. My grandmother died when I was thirteen, so she was already off the scene. I think they thought it was kind of an odd choice. People in my family were in the dental profession or the denture profession or something like that. I was the first lineal descendent, actually, to go to college or a law school, and I think people just thought, “Well, fine, if he thinks he can do it, okay,” but it took a long time to achieve any success at it, so I think they probably thought I was crazy.

HM: *(laugh)* Well, what do you think were your influences to become a Democrat?

AB: Well, again, that’s my family and my, my entire family, but again, principally, my grandmother who was very progressive and had come to America in 1921 and was a very strong Franklin Roosevelt supporter and a strong Kennedy supporter, and her first husband, Abraham, who I’m named after, had been involved in Union organizing back in the [19]20’s and [19]30’s. In fact, there were two brothers that married two sisters; Jack married Minnie, and Abraham married my grandmother. Jack built a dental laboratory business. It became a multi-million dollar business, eventually. He also became an

employer of other people in the family. One of the people employed was my grandfather, who got involved in organizing a Union in his company, so we were definitely on the Democratic branch of the family.

HM: Mmhmm. Well, what kind of Democrat would you classify yourself as?

AB: I mean, it's hard to put a label on it. I would just say I'm a rational Democrat. We would like to be problem solvers. I am interested in being fiscally cautious but at the same time solving problems that need to be solved, increasing opportunities, and doing strategic investing in people.

HM: Very well put. Could you describe your education? You said that you were the first person to graduate from law school.

AB: I was a very poor student right through high school. I was particularly poor in junior high school. I was a stubborn child, and I wouldn't learn things that I didn't want to learn and I didn't think were going to fit into my life plan, and, of course, all that ended up to be just wrong-headed. So, I didn't do well in foreign languages and I didn't do well in science and at math at that time. Everything that I did not do well in I eventually ended up working in, in those occupations, so when I got to tenth grade at Overbrook High School, I auditioned for the debating team, and Chester Plummer, who was this young black teacher who was just in his first couple years of teaching, thought I had some native ability at it, and he became a substitute father figure for me. You know,

he mentored me, and I would call him at home all the time, and I was there when his wife gave birth to his child, and it became a very close relationship. And because of that and because of the similar although less intense mentoring relationship from John Binstead who was another English teacher, I decided to take English seriously, and because I was not very adept at either grammar or really concise communication then, it became an objective for me both orally in debating and in terms of the written word, and then I became very proficient at that. I'd always had a passion for history and government, so now we, now we had the three of those things bundled. I graduated from Overbrook High School in 1969. I recall being on the school trip and a number of my compatriots pleading with my physics teacher to at least give me a "D" so I could get out of there, and I did, and I ended up at Temple University, and things were much better because I had more freedom of action. I was able to concentrate. Although you had to do math and science courses, you were able to concentrate on the subjects that were of interest, and college became a much more successful academic experience for me. I had always done well on the SAT-type tests. Now, we combine that with actually being proficient in some of the subject matter and decent grades, and I was able to get admitted to Temple Law School. So, I graduated from Temple University in 1973, graduated from Temple Law School in 1976.

HM: And then what did you do with your degree?

AB: I did a variety of general practice types of things. I worked in small law offices representing people with personal injury claims. When I was starting out, especially, I

did a lot of criminal defense representation. I also represented people in worker's compensation. I eventually became involved in an environmental insurance coverage litigation, which my wife thinks is funny because I kind of repeated my early life experience. When I took environmental law, I used to try to read it aloud to her, and we would both be asleep by the second page, and it was an 11:00am class on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and I would always appear at 11:20, because that's when my train came in. It never occurred to me to come in at seven o'clock in the morning to be there in advance of the time that class would start. And then I ended up really, the last few years before I ran for the legislature, specializing in environmental law.

HM: *(laugh)* Very interesting. Well, do you feel that your experience as an attorney impacted your outlook as a Legislator?

AB: Yeah, very much, and I think the Legislature as a whole has moved away from being as lawyer-dominated as it was historically, and on the one hand, that provides a greater diversity of experience and of, you know, real life experience. On the other hand, the Legislature is a specialized industry in the craft of making laws, and I think that there probably could be more sensitivity to the craftsmanship and the way things are phrased and the consequences of legislation. Nevertheless, there is a tremendous expertise differential between the Legislature and an institution like Philadelphia City Council. You can really see and I guess that's largely attributable to the fact that you have professional staff and legal staff in Harrisburg that at least works on this, because in the City Council you have a lot of good ideas that people jot down on napkins, and basically,

they write them up as an ordinance the way they wrote them down, and you have two-page ordinances without definitions of what the words mean and without any really start-to-finish consideration of what is the impact of this legislation that we're enacting and how does it fit into the whole American system of government. So, the city is frequently in the position of trying to enact legislation that is beyond the jurisdiction or the power of a city. You don't usually see that in Harrisburg; we have a level of professionalism in Harrisburg that is above that. I don't know how many lawyers are in the Legislature now, but I'll bet it's only a handful, and with the retirement of people like Bill Lloyd [William R. Lloyd, Jr., Somerset County, 1981-1998] who were, basically, the legal conscience of the House, there is some loss in understanding how what is being hammered out in law is going to be later interpreted by courts and applied in real situations. But, it was very useful to me to have not only a law degree but to have been in the position of having been in court, not only litigating the implementation of a law on something like worker's compensation but actually to have been in a number of court cases that involve constitutional law questions and election law questions, because in those cases you are also developing the philosophy behind the law and the particular procedure that's being used to reach that philosophy. So, you have kind-of a bird's eye view of how the whole scope of that process will work, and then, you come here, and you get to see the other part of that process that is kind of sanitized, as far as the courts are concerned. When you're in law school, you read about, you pay a lot of attention to how judges over time look at factual situations and evolve what the law should be, but in terms of how the statutory law occurs, that's pretty much taken as a given, and it is treated as if it's done at the Lincoln Memorial or something. The Harrisburg experience

keys you into what Bismarck said about people; “They’d be happier if they didn’t know how laws or sausages were made.” So, then you have that full scope of the experience of the kind of very practical considerations that go into lawmaking married to the question of the philosophy of the law.

HM: Great explanation. Thank you.

AB: Yeah.

HM: Well, let’s move to, why did you decide to run for the House of Representatives?

AB: Actually, I wanted to be in the Legislature from a very young age, and when I got married in 1973, my intent was that I would finish law school and go to the Legislature right after that, and I did try to do that. I ran in 1976 in a Democratic Primary and came in second. I lost to the endorsed candidate, Ken Hager; he got 3,900, and I got 2,100, and Vanita Nagel got, I think, 1,100¹, and my campaign ended up being a campaign largely of high school students. Danny Seigel was the President of Washington High School, was my campaign manager, and we ran a campaign on 3,000 dollars, and it was Republican Representative Frank Salvatore’s [State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1973-1984; State Senator, Philadelphia County, 1985-2000] seat, and it was probably not obtainable anyway, and it was really a development of a political education in terms of by trying it out, and I tried for a long time to break in. I found out all the things that were missing

¹ Actual vote count for the 170th District Primary Election, held April 27, 1976: (D) Kenneth G. Hager, 3,910; (D) Alan L. Butkovitz, 2,151; (D) Venita Nagel, 1,185; (R) Frank A. Salvatore, 4,598.

and that needed to be managed in order to break in, so I ran in 1976. I lost. In 1978 I ran for Democratic Ward Leader in the 58th Ward as part of the anti-Rizzo Charter Change Movement². I lost on that, although we elected fourteen Committeemen. And then, in 1982, I got the Democratic nomination to run against the Republican Representative Chris Wogan [Christopher R. Wogan; State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1981-2002], and I lost. That was a year that, that was a mid-term on Ronald Reagan [40th US President, 1981-1989]; it was a big Democratic backlash year but not in the District that I was running in, which was probably the most Republican District in Philadelphia at that time. So I lost, I think it was 13,000 to 8,000. It was the worst loss by a Democrat that year in Philadelphia, and after that, I really came to the conclusion that I just – whatever types of personality skills or inputs that you needed, I just didn't have and that I wasn't going to be a candidate for anything but that I would try to be active in politics and government in a staffing or supportive role. I got involved with Ed Rendell [Edward G. Rendell, Philadelphia District Attorney, 1978-1985; Philadelphia Mayor, 1992-1999; Pennsylvania Governor, 2003-2011], who was the District Attorney at the time and was planning a campaign for Governor in 1986, and then that didn't work, and then his Mayor's race in [19]87 didn't work, and Theresa and I bought a house, and it was on the wrong side of the line for any kind of political plan. And then in 1989, Bob O'Donnell [Robert W. O'Donnell; State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1973-1994; Speaker, 1991-1992] was the Speaker of the House, called me and told me that Max Pievsky [State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1967-1990], who was the Representative for the 174th District, was planning to retire, probably prompted by Speaker Manderino's [James

² Frank Rizzo, former Philadelphia Police Commissioner and two-term Democratic Mayor from 1972-1980. Rizzo's term was plagued with controversy, including raising the wage tax, which prompted a large anti-Rizzo movement throughout Philadelphia.

J. Manderino; State Representative, Westmoreland County, 1967-1989; Speaker, 1989] death. Pievsky and Manderino were very close. I think they shared an apartment. Manderino died in December of [19]89, but I think this conversation actually occurred before that. I think Pievsky was contemplating retirement anyway because it looked like there was an impending power shift in the House Democratic Caucus in that Bob O'Donnell was the Majority Leader, and the next pending power shift was that Dwight Evans [State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1981-present] was going to run for Appropriations Chair and that Manderino had, at least, announced his retirement. I think that's what the prod was, so Pievsky knew that Manderino wasn't going to be here anymore to cover his back, and I don't think he wanted to face the "young Turks" by himself. I think he was concerned about Dwight Evans's election. And then, in the middle of that process, very shortly after Manderino announced his retirement, Manderino died. I had been working with Pievsky in the 54th Ward as the council to the Ward but in a very peripheral way; I really didn't know him very well. The assumption would have been that there would have been somebody there that would have been better positioned to get the nomination. As it was, it really wasn't so. In 1990, I was thirty-eight; Max Pievsky was sixty-five, and the people at the top of his regime were either at his age or older than Max was, and so Bob kind of served as an intermediary with Pievsky in lining up his political support. This happened in October of 1989 because the [Pennsylvania] Constitution says you have to live in the District a year before the election, so I had, I had to move out of my house and into an apartment – moved my whole family into an apartment – and I don't even think we had a month's notice. We had to find a place in about a week and get a lease that would start before November 1st,

and we did move, and we had to rent out our house, which became an adventure of its own because we rented out to a family that was not – they weren't even American; they were from Italy, and they didn't speak English, and during the course of the time we rented it out, the guy that we had been dealing with suffered a stroke, and the people became in arrears with the rent, so we were juggling all of that. The political situation – it was a heavily Democratic District. John Sabatina, Sr. was the Ward Leader in the 56th Ward, which was, was 48 percent, or something, of the District. He really had an expectation that he would be the candidate, but he had really rubbed Pievsky the wrong way, and the result was, with Pievsky's support, I actually lined up the support of every other Ward Leader in the District, except for Sabatina. So, it was Max Pievsky; it was Tony Inarelli who was the *de facto* 53rd Ward Leader, where Paul Saulman was the Ward Leader; it was Frank Conaway; and Chris Strum. And I think that yielded, it was like a thirty-four to thirty-one vote in my favor for the endorsement. So, John Sabatina was pretty annoyed with me for a very long time. We had a lot of conflict, and he tried to recruit a candidate – he decided not to run himself, but he tried to support Alan Hornblum in that race, and we eventually – I had, I guess, overwhelming support – so we eventually got Hornblum out of the race, and I didn't have any opposition in the Primary. It was 1990. What happened after that was that things got a little hairy because, first of all, the Republicans had nominated Bill Brady who was an Assistant to the Republican Senator Frank Salvatore and thought he was going to replicate Salvatore's methodology of being elected by having a big personal following of the Democratic part of the District and then just trotting the Republican vote, and it looked like there was a lot of potential for him to get a lot of financial support from Salvatore. Aside from the fact that I had gone through

this very testy intra-Party process that yielded a three vote win, so that the biggest Democratic Ward Leader in my District is now against me, there were other big events that occurred that created a problem. Principally, that Mayor Goode³ announced that Philadelphia was insolvent, and there was a constant drumbeat of articles in late 1990 about whether the police would be able to be paid from week to week, or whether there were going to be police, or they were just going to have to suspend the whole basic city services. Nobody knew what was going to happen. There was just a tremendous amount of anti-Democratic Party hostility. Now, you couldn't even make a case to the House Democratic Campaign Committee – and Mike Veon [State Representative, Beaver County, 1985-2006] was just beginning to become a presence there – that this placed the seat in play, because they were operating off of printouts and historical data, and really, either they didn't know or they didn't care about actual data on the ground, and it also became obvious later that there was an intra-Party feud developing between Bob O'Donnell and Veon and some of the others. So, I think there was a secondary problem that they figured that since I was an O'Donnell protégé, who really cares if he wins? So we had the Goode problem – in a lot of Districts, there was a feeling that Governor Casey's [Robert P. Casey; Governor of Pennsylvania, 1987-1995] overwhelming lead over Barbara Hafer⁴ would compensate for that, but not in my District. I remember that the only County in the whole state that she won at that time was Montgomery County and because the abortion became a defining issue in the election. I was running in a largely Jewish District that was not as sympathetic with Casey's defining issue on abortion. So, you had a traditionally Democratic District where I thought Barbara Hafer was going to

³ Woodrow Wilson Goode, Philadelphia's first African-American Mayor, 1984-1992.

⁴ Pennsylvania Auditor General, 1989-1997; Pennsylvania State Treasurer, 1997-2005. Of note, Hafer switched Parties from Republican to Democrat in 2003.

do very well, if not win, combined with this focused hostility on Mayor Goode and the, and the idea that Democrats screwed up City Hall. O'Donnell finally became engaged. For a long time I couldn't even get him engaged. He finally got engaged. We did manage to pull 25,000 dollars out of the House Democratic Campaign Committee for a set of three or five mailings, and I think I raised 39,000 dollars. I think we spent 64,000 dollars all together, which as it turns out, was more than Brady spent. It did turn out that that election was a problematic year for Northeast Philadelphia Democrats just as I felt, but by, by virtue of the fact that we worried early and addressed those problems, I did win a landslide win. I got 62 percent; I think it was 13,800 to about, it was about 8,000. That's the same election in which Congressman Borski's [Robert Anthony Borski; State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1976-1982; United States Representative, 1983-2002] vote dropped, and Gerry Kosinski [Gerard A. Kosinski; State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1983-1992] only won re-election by 151 votes, which I think prompted his decision two years later to not try again. So, there was this anti-Democratic reaction developing in Northeast Philadelphia.

HM: So how did you feel with the subsequent campaigns? Because that was quite – the first campaign would have been enough to – you know?

AB: Well, I was conscious immediately of the fact that there was going to be a problem on my right wing, and even as we celebrated winning in 1990, I knew that it was a bad time to win because the next thing that was going to happen was going to be a state tax increase. And Governor Casey ran on the – he said that the budget was in balance,

Barbara Hafer said there was a billion dollar deficit. Within two weeks after the election, Casey said, “Turns out she’s right. There is a billion dollar deficit,” so I was already fretting about how to get through this, and I didn’t really want to be for any tax increase. There was a feeling that coming from a safe Democratic seat and with Max Pievsky having been the former Appropriations Chairman and with Bob O’Donnell being my mentor, that no matter how I felt about it I wasn’t going to be able to resist putting across some kind of tax increase. So then, my focus shifted to, what should it consist of? And I reached the opinion that I would be more receptive to a sales tax increase than to an income tax increase, and that if the tax increase could be modified or moderated and kept at a certain level it wouldn’t be so bad. So then I started to engage in this – first I tried to talk to Dwight Evans about it, who was the newly elected Appropriations Chairman, having been elected with my vote among a number of other people. Max Pievsky wanted me to vote for Frank Pistella [State Representative, Allegheny County, 1979-2006], and O’Donnell pushed hard for Evans, and I voted with Evans. Well, now, you know, I had been an intern in Harrisburg, and I had some knowledge of it from the early [19]70’s, but I really wasn’t that familiar with the way it operated. Dwight thought it was just the silliest thing in the world that, that I thought I had a right to any opinions on things like budget issues, so that didn’t go anywhere. And I tried to talk to Bill DeWeese [H. William DeWeese; State Representative, Greene and Fayette Counties, 1979-present; Speaker, 1993-1994], and DeWeese was under this pseudo-military ideology that he’s got colonels that are responsible for different subject areas, and that he doesn’t get involved in that, and budget is Dwight’s area, so it kind of circled back to Dwight. So, I would engage in debate in the Caucus on these issues, and basically the senior guys, their

reaction was, “You’re just a young puppy. You don’t know what you’re talking about,” you know, “Let us adults handle it. Although we’ve got to handle it with your vote, you’re just going to have to go along with us.” I do remember, actually, the last two people, well, three people; O’Donnell was one of the people prodding me for it, but, Dick Hayden [Richard Hayden; State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1987-1992], who I became a fast friend, pulled me out into the Member’s Lobby and said, “You know, we’re never going to go home unless and until you vote for whatever the tax package is because you come from a seat that has to be one of the Democratic pro-tax votes, or it can’t happen, so you’re going to hold up the whole parade,” and he actually made more sense than anybody, and the other, the other conversation was with Veon who said that they had “polled this issue, and there would be absolutely no political damage, and you could do it,” and it was, it was the beginning of a real disillusioning set of experiences for me with Veon, because when we did pass the tax increase there was a big negative public reaction. What Veon was arguing and what many of the Leaders were arguing is “You haven’t heard any complaints yet, right?” Well, of course, there is never any public reaction until you’ve injured the public. They don’t react in a predictive way.

Nevertheless, Veon acted as if he knew something. Two days after the tax vote I saw him in his office, and he was visibly shaking. His hands were shaking about it. He was worried about his own political safety, and I did resolve to never take him seriously again in any of his political judgments. I really thought that he had just been dishonest. What they were actually doing is they were citing Kathy McHale’s [Katherine McHale; State Representative, Lehigh County, 1991-1992] election. Paul McHale [Paul F. McHale, Jr.; State Representative, Lehigh County, 1983-1992; United States Representative, 1993-

1998] had resigned to go to fight in the Iraq War, and they had a Special Election in Kathy McHale. They did polling, and she said she was going to do whatever was necessary to balance the budget, and if it involved a tax increase, and they had polling data from her District saying, “See? The public wants you to vote for these taxes,” but the data that they had was completely different than the situation that was being foisted, and, as indicated by Veon’s shaky response to the whole thing afterwards, he knew that those polls weren’t worth anything. But, the bigger problem I had was that I just didn’t agree with the policy. I represented a District that was – there was a guide to Pennsylvania Legislators or something that used to use studies based on census data, and my District had the largest concentration of senior citizens of any District in the state, and to top it off, they were not well off. They were – I think when we looked at Philadelphia Corporation for the Aging data it was about a third of – probably a third of the seniors in that District had annual incomes of 15,000 dollars or less, and I really felt a strong empathy and representation of those constituents, and the arguments that I made in the Caucus was that they simply couldn’t afford the kind of tax increases that were being talked about. Now, that was also my first introduction to the way tax increases get rolled in Harrisburg, because what started out as a one billion dollar deficit became a three billion dollar tax increase because Leaders would start with a paradigm. They would deal in the people who were least resistant to taxes, but in order to do that, they had to increase spending to nail down their votes. Then they would go to get a critical mass of votes, so that they were heading towards a clear majority of the Democratic Caucus, and then they would use that posture to steamroll everybody else that you had to go along because you’ve got to be a good Democrat, and this is where the majority of the Caucus is

heading. So, first of all, it became a moment for bigger spending than to just deal with the deficit problem, and what you were being recruited for were potential tax increases that were hypothesized to be much smaller than what was finally presented, but it was a constant work in progress. So, if you would ever at any moment cleared your throat and indicated that “I could consider a sales tax increase on this,” or “I could consider an income tax increase that is just at such-and-such a level,” when it was ultimately negotiated to be at a higher level, the position of the Leadership was, “Well, you’re in for a penny and for pound. You said you’d be okay with this,” and then there’s this high pressure process. The point I kept making, as I said, was it wasn’t, in my view, at least as far as my District was concerned, a transfer of wealth from wealthy people who had excess income; it was a severe imposition on people who probably couldn’t afford to own their own car. A 15,000 dollar annual income in 1990 wouldn’t get you very far. Nevertheless, they got my vote. This budget and tax plan passed on August 4th, and then everybody got sent home, and then we came back in October, and the first Caucus that I was back in October, Tom Tigue [Thomas M. Tigue; State Representative, Luzerne County, 1981-2006], who I didn’t know at the time, was making comments that he had talked to some State Revenue Department officials about the impact of some of the tax changes, and he said that we in the Legislature really didn’t have a clear understanding of what had been enacted, and particularly, there were interpretations by the Administration that were going to be really outrage-generating with the public, and it was as if he was talking in a bus terminal. I mean, everybody else was doing whatever they were doing. Nobody was paying attention to him, but my ears really pricked up, and I went up to him, and I asked him to explain in more detail what he was talking about, and the particular

issue that riveted us was the fact that there had been a change in something called the “poverty exemption” on the income tax. And what that was, was there was a change in the definition of income for purposes of forgiving taxability for senior citizens. The old definition said that income was interest, dividends, and things of that nature but did not include Social Security or pensions. Well, that word definition change was changed, and now it did. So, the practical effect of that was that before that bill was passed, you really needed to have a savings of investments of maybe 200,000 dollars a year to pay state income tax if you were a senior citizen, or really anybody, because that’s what would generate 15,000 dollars in income. Now, you would pay income tax if your pension and social security added up to 15,000 dollars. Under the existing law, it didn’t count pensions, it didn’t count Social Security; it didn’t count any of those things. Now it did, so almost everybody who, when you added up Social Security and pensions at that age level, was now included in. And so, this was devastating to me because I thought my people back home had sent me up here and I had been tricked and had really come back with an awful product for them, and was very depressed and I didn’t get anywhere. I tried talking to Dick Willey who was the Executive Director of the Appropriations Committee, and I tried talking to Dwight Evans about it and, basically, I was deflected, and it turned out that there had been efforts to make this particular change in the law for years, but that Max Pievsky as the Appropriations Chairman had been blocking it, so this was information that I didn’t know, and so I didn’t really know what to do. I reached the conclusion that, really the only respectable thing to do was to just not run for re-election. Just tell everybody that this had been a disgrace, and to – and I was – really went home. I got into bed. I didn’t want to get out of bed, and my wife really didn’t have much

patience for it after, I think, after the first weekend. I think it was okay for me to stay in bed for the weekend, but I think by Monday she was fed up with it, and she just got a Legislative phone book and said, “Why don’t you just call somebody, and do something about this?” So I really hardly knew any of the Democratic Legislators, but I literally did go through the Legislative Directory, and I called every Democratic Representative, and I kind of had a sound bite description of this particular change, and the sound bite was that if you were over sixty-five and you had the income generated by less than 200,000 dollars in savings, you didn’t pay any taxes, but as of next year if you had 15,000 dollars, you would pay taxes and that that revelation would probably hit home to tax payers on or about April 15th and that the Primary that year was going to be April 23rd or April 24th. So, I got a lot of sympathy on the phone but not much commitment, but in the course of calling every Democrat, I did happen to – since I called everybody – I ran into the three other rebellious personalities in the Caucus, and that was Tom Tigue, Tom Murphy [Thomas J. Murphy, Jr.; State Representative, Allegheny County, 1979-1994], and Huck Gamble [Ronald Gamble; State Representative, Allegheny County, 1977-1996], and, of course, they all had a lot of seniority and some experience with fighting battles up here. Particularly, Tom Murphy seemed to be the most ‘can-do’ out of the bunch. Tom Tigue had strong personality, but at that time anyway, there was a defeatist streak in him. It was kind of like, “Just another day in the big city. What do you expect?” Murphy was also getting ready to run for [Pittsburgh] Mayor, and he had been away in Israel after the, after the budget enactment, and he was already upset because when he got off the plane, reporters were putting microphones in his face and asking him about certain budget provisions that had been hidden in there, a specific one that Senator Fumo [Vincent J.

Fumo, Philadelphia County, 1977-2008] got that got a special tax exemption for Philadelphia's port, which did not apply to Pittsburgh's port. So, it didn't take much with Murphy. One of his nicknames was "Rocket Man." He was always kind of on the verge of outrage, so apparently the information that I gave him on this was just one more straw, and he was really enraged about it, so now we kind-of talked about this at every Democratic Caucus and it went on for about eight weeks. It just wasn't going anywhere. The math was that there were one hundred and six Democrats, and the point that was driven home to us by the Leaders was that one hundred and two votes runs this House, and we don't care if four of you aren't happy. Take one hundred and six minus four, we still have one hundred and two, and for that matter, they had passed the tax increase with a coalition of about – I think Matt Ryan [Matthew J. Ryan, Delaware County, 1965-2003; Speaker, 1995-2003] had delivered something like eleven Republican votes – so, their attitude was, "Who cares what you think?" Actually, Dwight was new in this position and inexperienced as well, and apparently, he had forgotten to clean up one of the classic technical loose ends that the Leaders are supposed to clean up in a budget, and specifically, there remained on the calendar two or three prospective budget bills that hadn't been sent back to committee or anything, so Mark Cohen [State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1973-present], who was, I guess, the Caucus Chairman at the time, and he's in the adjoining District, and he clearly was on the Leadership's side, but nevertheless, he called me up and said, "Maybe you don't realize this, but Matt Ryan," who was the Republican Minority Leader at the time, "has been threatening to use one of those still pending budget bills as a vehicle to open up and repeal what had been done." Now, Matt Ryan, apparently, was just fooling around or trying to get leverage, but this

was new technical information to our group. So, actually, we put out a memo and suggested doing just this. That first of all, we talked about how bad the particular provision was that we were dealing with and that the method of dealing with it was going to be to seek to call up one of these bills and to put an amendment in there to repeal this thing that we now called the Senior Tax. Now, simultaneously, there were a lot of Special Interest groups that were advocating with regard to complaints that they had about interpretations of the tax bill. I think Carl Ross was the Deputy Revenue Secretary who was actually implementing this, and the things that he was doing – there was a tax on personal care products, and they were applying that to colostomy bags, and they were storage facilities which the Legislators believed were those large, metal contraptions for storing your furniture and things like that was being applied to tax the contents of safe deposit boxes. And there was a general sense that the Administration really wasn't acting in good faith or that the Legislature had been hoodwinked, but there was also – it was one thing to advocate for poor senior citizens who really didn't have any organization. You couldn't get them on the radar screen. But if there were industry groups, such as the people who manufactured cleaning supplies or whatever that had lobbyists, they were able to get their issues on the table. Well, what it meant was that there was going to be some correction to the tax bill. They just didn't want to do our correction. So, now we had a methodology for addressing our correction and now Bill DeWeese grabbed me in the middle of one of these things. I remember he was wearing a seersucker suit. He comes up and puts his arm around me and says, "Young man, you and me are now at war," which from my point of view continued until I left here. I don't think he understood the intensity that it would take, but their idea was I'm just embarrassing

people, and I remember Howard Cane made some comment about not to worry about being targeted by the Republicans because I would be targeted by the Democratic Leadership now, and he said, “I don’t know what you think you’re going to accomplish because the way this process works, even if you start to get a correction on this issue, it will be gummed up in the Senate.” But actually, it worked out in a way that we made that process work for us, specifically several things. First of all, Tom Murphy, I think, was very correct in saying, “Early on, make sure that you don’t attack Governor Casey on this or tie him to this policy because he is a stubborn Irishman, and once that battle becomes joined, he will never back down, so you’ll never be able to win it with the Governor’s intransigent opposition.” So, we talked about these unnamed, faceless bureaucrats, such as Karl Ross [Secretary of Revenue, 1989], who had implemented this, and probably the Governor didn’t even know what these ministers of his were inflicting upon the population. The second thing is that the Casey Administration, we felt, probably had made a misrepresentation about the financial impact of this, because they claimed that this tax change would actually cost them money, and given the number of people that were being impacted, it’s hard to believe, but I think the whole cost of the change – well, they then were saying, actually, they were going to give back more benefits than they were going to gain – so, they claimed that they were going to lose three million dollars in revenue by making this change, and the contention was that seniors would lose this benefit but that poor families would pick it up, and in that transition, they would be extending the benefit to more people than they would take it away from. It didn’t make any sense to any of the people in our group because when you totaled up the number of people that would be allegedly getting this benefit and how big the family

would be and the fifteen thousand dollar limit and everything, it didn't look to us like there really would be an extension of benefits. Nevertheless, on their tally sheet, this was one of the things that supposedly was a deduction from the budget. So, this repeal of – and, and they didn't let us do it our way. We didn't get to call up our amendment. They went into Caucus the day that that memo went out, and they adjourned or recessed the House from Caucus for two weeks. It was around Thanksgiving, and when they came back, Dwight Evans put in the change under his name. But the idea was that they were going to gum it up, and it passed the House, probably unanimously, on a Monday. It was probably Monday, December 9, 1991, and the next wrinkle in it is what the Senate did with it because Senator Loeper [F. Joseph Loeper, Jr.; State Senator, Delaware County, 1979-2000], who was the Majority Leader at the time, had a particular grievance in terms – the expectations of people like Howard Cane were that the Republicans would just seize on this to further beat the Democrats in the head and say, “See what they did,” and that they would add some overly attractive amendment in the Senate that would never be able to be enacted in the House or that they would repeal the entire tax increase or they would do something that the Governor would have to veto, and that therefore, the net effect of what I was doing would simply be to give the Democrats a bigger black eye. But what actually happened was that Senator Loeper saw it as an opportunity to fix a priority that he had, and that was there among this list of outrageous tax changes, there had been a tax on computerized bank transactions and, coincidentally, supposedly the amount of revenue that was raised by that was three million dollars. So, we now had a balancing figure, and he said, “We'll repeal this.” So, actually, I think what really happened is that the Administration ended up paying twice, but since they had the

audacity to contend that they were losing money on the poverty tax exemption change, they couldn't now deny it, so that looked like it was a surplus, which now became available to reduce or to eliminate another offensive tax. It really has all the earmarks of divine intervention. *(laugh)* So, it passed the House on Monday, December 9. Tuesday, December 10, it passed the Senate. It comes back to the House Wednesday, December 11, which is the last day we're going to be there. Dwight has it in the Rules Committee, and he amends the bill to go back to a prior printer's number because he'll be damned if he's going to do what the Senate said, and they pretty much had us all beat up by that point. I mean, we really couldn't carry on the fight much further, but John Wozniak [State Representative, Cambria County, 1981-1996; State Senator, Cambria, Clearfield, Somerset and Westmoreland Counties, 1997-present] just kind of came out of nowhere, because he had apparently been sitting in Caucus and listening to this for like eight or twelve weeks and he wanted a resolution, and he got involved now and fought that on the Floor. He didn't even know what kind of motion to make. People had to jump up and whisper in his ear that he wanted it to revert back to the prior printer's number with which it had been approved by the House and the Senate. So with that done, he did get that motion adopted. The bill passed by about a two-to-one margin, and the Governor signed it on Friday the 13th. So, in my first year in office, even though I had voted for the biggest tax increase in state history, my record was that I had saved seniors from this unfair new tax, and Bill Brady was getting ready to run against me, and that whole thing melted away. The political opposition just melted away. Dwight certainly looked at me suspiciously because – and it became clearer to me to understand over time, because once the mystique of Leadership is broken and once other people understand how to work the

process from beginning to end, then they become part of the decision-making structure. You can't take away that experience or knowledge, so Leadership is always committed to gumming up any membership driven initiative just to show you that you can't do it. Well, this had demonstrated exactly the opposite, and it demonstrated that in my first year, so I was in the doghouse with Dwight, and definitely with DeWeese and Veon, the whole gang, and then we kind of went dormant for a while. I mean, I tried to be good during 1992. As far as they were concerned, my major sin in 1992 was that I continued to support my mentor Bob O'Donnell for reelection to Speaker, and they had a coup d'etat organized, so the fact that I wouldn't sell him out marked me. So, [19]93 there were some issues. Again, my specialized issues were senior citizen issues, and in [19]93, there was a arcane issue involving contributions that needed to be made by the state government to the teachers' pension fund, and in a nutshell the Administration's position was that the 1980's had been a roaring, successful stock market and that they had made a lot more money for the pension fund than they had anticipated, and they wanted a change in assumptions that would permit them to contribute less money to the pension fund. The teachers' retiree association targeted me. Fred McKillup was their lobbyist. I think he actually thought it was funny at the time that they bombarded me with about three hundred calls, and when you looked at it later, you realized they came from all over the place, but they wanted to alert us or panic us about this issue. Well, we did get into the issue, and I supported the retirees, as did Tom Corrigan [Thomas C. Corrigan, Sr., Bucks County, 1987-2006] and a number of other Democrats, the end result being that – there's two chapters to this; one in [19]93; and one in [19]94. And I think in the [19]93 version, Ryan was surprised that he had something like twelve Democrats voting with him. He

really, again, thought he was fooling around and embarrassing the Democrats, and he ended up winning the issue, so the Administration had to back off on their effort to lower their contributions to the pension fund. In [19]94, there was another issue; the issue was that every five years the Legislature had a practice of increasing the cost of living adjustments for school retirees, and this was the fifth year of the cycle, and the Governor was willing to give it to them, but Dwight Evans wasn't because he felt that their organization had defied him the previous year. I thought he was out of his mind. It's apparently the best organized grassroots operation in Harrisburg, and if you're talking about senior citizens who, the older they were, the poorer they were. The one figure I remember was that it would have been something like they were getting eighty dollars a month if they were eighty years old, so they needed a cost of living increase. So, it was like I was the bad boy. I was constantly fighting Dwight, but I was like, "You got to be kidding me that we're fighting about this. What are you doing?" And that, combined with the fact that Dwight came back from the 1994 Governor's Primary as a second place finisher with the conclusion that it was a mandate for him, so he had also declared the Governor's budget that year dead on arrival. So, there were a few of us, mostly the Philadelphia core, Bill Keller [William F. Keller; State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1993-present], who was elected in [19]92, Mike McGeehan [Michael Patrick McGeehan; State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1991-present] and Marie Lederer [State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1993-2006] and I had agreed that we would start voting together on something, but we didn't realize this was coming up the next day, and this became the first thing that we worked on. By this time, I wasn't surprised by these things anymore, and I don't think Dwight should have been surprised, but

unsurprisingly, the Legislature granted the school retirees their cost of living increase. People who were more sophisticated than us realized that it was more than that, that there was now a roadmap on how the budget could be passed that year without Dwight's participation, and that is what ultimately happened. Dwight kind of led a Democratic boycott of the budget negotiations that year, and Casey worked out a budget deal with the Senate Democrats, Republicans, and House Republicans with us, cooperating with the Senate Democrats and the House Republicans, and it had dramatic elements to it. I mean, there were a lot of taboos at that time that had been broken over time. When I got here, Democrats didn't cross the aisle to even sit with Republicans and talk to them. It was kind of boys' school, girls' school, Democrat school, Republican school. Well, we were past that by then, but there was still a taboo about procedural votes. What the Leadership would say to you is, you can vote however you want on the substance of issues, but they would always come up with a procedural issue that would defeat you, and we just thought that was silly that you needed to keep your focus on the outcome and do what you needed to do to facilitate the outcome. So, in that context what that meant was that Bill DeWeese, who was the Speaker, and I think Ivan Itkin [State Representative, Allegheny County, 1973-1998] was the Majority Leader, didn't have the votes to adjourn the House. Matt Ryan, as the Minority Leader, was in control of the schedule and this was just, you know, and there would be appeals of the rulings by the Chair, and the Chair would lose, but it came to its most dramatic moment where there was one particular moment when Speaker DeWeese decided he was going to recess the House, and Ryan objected to that, felt that it required a vote. And DeWeese said it was within his prerogative to recess the House; it wasn't an adjournment. And Ryan got up and said, "Well, the replacement of

the Speaker is always in order,” and that he was prepared to elect a Democrat as Speaker, and they came back, and anybody who was interested in, he wanted to make contact with, but actually, since I had a faction – and by that time it was anywhere from four to fifteen people. He wanted me to be the Speaker, which is an early precursor of what actually happened with O’Brien [Dennis M. O’Brien; State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1977-1980, 1983-present; Speaker, 2007-2008], although the idea kind-of morphed into something totally different than what it was thought of at the time, and I thought it would just be political death to do it. It would obviously be a short term remedy because you would be considered the biggest traitor by every other Democrat. You would have dislodged everybody from their – I don’t know how – nobody could even figure out how it would have worked on committee chairmanships and all that, but you would have effectively shifted power to the Republican Party while being a nominal Democrat. So, if you weren’t going to become a Republican, I didn’t think it made any sense, so I wouldn’t do it. Bill Keller, to this day doesn’t understand why Tom Fee [Thomas J. Fee, Lawrence County, 1969-1994] didn’t do it, because Tom Fee – I think Tom Fee was not running for reelection. He was in his late sixties, he had been ousted by this Leadership, this DeWeese Leadership team, from his position as Caucus Secretary, and I forget how many years he had in office, but by his mere elevation to Speaker for the rest of the year, the effect on his pension would have been enormous. And I think the focus, you know, when I wouldn’t do it, I think there was kind-of a focus on, “Will Tom Fee do this?” And he just wouldn’t do it. I mean, ultimately, he went back home. He became a County Commissioner, I guess, even though he was in his late sixties. He must have had the same calculus that he was not going to be a pariah among his Democratic colleagues. So,

the budget was enacted without the Democratic Caucus that year, and then there was a push on our part to make sure that instead of Leadership controlling all the WAMs [walking around money] and all the budget items and everything that there be a more democratic distribution among Members, and we accomplished some of that, and that ultimately led to a increase in my following in the Caucus, so that was [19]94. [19]95, we developed a working relationship with the Republicans. Perzel [John Michael Perzel; State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1979-present; Speaker, 2003-2006] was the new Majority Leader, and I really didn't have good feelings about Perzel. He was the Republican campaign hatchet guy, so when I had problems with that first election, and particularly the day we passed the tax increase, after we were here all night, and we ended up at eleven o'clock in the morning, [we] went over to the Hilton for breakfast, and he was over there and he was kind-of cackling about me and a number of others, and it's like, "Dead, dead, dead." He had us on the list, so I really didn't have very warm feelings about Perzel. We had a decent relationship with Matt Ryan, but Ryan said he's now the Speaker, and he doesn't do this kind of stuff anymore. So, somehow there was an accommodation with Perzel, which gave Keller and me and a number of others the ability to influence actual outcomes. We could get our legislation called up. We could have an effective budget. We could get things – we could help get grants for other Democratic Members, as well as for ourselves, and we did it across the board. We didn't just do it with our own supporters. Actually, we went in, and we did it for people that were against us personally, which was kind of counterintuitive. People didn't expect that or understand that, but it vastly increased my following within the Caucus, and it gave me the stature to man a campaign for Appropriations Chairman, which would be the

following year, 1996, and by that time we had also developed a political action committee, PAC 102. I mean, the amounts of money are not that great compared to what the Caucuses raise now or the amount spent now, but I think we did raise 180,000 dollars for the 1996 Election, and the way we did it, I think we were more – the Democratic Caucus would be like, they pick three races, and they put eight hundred thousand dollars into one of them, and we were more inclined to be in the five to twenty thousand dollars was a major investment for us, and we were in a number of Primaries and generally protecting incumbents who we felt had an independent streak. So, now you had the combination of we were helping people get things done in Harrisburg, and we were also helping them in their election campaigns, and then we got into a lot of competition with the House Democratic Campaign Committee, because they would not support anybody that got help from us; they wouldn't help. We had an early belief in the early use of cable TV, so just because we would do that, we would start cable TV advertising for people in August on the idea that our media guy said it would take that much time because of the lower penetration of cable television to have an impact, so the House Democrats decided they didn't believe in cable TV; they believed in mail. So, anybody that accepted cable TV from us, then they couldn't get a larger dollar support from the House Democratic Caucus. Some of that created intimidation on the part of Members. Some of it just engendered more resentment, and they were building their own wedges into the Caucus. It's like every time DeWeese did something, he was sending people over to us because he was so locked into this childlike, vindictive, instinctive response to things. He didn't really think things through, and it really depended on the personalities you were dealing with. It might be that there's certain people that you can intimidate, but there are certain

people that are just ornery or resistant to it. So, it created a division in the Caucus, basically along those personality lines because it wasn't even ideological. We surprised a lot of people because I got – I forget how many black Representatives there were, whether there were twelve or sixteen, but I got four – the votes of four black Representatives against Dwight Evans for Appropriations Chair. Really, the cleavage line was people who felt that they had been locked out. So, there were liberals, and there were conservatives, and that didn't seem to be anything that prevented people from working together. I mean, I remember one of the outgrowths of that was that Rosita Youngblood [State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1995-present] was pushing legislation for tax credits for people to commute from the inner city to the suburbs, and it was the kind of thing that the conservative Republicans routinely opposed, but Joe Gladeck [Joseph M. Gladeck, Jr.; State Representative, Montgomery County, 1979-2002] got up and made a very strong speech for our Rosita, or, they had to back up Rosita, and that was the kind of thing that was being engendered, that people were forming working relationships and not having the kind of automatic ideological responses to each other's initiatives. Of course, that was the same year the Democratic Leadership tried to purge Rosita for reelection, and aside from raising money for elections, I mean, I personally was undertaking election court representations for a lot of these people, and now in Rosita's case, I don't remember whether I represented her in court or whether we just helped her get a lawyer. I think we recruited a lawyer for her, who handled the case, and her opponent was knocked off the ballot. Bill Keller was a tremendous, you know, he's just got such a fun loving personality, and he's so in your face, so we were not inclined to be nuanced or subtle when we'd get a victory like that because we really felt that we

needed to make the point that the intimidation system is breaking down. So, what we had done was we ordered this enormous birthday kind of cake to celebrate Rosita's reelection, or the fact that she knocked her opponent off the ballot, and was thus effectively as good as reelected because it showed that she was able to stand up for herself and yet survive and thrive. So, we had it sent it up to the Caucus Room because we figured lunchtime we were going to do this. Well, I mean, DeWeese, I guess, was thinking along the same tracks because the cake disappeared. So, Keller comes up there, and, like, there's no cake. He (*laugh*) forces his way into DeWeese's inner office. They don't know what he's talking about. He's back into the back offices, and he finally locates the cake, which he carries out to the Caucus meeting the way the robot carried that woman in "The Day the Earth Stood Still." He's got the cake in his hands, and he goes to the microphone of the Caucus and he just recites this whole thing about "We believe in protecting incumbent protecting Members. We're not predatory on our own Members like the – and our Member, Rosita, achieved a great victory in this court case, and as a result, we got this cake so everybody can celebrate this." So, I mean, they basically had to suspend the Caucus. I remember Mark Cohen was the first guy off the Leadership rack in line for the cake, but it was a very basic way of kind of making the point. So, we traveled around a lot in [19]96. Keller and I stayed at Bud George's [Camille George; State Representative, Clearfield County, 1975-present] house. I had to end up – I don't think in [19]96, but in my second run in [19]98, I think I had to go paintballing with Bob Belfanti [Robert E. Belfanti, Jr.; State Representative, Northumberland County, 1981-2010] and went to everybody's District and went through everybody's ritual, and the end result was that I lost that, I think, by fifty-seven to forty-two, and that was the first

challenge to Leadership that came out of the grassroots. In the past, it had always been palace coups by certain Leaders. Now, there was an expression of this, of a measurable split in the Caucus and how many votes, and the Leadership was definitely concerned about it, because the thing they did the night before; DeWeese was holed up over at the Hilton. Keller and I were over in the lobby, and he was just summoning people all through the night. I mean, his practice was to conduct business at night. We didn't come into Session until late in the day, but he was up all night, there, two, three o'clock in the morning, and they were pulling individual Members up to this hotel suite that DeWeese had, and God only knows what conversations occurred between them, but they swung enough votes that they were able to assure that they held on to the Appropriations Chairmanship. [19]98 I tried again. This time they picked off a couple votes. I only got thirty-nine. I don't remember how many Democrats there were totally, so I don't know what Dwight's vote was, but it was obvious that we weren't going to be able to pull off a change in Leadership in that way. I mean, the, the old paradigm used to be Philadelphia plus Allegheny County would be dominant in the Democratic Caucus. DeWeese and Veon were kind of ingenious in killing that paradigm and specifically in killing Allegheny County as an entity, so they had this Greene County, Beaver County thing, and we were giving Dwight a harder time in Philadelphia than anybody anticipated, but he was still dominant in Philadelphia, and I guess that the thinking about a revolt would have been that there would have needed to have been more critical mass going on in Allegheny County. And in fact, what was happening is that the dissidents from Allegheny County, there were a lot of independents from Allegheny County, but they all would either get disgusted and retire, or Tom Murphy became Mayor, and DeWeese did

destroy Dave Mayernik [David J. Mayernik; State Representative, Allegheny County, 1983-2002] and Ralph Kaiser's [State Representative, Allegheny County, 1991-2002] District's with reapportionment,. So, in that tactical sense he was ingenious in knowing that he needed to crush a potential source of rivalry in Allegheny County, and they did do that. I think it was terrible for the Democratic Caucus and really bad for Allegheny County, because it prevented the creation of any kind of homegrown, strong Allegheny County leadership. I mean, Ivan Itkin, whatever else you say about him, he wasn't a strong leader, and basically, the system in Allegheny became for DeWeese and Veon to impose control or leadership in Allegheny County, and you could see its effect. Well, when issues came up, like the location of the casino licenses and everything, I mean, it represented a major policy problem for Allegheny County to be subordinated to other smaller counties in that region. When the issue of the stadium support – a number of other issues – it wasn't a pure political problem; it was a breakdown of Allegheny, which already had internal problems, city suburb and everything. They already had problems identifying as a group, but at least the Allegheny County designation gave them something. Now that had been totally stamped out by DeWeese and Veon, with the result that it was just like a bunch of small towns that were uncoordinated. So, that's [19]98. [19]97, well, DeWeese's response to our getting forty-two votes in 1996, was that the night of the Caucus election he took away the committee Chairmanships of the people that voted for me. That was Tom Michlovic [Thomas A. Michlovic; State Representative, Allegheny County, 1979-2002], Frank Pistella, Italo Cappabianca [State Representative, Erie County, 1979-2000]. Again, I don't know what he was thinking. I guess he thought that this was some kind of Roman ritual where you enslave the

conquered peoples and you burn down their houses or something, but we didn't think that we could let something like that stand. So, the people that supported me and myself got involved immediately in trying to figure out what to do about it, and what we wanted to do was a rule change to institutionalize seniority. Now, that also sounds counterintuitive as a reform measure because generally, in Congress, the thinking is that seniority is a bad thing, and if you would open it up, either to centralize control or to election by the Members, then that's a more Democratic process, but we knew that in practice that's not true, and, and what DeWeese was doing here was mirroring what Newt Gingrich [United States Representative, 1979-2000; Speaker, 1995-1998] was doing in Washington. He was trying to create a paradigm where as long as he could get his hands on 51 percent of the Democratic Caucus, he could then impose a dictatorship of the Democratic Caucus. And our point was, that if people are not free to express their own opinions in the Leadership election, where is democracy here? Who gets to decide what the Democratic Party is? They have to be unmolested in making that decision. You don't have to do any special favors for them or like them, but taking away their Chairmanships because you didn't agree with the way they voted in a supposedly secret ballot election – which is a whole other story. They wouldn't let it be, I mean, they would get guys to come over and show them the ballots, and they would have a system like that so that it wasn't really a secret ballot election. It was an attempt to make everything an intimidation system. Well, we were able to make the appeal to Perzel that we needed this rule change, and Perzel was very agreeable, except that like two weeks later, he came back with a phone call saying it just couldn't be done because Matt Ryan wasn't for it. So, we thought that was a really weak response by Perzel, but it meant that, obviously, not to be deterred, we

had to go talk to Matt Ryan, and Tom Tigue and I went to see Matt Ryan. Now, you know, Bill DeWeese is a Marine veteran, and Matt Ryan is a Marine veteran, but Tom Tigue is a Marine veteran hero Silver Star winner, and that really counted a lot with Matt Ryan, and it was being in the room with them, it was obvious that the fact that Tom Tigue was saying certain things and was pointing out how this was being used in an unfair way and everything, the messenger carried a lot of weight with Ryan.

HM: Would you like to begin where we left off?

AB: Well, this is right after the blackout in the studio.

HM: Yes.

AB: And unlike the prevailing opinion in the Sopranos, life does go on in this interview. So, we were in the middle of a discussion of the committee Chairmanship seniority fight, and I think I was talking about the credibility that Tom Tigue had with Matt Ryan because of his being a genuine war hero. So, Speaker Ryan was moved from a posture where he originally opposed this rules change, and the reason for his opposition was he didn't want any interference with the prerogatives of Leadership because of a slippery slope argument. He thought if you ever start restricting the prerogatives of Leaders, where would it all end? But he was persuaded that there had been an abuse of that power by Bill DeWeese and that specifically, Tom Tigue would be poorly treated, that Tigue would be on the verge of being a committee Chairman himself in a few years, and Ryan

felt it was a clear signal that he would be denied a Chairmanship because of his oh, can I touch your cheek somewhere on a dark-filled, rainy nights with my socks stuck in the mud please come dive in puddles with me outspokenness and independence in the Democratic Caucus. So, when the matter actually went to the Floor, Bill DeWeese baited Ryan, and he delivered a speech that it was all kind-of, “poor Bill DeWeese,” and talked about Matt Ryan as *pater familias* and a man who had always protected the prerogatives of the institution of the House and tried to make Ryan look ridiculous and that he was somehow betraying that tradition. So Ryan took the extraordinary step of giving up the rostrum and coming down to the Floor to debate the issue, and he completely eviscerated DeWeese, and one statement that he made that I recall; he talked about his, DeWeese’s and Tigie’s Marine backgrounds, and he said, “I know we all walk around here whistling the Marine Corps hymn to each other, but in Tom Tigie we have a genuine Marine hero, and what’s been done in this instance and what’s proposed to be done is, is an abuse of power and an abuse of a hero of that type and that that’s why he was persuaded that this was the right change to make.” And it was an extraordinarily effective and emotional pitch, and it got all of the Republican votes for the change and I think, something about twenty-six Democratic votes, so it was about one hundred and twenty-six or one hundred and twenty-eight votes in favor of the rules change, and the result was that the people that had been temporarily appointed as Minority committee Chairman, which I believe were Stan Jarolin [Stanley J. Jarolin; State Representative, Luzerne County, 1983-1998] and Andy Carn [Andrew J. Carn; State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1983-2000], and I think Keith McCall [State Representative, Carbon County, 1991-2010; Speaker, 2009-2010]. I think, but I’m not sure about McCall. I don’t think he had the seniority yet for a

Chairmanship, and their positions were vacated, and Italo Cappabianca actually got a promotion. Instead of Intergovernmental Affairs, he got the Agriculture Committee, and he thought that was an extraordinary achievement. They had chronicled this battle in the Erie newspapers as if it was some great political standoff, and Cappabianca was greeted back home as a hero, and Tom Michlovic and Frank Pistella, but were both restored to their Chairmanships.

HM: How often does that happen? Do you see rule changes and – ?

AB: Well, it was very unusual, but it's because the rules were originally agreed to because all of these kinds of issues were considered. Any time someone would act in disregard of the whole social contract, the reason for the connection of all the rules, then the whole balance was thrown off. So, there had been a traditional argument that committee Chairmen are part of the Leadership, and they should support the Leadership on Party line issues, such as if the Democratic Party took a position that we were for a tax increase, there was a feeling that it was unfair for a committee Chairman to have the benefits of Leadership and not to do heavy lifting, but what was viewed as the abuse, in this case, was that it wasn't for abuse of support of the Party. There had been an example like that in 1991 where Emil Mrkonic [State Representative, Allegheny County, 1975-1992] didn't support the tax increase. The view here was that people had personally been against Bill DeWeese or Dwight Evans in a specific election for their office and that it's a nuance, I guess, but these tools are in the arsenal to help Leaders help protect the Party, not to help personally benefit themselves. So, DeWeese had stepped over the line in

trying to use some of the weapons in the arsenal of the Leader to try to mandate personal support for himself, and clearly, at least a quarter of the Democrats felt that this was an abuse. Now, when that came full circle, and in 2005, there was the pay raise, which was another kind of vote that had traditionally been seen as a Leadership vote. The aftereffects of this were that there was at least one committee Chairman, David Levdansky [State Representative, Allegheny County, 1985-present], who voted against Leadership on that issue, and because of this rule, he could not be removed. Now, I think DeWeese thought that was terrible at the time, because he removed everybody that he could. He removed people from Vice Chairmanships for not being for the pay raise. I think he removed people from desired committee assignments, but he couldn't do anything to Dave Levdansky. On the other hand, I think that that was a good effect, because that's exactly what we were trying to accomplish, and Levdansky felt that the pay raise was excessive and was wrong and that he was being muddled between responsibility to his constituents and the pressure he felt within the Caucus and from Leadership, and obviously, he paid a penalty anyway in antagonizing DeWeese and antagonizing other Members of the Caucus, but he retained his Chairmanship, his Minority Chairmanship, and he lived to fight another day, and it's a legislative body; it's a democratically elected body. The idea is that you try to get 51 percent of the vote, that you try to get either consensus or majority support for issues, not that you silence large numbers of people under threat of doing injury to them personally so that all you have is an echo chamber, because first of all, democracy in itself is a value in itself, and secondly, when you have a lot of other heads involved in the decision, you got a much better chance of correcting a mistake or avoiding a mistake or correcting the problem.

It's not good institutionally to stamp out dissent. I mean, the contention, and I agree with it, that the collapse of the Soviet Union and of Communism in Europe was that totalitarianism, it's not only wrong, but it doesn't work. And that was a totalitarian system with respect, you know, in a much narrower sense, just in a respect to the meting out of Leadership positions.

HM: Well, did you enjoy the role of playing this opposition party to your own Party? It seems like there was – ?

AB: Well, I eventually got into it, but it really wasn't at all what I wanted to do or had any idea of doing when I got up here. I got elected in a very Democratic District. I would have thought that I would be here for a long time and that ultimately I would have tried to be elected to Leadership or try to be Speaker, and that in many ways it was frustrating to me to be separated from the Party line, but the choices that were being given to me were just unacceptable. To begin with, in 1991, the definition of being a good Democrat was that I had to not represent poor senior citizens who I thought the Democratic Party was supposed to represent, and the choice was either do what we say and abandon those people, or represent those people and be what they called a malcontent. And forced to a choice between the people I represented and going along here, I represented the people that I was elected to represent, but I did suffer for it, and I was elected in 1990. I went through this whole battle [19]91 and [19]92. O'Donnell was still here, but O'Donnell kind of had one foot out the door. He was getting ready to run for Governor, and he did resign in 1993, so I had not yet created this strong bond with

Bill Keller. But it was a particularly lonely role to be a gadfly without any allies. The fact that ultimately it formed as a very strong partnership with Bill Keller and that we then brought in, as I said, depending on what the vote was, up to sixteen other people, meant that we now created our own community. The organization process in the House is really, in our view, it's based on the organization of elementary school. Even the way the desks are arranged in the House is the way desks are arranged in elementary school. The way Caucus is arranged is elementary school, and the prevailing control procedure is peer pressure, and you're supposed to come into Caucus and be berated or humiliated and thereby pushed into just going along, and that whole structure is set up to crush individual independent opinion. Now, you do have some people here who thrive as individualists, such as Greg Vitali [Gregory S. Vitali; State Representative, Delaware County, 1993-present], and I think Tom Tigue did fine as an individual, but as a basic rule of human nature, it's hard for people to remain in that posture for a long time. So, Bill Keller and I decided early on that what you needed to do was create another community, another family, so that people had – it's not the tangible deprivation of benefits or anything that gets to people; it's the mere human element. So, you know, the first arrow in Leadership's armaments is the idea of shunning or ostracism, so as Keller and I deviated and provided leadership, alternative leadership on some of these issues, the first thing that they would try to do is to get other Democrats not to talk to us or to scold us, and Keller particularly just thought that was funny, because he made it clear he, you know, he used to work in the hull of ships, and he did hard work, and he had a soft chair here, and, you know, the fact that he had to work to two o'clock in the morning on budget days he didn't think compared to his average day on the dock, and he just had a tremendous laugh and a

tremendous sense of humor, and he could turn the tables on people so that they felt small by trying to pull that stuff on him, and essentially, the people that were dispatched to do that kind of work were only comfortable doing it as long as they, they had a strong group behind them, but once there was a group that was pushing back, actually, it became a problem for the enforcers because they didn't want to be unpopular. They didn't want to be shunned, and they didn't want anybody angry with them, and now so I remember there was an incident where Keller, I think, Marie Lederer and I voted in some way, I can't even remember the issue, but DeWeese decided to organize criticism of us – so I might be mixing several issues – but one thing that happened is Nick Colafella [Nicholas A. Colafella; State Representative, Beaver County, 1981-2002] wrote a scolding letter to us, and Mark Cohen wrote a scolding letter, and what we did, Keller and I and maybe Tigie, we went to see Nick Colafella, and we went over his letter line by line, and we explained the reasons why we did it, and he was virtually in tears by the end of the conversation, and he didn't want any parts of the criticism of us. Cohen came to the office, and he wrote a retraction or an apology for his letter. Now, I can't remember it was the same issue or another issue where Steve Stetler [Stephen H. Stetler; State Representative, York County, 1991-2006] wrote an open letter to the Caucus criticizing me for not voting the way the Democratic Caucus did on some issue that I regarded as a peripheral issue, and so I did a responsive open letter that pointed out that Stetler had gone over and negotiated with the Senate Republicans about killing, or actually about bringing about their workers' compensation changes that gutted workers' compensation, which in my view and I think in most people's view would be a core Democratic value, and the point was who gets to decide what the core issues are? Because DeWeese had evolved a procedure – he was

getting support from a certain number of Members that came from swing Districts, and he, again, he would personally reward them with desired committee assignments, board appointments, anything that was in his power, and then, they didn't vote for the [19]91 tax increase, and they wouldn't vote – they had to – it became who are you? You know, Ed Krebs [Edward H. Krebs; State Representative, Lebanon County, 1991-2002] was not a good DeWeese sycophant, so if Ed Krebs wanted welfare reform, DeWeese would make him an object of scorn, but if Steve Stetler came from a District where he had to pay attention to conservatives in his District, or Phyllis Mundy [State Representative, Luzerne County, 1991-present] that was okay because they were core DeWeese supporters. So, we felt that that wasn't a standard. You know, there had to be one standard for everybody, and Stetler said, "Good luck." I mean, Stetler backed off in response to the letter, so Keller and I wouldn't accept that kind of treatment and, in fact, turned it into a joke and ridiculed that attempt, and I think because of the intensity and the comprehensiveness of our viewpoint on it, we actually picked up more adherents, and people kind of got a kick out of ridiculing these elementary school kinds of tactics. But, it was also an internal, political tactic, because if you played by the preexisting rules, and there was no way that you could ever swing either Caucus or that you could even – in fact, as I kind of backed into a Leadership race because certainly from where we were starting in 1991, I would be happy just to survive and be left alone. I didn't expect that 95 percent or 80 percent or whatever it was of the Caucus was going to wake up one day and change their mind and say, "We're going to look at things the way you look at things," but what I did want was some space and some freedom to define my own core issues and to be respected for standing up for my people. But it became obvious that I

wouldn't be left alone, so that the only way to defend my own independence and Keller's independence was to actually engage in a power struggle, because by extending the perimeter and getting further out and picking up more adherents and actually challenging for Leadership positions, the more support you had, the greater freedom you had to do what you thought you needed to do on policy issues and everything else. But it really wasn't driven by ambition; it was driven more by a sense that we needed to defend ourselves by taking the perimeter out as far as we could, and then it just turned out that there was like no limit to it. Once there was a breakdown in the control system, there were surprising numbers and surprising individuals who wanted to be part of that. There were, I mean, there were people that we never thought would be with us. I mean, the first year I was here, Tom Corrigan really was very much pro-Leadership and pro-let's-just-do-what-the-Leaders-decide-to-do-on-the-taxes, but he was also very offended by the control mechanisms, by the ouster of O'Donnell, and he felt that as a Bucks County Representative, they were never taken seriously, that Philadelphia kind of made them go along and didn't give them anything. So, we helped him find out how he could get more for Bucks County for his District. We helped empower him, and he ended up being one of our stalwarts, but I never, ever would have seen that coming. Bud George ultimately became a very good friend and ally. Even – excuse me. I forgot to turn this off. I think. No, I did turn it off. – So, the more friends you picked up, the more people there were on the cusp and there was another conclusion that we came to about Harrisburg, which is; if you watched the Members, the Caucus is really organized into cliques of two or three people. They're the people that hang out constantly, go to dinner together, and the key to really getting support in the Caucus is that you have break into most or the vast majority

of the cliches, so you get one of the five guys to play cards together. Now, you have an opening for him to begin to soften feelings towards you among his friends and so on. So, it isn't governed by geography or what Caucus you come from, or ideology or anything else. It's just the human chemistry of which particular people happen to bond, and what's fascinating about the House is, I mean, it's a large institution, but it is small enough that if you really pay close attention to people, you can really become an expert on the Members of the House, and you get a pretty good idea of how an individual Representative is going to vote on things and how he's going to feel about things and who he's going to have feelings, positive and negative, about and get the ability to predict how they might respond in a new situation. And I just think that's fascinating, because one reason I love politics is that it gives you that up close psychology, psychological insight into people, and here it's practiced every day, and you could actually see the organism grow and evolve that the people, the relationships didn't stay static; they were affected by every conflict and by every reconciliation. Sometimes conflict was really good, and that's something that actually DeWeese was a master at. He knew that if he picked a fight with you that there would be tremendous benefits to the reconciliation, and then we found that, too. So, there were a lot of emotional roles broken down by people interacting with each other, so the shunning didn't work. The Leaders were never able to get to try to use brute force with us, I think, because there were too many of us. We were just too strong. I mean, they would try – if there would be other people like Rosita Youngblood who might go out on a mission of their own and to be isolated, and in that case, they would deprive them of staff or, for example, in the Mayernik and Kaiser case they would just kill them in reapportionment. Keller and I were always kind of thinking

three or ten steps ahead at how to prevent that kind of jeopardy and to protect our people and to make sure that the fight occurred at a higher level and over higher stakes than over this kind of personal survival issues. Although, you know, Ed Rendell, who was mayor at the time, told me DeWeese did come to Philadelphia and asked him to run somebody against me, but it was kind of silly because I had strong enough roots with him and with anybody that they would have been talking to in Philadelphia, so all that resulted in was an anecdote being repeated to me, I think by Ed Rendell (*laugh*), so that was kind of self-defeating.

HM: So, the Leadership that we're talking about is the present Leadership, and you talked about some gentlemen that are still here –

AB: Oh, well, so, let's see. By 1998, as I said, I knew we weren't going to be able to win this Leadership battle, and I talked to Dwight Evans, I think in the beginning of 2000, and actually, my only problems with Dwight were that he was a little bit too rigid and maybe not inclusive enough in his decision-making. There were aspects of his leadership that I admired, which is that he has a philosophy and he has the strength of his convictions, and there were times during this process where he also got out on a limb, and although some of the specific issues I didn't agree with him on, but basically, he had been very strongly supported by the teachers' unions, and he was a strong public education advocate, and he moved beyond that base and was a, a prime sponsor of charter schools, and he became involved in a number of education reform issues where he was out of the Democratic and the liberal mainstream, and he took a lot of backbiting and criticism from

Members over, “Can you believe he’s our Appropriations Chairman, and he’s out doing things that, that the rest of us don’t agree with and making deals himself with John Perzel on education initiatives, and how dare he?” And some of the things that he was doing I agreed with, and some of them I disagreed with, but actually, I admired his willingness to take a bullet for things that he believed in, and I thought that the competition between him and me had actually improved our mutual respect for each other, because we had now seen each other in conflict. We knew that we could both be tough opponents, and I told him beginning of 2000 that I, you know, I wasn’t going to run for Appropriations Chairman again and in fact would be supportive of Dwight if anybody else tried it. And that year, Keith McCall did try to man a race for Appropriations Chairman, and he did call me, and I think we were very effective at shutting that off early on. In fact, our suggestion was run against Bill DeWeese. We’ll be all for that, but actually, we think Dwight’s done a good job, and he’s Philadelphia’s guy, and we’re not going to have that kind-of – I mean, Philadelphia’s not going to give up the Appropriations Chairmanship, and I think that Keith McCall had expected, based on his observation of our prior behavior, that he could just come bouncing in, and he could pick up all of these votes. So, I guess that was another thing that was unexpected, and the relationship between Dwight and me continually improved after 2000. Actually, I thought it was, in the end, there were probably a lot of similarities in our personalities and approach, and you had strong personalities on both sides. The same thing that was irritating each of us about the other was a recognition of the other in ourselves. But I had felt that before that he was just stubborn and wouldn’t listen, and I think from what he said, I think he just thought I didn’t understand his problems coming into the Leadership where he came in, that he was

brought in as Appropriations Chairman in the middle of the big deficit where you had to carry water for the Governor and that he had a lot of demands on his policy making other than demands coming from me and from other Members of the Caucus. The end result is that we didn't really want to fight with each other anymore, both because we knew it would be a tough fight and because it really wasn't worth it because we were really trying to accomplish similar goals. We were both strong public education advocates, and we were both interested in – yeah, when Dwight ran for Governor his book and his campaign was based on – it was the book reinventing government. We both had a similar philosophy about improvements in government. We both are really workaholic on politics and government, so there was really no fundamental division between us, and when I ran for City Controller, Dwight was a good supporter, and now since I've left here, Dwight and Bill Keller have really bonded pretty well. So, I think, in terms of that relationship, that was a healthy evolution in people exploring each other and setting limits with each other. With Bill DeWeese, it just didn't work the same way because I guess our feeling is that Bill DeWeese is not as deep as Dwight, that he's a more shallow character, and in fact, is probably reflective of whoever happens to be around him at the time. So, one of the problems with DeWeese is even if he was friendly to you, it would last until the next person tried to move him in a contrary position, and I thought one of the more damaging things inside the Caucus about the DeWeese style was that he didn't have a sense of personal security sufficient that he could really unite everybody. The way he organized support for himself in the Caucus was to set people against each other, so he would tell people that "I'm going to appoint you committee Chairman because you were for me fifteen minutes before this other guy was for me," and that's inherently

divisive, and it can work. You can get fifty-one votes out of one hundred in the Caucus with that policy, but you can't get all one hundred at the end of that because you've used the bodies of people that you had to step on in order to get the fifty-one votes. He never seemed to be able to come to terms with that, and I don't think he knows how to accommodate different points of view without setting people against each other. So, you had the spectacle of one of the biggest Democratic majorities in Pennsylvania history being frittered away, first of all, figuratively because of the fractured unity in the Caucus and then literally. We lost Democratic Majority without an election. We had at least four changes of Party between [19]92 and [19]94. There was Ed Krebs and Pat Carone [Patricia Carone; State Representative, Butler County, 1991-1998]. Ralph Acosta [State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1985-1994] switched after he lost the Democratic Primary, so that was a temporary thing, and then Tom Stish [Thomas B. Stish; State Representative, Luzerne County, 1991-1996] was the final straw there. Even in Congress there have been Party switches, but there hasn't been the epidemic that occurred here in response to the DeWeese-Veon Leadership style, and then ultimately, you had John Gordner [State Representative, Columbia County, 1993-2003; State Senator, 2003-present]. I don't even think I can keep track of the number of people that switched Parties, and it was damaging in many ways. First of all, the Democratic Party in Pennsylvania really is a big tent. It is not an ideologically extreme Party, as evidenced by Bob Casey's [Robert Casey, Jr., United States Senator, 2007-present] success and by his father's success. To be successful as a Democrat in Pennsylvania, politically, you really have to be pretty much in the middle of the vote. To try to operate the Caucus based on polarizing issues is self-defeating in that it runs counter to what the majority of

Pennsylvanians want, and you had a phenomenon of people switching Parties, some guys retiring, and some others whose feet were held to the fire just losing elections, but the net effect over time was that during the DeWeese years there was a very substantial loss of ground in central and rural Pennsylvania among Democrats, and what the Democratic Party meant in those counties was not what the Democratic Party meant in Philadelphia. They were very specific kinds of things that people felt they could concur with out there, and as their Representatives were pushed into a more ideologically liberal posture, the Democrats were losing ground, and the result of that was that that made the Party even more liberal, because the survivors were the liberals, but you were getting backed into a posture where it looked like permanent minority status. Now, ultimately demographically what started to happen, and probably, mostly, because Ed Rendell was so enormously popular in southeastern Pennsylvania more than anything else, is the breakthrough that the Democrats made in the Philadelphia suburbs. So, the Republicans consistently picked up ground. They just took seats from us all over the place in central Pennsylvania, and then they really started posturing for gains in the west, which was the other part of the traditional Democratic base, and then little-by-little they started losing seats in the southeast, so now that you're in a position where you are, which is one hundred and two to one hundred and one. I still disagree with it, both as a political tactic and as a general philosophy, because it is about getting enough – where you have common values, you want to use that as a building block, and you want to build the strongest coalition that you can because especially in Pennsylvania, nobody ever wins. It's not like other states where people get 60 percent statewide blowouts. It is a state that more often than not results in a fifty-one, forty-nine win for whoever wins, so you're

operating in a form like that. You're looking to make friends, not expatriates and the Democratic Party nationally has recognized that they need to find a way to win elections in Virginia and in – I guess when Mark Warner [Governor of Virginia, 2002-2006] ran, that was considered an example of what we need to do. Casey's victory is considered a example of what we need to do in the country. It works at that level. Same kind-of thing works at the local level. Now, I think the first reversal of that was Scott Conklin's [H. Scott Conklin; State Representative, Centre County, 2007-present] election, and I think we need to do more of that, but that means that individual Democratic Members have to be given somewhat more freedom to figure out how to represent their constituencies and how to meld that with Majority Democratic philosophy, and sometimes they should be swayed by the Majority Democratic philosophy, but also, they should each be listened to because the Majority Democratic philosophy may have to be amended in some respects to accommodate enough people to constitute a Majority. It's not just a tactic. It's in the nature of having a conversation and having a conclave that you really – it's like in a jury; you do want everybody to speak their mind. They might have a little bit of wisdom that's going to actually help you, so some of that may be developing as, as a result of the breakdown in this strong leadership model. And I also felt that DeWeese was kind of parroting Manderino without understanding the essence of how Manderino and other strong leaders got to that posture. I think Manderino – I mean, I didn't know him, but from what I understand of him, he really was expert at everybody's District and everybody's political calculus, and it wasn't a question of constantly breaking people's arms to disregard what was in their own best interest, but it was a calculation of where majority opinion was going in the Caucus – and I think DeWeese, who had been a

dissident himself during the Manderino years, kind-of caricatured it, and he was impressed by the ferocity or the strength of the tactics that were employed on him when he was a dissident. So, I think he wanted to copycat that, and his view was it had been so awesome when applied to him that it'd be awesome to everybody else, and the irony of that whole thing was it didn't work on him. He didn't stop being a dissident, and Dwight Evans didn't stop being a dissident. When they were treated to the same type of high pressure tactics, they successfully resisted it, and it became the basis for them ascending to Leadership. Now, they were operating under the same principles and they were generating an opposition that potentially could displace them from the Leadership. They had to not have studied it very closely.

HM: Do you think there was the possibility of new Leadership on the horizon, or do you think – you've talked about the numbers, the numbers that you need to keep control of your Caucus and the numbers that you need to keep – ?

AB: Well, I think a lot will pivot on Dwight Evans. I think now that he's decided to settle down in Harrisburg, he's going to be the principle Democratic power in the Caucus, and I mean, there's always been an issue about whether he wanted to switch hats; would he give up Appropriations and become Majority Leader? Would he be the Speaker? His interest has always been direct budgetary control, and as long as he could have that control as Appropriations Chairman, he didn't want to have to be overwhelmed with all the duties of the Majority Leader. Keith McCall has a lot of support in the Caucus, but for some reason when it came time to actually get into the fight, he blinked in the race

against DeWeese. So, McCall has a lot of ability, and he has a lot of support, and I think maybe he underestimates his own support, and, of course, now, the Party – and DeWeese didn't recognize his support sufficient to move him in as Majority Whip. I think Bill Keller has had tremendous leadership ability on issues. There are more important things that have been accomplished where he doesn't even take any credit and is kind of invisible than anything. I can remember anybody else doing here, and now, finally, that is being recognized, and his Vice Chairmanship in the Appropriations Committee. He's moved visibly closer to Dwight. I think Dwight trusts him and relies on him, and I think he will be a strong partner with Dwight. I don't see him moving into a challenging position because I don't think he thinks it's necessary now. I think Keller is also interested in budget issues and in the way in which the Appropriations Committee can facilitate economic development and protection of labor interests and things like that, so as long as he and Dwight are on the same page, that'll work out fine. I don't think that DeWeese is a long termer at this point. He's already been the Democratic Leader for seventeen years, which is in itself something of a historical milestone. I can't remember of anybody in history serving that long. I mean, Herb Fineman was the Democratic Leader or the Speaker from 1966 to 1977, so that's eleven years, and that's probably the longest tenure. Well, Irvis, [19]77 to [19]88 – that's also eleven years. So, DeWeese is closing in on almost double the historic record, and as you get close to twenty years, that's a generation, and there's very few things in human life that stay static for twenty years. People retire from the Legislature after twenty years. People reconsider their marriages after twenty years. Twenty years seems to be a basic milestone for the way people look at life, and so at the end of this term, he'll be at eighteen years, and look how

radically everything has changed underneath him. Look at the composition of the Legislature. In eighteen years is much more than 50 percent change. It's probably around 70 or 75 percent change in that period of time. So, in many ways, DeWeese appears to be an anachronism. It is as if he reflects a time that produced him, and one of the things that happens when you're up in Leadership is that you tend to be insulated from changes occurring at the ground level, and that's a vulnerability. Now, he has been trying to scramble this year and become a super reformer and to show that he's changing radically, but it's really part of his central education and his system, and I don't think he can be a child of the twenty-first century and come here in the 1970's. He can't internalize it, and I think you don't see – people used to say that they really liked him. It was not just purely that they had to support him because he was the incumbent, but he kind of charmed his way into the Leadership. He took people to dinner. He spent a lot of time and attention on them. As he became ensconced, there was less charm and more brute force, and I think there's been damage to his popularity as a result of that. Plus he's, he's taken steps, like the elimination of Kaiser and Mayernik that people who watched have said, "That's just brutal," or, "You, you can't be the kind of person you thought you were. You can't be a funny, charming guy and be meting out that kind of conduct." So, I think right now he's there because he's the incumbent, and he's there because Dwight Evans has decided to support him to be there. There was a time when Bill DeWeese got Dwight Evans elected. I think Dwight Evans gets Bill DeWeese elected now. I think Dwight Evans could win any Caucus election now and that he's in a much stronger position and that he's really grown in the level of support that he has, but usually, Leadership changes, in fact, almost always, Leadership changes as a result of

external events. There's really only three ways that Party leaders have gone, and that's either to lose their own reelection, they retire, they die in office, or they're convicted of a crime. That has been the pattern. The removal of Perzel as Speaker is an anomaly because Perzel should have recognized that when he lost the majority, he couldn't be the Speaker any more, and he should have run for Republican Leader, and if he'd done that at the time, everybody I've talked to has said that he would have been reelected. So, that was just a colossal misjudgment, probably fed from his own sense of overconfidence, so I don't even put that in the category of Leadership changes. That was just – it's almost like he made that choice. DeWeese had a very hard election in 2006, and it doesn't – you know, I'm not up from out his way, but it sounds like the west and the southwest is in a continuous state of revolt and of discontent, and that he personally has been subjected to a lot of attacks in his local media, and he has been characterized as the symbol of the old system, and he's getting beat up on that on a daily basis. I know he's, as I said, I think he's struggling to find a way to get out from under that and to reinvent himself. But the existence of the Tribune Review and of the, of the institutional conservative Republican strength in the southwest poses a problem for a lot of Democrats out there, in that there's this slow type of management of public opinion taking place in those areas, and it's insidious and it's invisible, and it's only a little bit at a time. So, I think he – what did he win by? Fifty-one or 52 percent of this last election against a Republican in a District that probably should be 70 percent plus Democrat, and that was after a decision by a popular County Commissioner not to challenge him in the Democratic Primary. I think he did have a Primary challenge, but by a relatively weak opponent. And so, the question [end of side 2] will be whether there are well-known Democrats who are encouraged by

the Republican performance to challenge him in the Democratic Primary, because I do think that when you get to the General Election next year the Republicans won't be in that strong of shape, and particularly in his District, so if he's going to have a fight, it's a question of whether he's going to have a strong Democratic challenge or not. But I guess Veon ended up losing to a Republican, but again, that was in 2006. I doubt if that would happen in 2008. The turnout is so much higher, and the Democrats tend to do better among the casual voters that if the Veon challenge was taking place in 2008 he undoubtedly would have won.

HM: Well, how do you feel about all the reformers that were just recently elected? Do you think that they'll have enough say in the process this time around, or will they have to wait several years until they actually have a voice?

AB: I think that they should focus their attention on something that's going to have important policy implications. The problem with focusing on process changes for their own sake is that it doesn't leave you any place. Pennsylvania has real problems. We lag in education and industrial development, economic development, generally, and a lot of the policy prescriptions are very contentious between the Parties and inside the Parties, and in the example I studied about Bill Keller. Bill Keller was absolutely right about the Meyerwerft ship building deal being an opportunity to recreate ship building in America, and the problem was he was just a little guy. Nobody ever heard of him at the time, and the prevailing opinion was they're doing ship building in Korea and Formosa and low wage countries, and the Ridge [Thomas J. Ridge, Governor of Pennsylvania, 1995-2001]

Administration wasn't able to see the real opportunity they had in front of them. Well, now you look at what Bill Keller has accomplished since 1991, and he has really changed the way the Philadelphia port is treated. When he got here in [19]91, there was talk that maybe the Philadelphia port should just go out of business to Baltimore. Now, it's been designated as a strategic military port. He's just concluded a successful fight with Senator Fumo and persuading Governor Rendell to support port expansion because there are changes in the way international commercial traffic occurs that now favor Philadelphia, and there's tremendous private investment waiting to come in here on terminals, and that, I think, that's an investment of a lifetime worth of effort in something that will yield large numbers of well paying jobs and will probably save Philadelphia region, and that's an accomplishment. Now, from the other hand, you spend your time purely on process issues, what you have to do is sacrifice so much political capital and antagonize so many Legislators, and first of all, it's very difficult to win those issues. How are you going to get Legislators to vote themselves out of office, to vote term limits on themselves, to vote for a smaller Legislature, to vote for nonparticipation in reapportionment, and all of that? I mean, that's like good case if you can do it. I think in a lot of states where that's been accomplished it was through referenda. It's hard to get the Legislators to vote themselves out of office. So, first of all, you may not get it done. Secondly, is it worth getting done? Because in doing it, what you're probably doing is weakening the branch of the government that has the closest proximity to the people, and you're either strengthening the executive branch at their expense, or you're strengthening lobbyists and legislative staff people, and the Legislators just come and go. Most of the places that have had those types of changes have found them not to be helpful. But the

final problem is, so you fight with 50 percent plus of the Legislature about eliminating their own jobs; how in the world do you get them to vote for hard policies that are necessary for the long term improvement of Pennsylvania, and therefore, what do you have at the end of the day? Why are you here? It's not a student council election. It's not a symbolic job. The job exists because you're supposed to improve life for the people you represent, and you expend so much effort in these fights that do not strengthen you in being able to accomplish that. So now, for some reason, the media is much more eager to pay attention to these internal process fights than they are to real policy fights, but they're in a different business than we are. I mean, as far as the media's concerned, if everybody was fighting every day, that would be good because that's another story. And there's no progressive economic policy initiative embraced by the media. If anything in Pennsylvania, there might be a conservative bias on the part of the media, so if they can stop things from happening, they're probably happy with that. Certainly, when we talked about the conservative media in the West, they don't want to see a lot of changes. So if the Legislature is paralyzed by a conflict over things that don't mean anything, what do they care? In fact, they're probably happy. So I mean, I do think that a lot of these new guys showed a lot of stamina and ingenuity and intelligence and a real grasp of what it takes to get elected and to deal with their electorate, and they're increasingly becoming smarter than the people that preceded them and more adept at the new system. There's not the kind of reliance on old Party machines or Special Interest, yet people are now more entrepreneurial about getting elected and reelected. Now, there has to be a further development for them to become that way on policy, and that's just a new subject. Policy is hard, and, you know, people have to

become really adept at getting elected and reelected because that's a survival issue. Then when they get around the policy, often it's a question of not being able to dig through a lot of conflicting and complicated ideas. Maybe not knowing where you want to go or how to figure out how this stuff leads to that stuff, but where you are going to go, it probably does take a while to really become expert at that, and then after you know where you're going, you got to convince everybody else that that's the right place to be going. But there are a lot of talented new Legislators who could do a very good job on that. I just think it's going to have to evolve from the process issues to substantive economic issues.

HM: Well, I'd like to talk a little bit about the legislation in which you were involved. Do you have any that you would specifically like to talk about today?

AB: Well, I would say, I mean, there were a number of bills. I was the sponsor of legislation that ended up passing under somebody else's name regarding the increase of penalties for drunk drivers who leave the scene of an accident. That was because of an incident that happened in my District; two older women were run down, and somebody fled the scene and the, and the legal status of that was at the time if you were prosecuted for leaving the scene of the accident, it was a relatively minor offence, relative to if you were caught and were alcohol impaired. So, that was upside down, and we corrected that, so that the penalty was severe for leaving the scene of an accident, and in fact, there was a one year mandatory prison term. Tom Druce [Thomas W. Druce; State Representative, Bucks County, 1993-2000] voted for that bill, and he got more than the

mandatory minimum prison term, but he ended up being hoisted by his own petard and being subject to the philosophy of the bill that he embraced. Between [19]99 and 2000, John Taylor [State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1985-present], Marie Lederer, Bill Keller and I worked on a intense review of the school violence issue in the Philadelphia public schools, and we developed a voluminous list of specific incidents, so we put a human face on the problem of school violence, and we also did a diagnosis of the breakdown of school discipline that encouraged that, and came up with policy prescriptions. They were problems such as a twenty-one step process in Philadelphia to be expelled. The only thing that you could be expelled for was literally bringing a gun to school, and so there were only twenty-one expulsions in a year in Philadelphia compared to four hundred in Pittsburgh, which was a quarter of the size. The legislative proposal that we came up with was to create a school victim advocate office, and that's a whole story in itself. Governor Ridge initially opposed us on it. We had a meeting with him and Keller, I had a meeting with him and his staff, and it turned out that his principle opposition was because there's already a victim advocate profession that believes that they have proprietary rights to the term "victim advocate." So, by changing it from "victim advocate" to "safe school advocate," we got rid of his objection, so we created a safe school advocate. I couldn't believe that something that substantive would turn on something that cosmetic, but it does, so we agreed to that change. Then, we got a safe school advocate created in Philadelphia, and the position was envisioned as a balance of power or as a watchdog position over the school administration, because one of the things that we had uncovered was that the school administration has extraordinary control over the kind-of information that comes out of schools. Much more control than any other

level of government has. Government is generally transparent, but schools operate under this idea that they're supposed to be a protective haven for kids and that you're intruding into their privacy if you know too much about what's going on in schools. But, in fact, school administrators hide behind that to not be fully forthcoming about any criticizable conditions on their watch, so the idea of this position was several fold. First of all, that there would be somebody that was not under the thumb of the school administration that would have the motivation to show accurate statistics about what was actually happening in terms of violent incidents. Secondly, that the way school discipline works, the victim is cut out of the process once he's been victimized. At the most, maybe it generates an incident report and some disciplinary process, but the disciplinary process then becomes between the school and the offender, and as in anything, if you've got the victim locked out of the room, then the process is going to tend to tilt sympathetically towards the person who is in the room, so it's a, it's a secondary victimization of the victim, so this advocate was supposed to be in the room pitching for the victims and participating in every level of the disciplinary process and advocating for measures that would protect the victim and protect other students. Now, the functional problem became – first of all, bureaucratically where are you going to put that office? And we felt if it's going to be a watchdog position or a balance of power position, it needs to be separated from school administration. So, it couldn't be made a Cabinet office because it was just for Philadelphia, and in order to get the legislation passed, we had to let every other school district out of it because we didn't want to be fighting all the school districts. They were willing to acknowledge that you might have a problem in Philadelphia, but we don't have a problem, and we don't want any parts of this. So, it was incapable of being its own

Cabinet position, and I think we wanted it to be part of the Governor's Office, and the Governor didn't really want it, so then the Attorney General did want it. That was another idea. Attorney General Fisher [D. Michael Fisher; State Representative, 1975-1980; State Senator, 1981-1996; Attorney General of Pennsylvania, 1997-2003] wanted it. Well, when Governor Ridge found out Attorney General Fisher wanted it, he didn't want the Attorney General to have it. So, ultimately, the office was placed under the State Department of Education, which as a functional matter, put it physically and functionally under the school district administration of Philadelphia, which put you right back to the original problem; what is the point of having a watchdog that is subject to the control of the person it's supposed to be watching? How can that possibly work? Nevertheless, it did work for about four years, because Harvey Rice, who had been counsel to our committee and served that position, was one of those contrarian personalities that didn't care. Felt he was on a mission, and Paul Vallas [Philadelphia Schools Superintendent, 2002-2007] took extreme umbrage to him because this is one source of information that wasn't under his control. He wanted to be in control of this message that miracles were happening in the Philadelphia schools, and they didn't want to book anything that ran counter to that. So, now he had something that wasn't under his control. He spent a lot of energy and effort trying to get Harvey fired, trying to make sure that they didn't get adequate appropriations, or staffing, or limiting the role. And the frustrating thing is all that's totally predictable. That's why it needs to be someplace else. Now, I understand that there's always a choice, because if it's someplace else, if you put it under the Attorney General or you put it someplace else, the argument is going to be, "Well, you've just invented a troublemaker." You got somebody who's going to get

more attention the more he kicks and screams and says things are going badly. But the finding was that the violence problem was so out of control that the system did need to be moved and adjusted in the direction of more vigilance and more protection of victims rather than less. That's not to say that that would be true forever. I think in human events the pendulum swings, and there could be a time that discipline was too strong, but that is not the situation in Philadelphia right now, and it wasn't at the time that was enacted, but I think it was the most important legislation enacted by me when I was here, and it was the only legislation of that kind in the country, and we thought it would be a model. Very disappointed at the way that it was implemented in Philadelphia, although it has at least provided a historical basis, because there were school advocate statistics versus official school district statistics, and it has provided a basis for the Philadelphia Inquirer to have another source of data and to raise important questions on the violence issues, so it did perform a historical purpose. I work very closely with Bill Keller on his port initiatives, and as I said before, I think they are one of the areas that have offered the best hopes for improvement in employment and economic strength in Pennsylvania, so I worked with him on the Meyerwerft deal. Unfortunately, the Meyerwerft deal was lost. It would have been much better than the subsequent deal that was obtained, because Meyerwerft actually had ships orders to build. They were chased out of Pennsylvania. Then, Governor Ridge had to go find another ship builder. They found Krono, which did not have an order book of ships to build, but a lot of the government support was offered for a deal that was not as good as the first deal. Now, we needed to get a Capitol budget appropriated to support the Krono ship building deal. Bill DeWeese revved up western Pennsylvania Democrats like Tommy DeLuca [Anthony M. DeLuca; State

Representative, Allegheny County, 1983-present] to get them in opposition to this on the basis that, “Are they giving you this amount of money?” And, of course, our response is, “We’re happy to help when there’s a stadium, or they have an issue.” It was the point that if you don’t have a ship building facility coming to Pittsburgh right now, we can’t do something here where there is an offer, and Keller did have a detailed analysis showing the state-wide District by District businesses that would be affected that would have to supply component parts for ship building. So, Keller and I worked very hard in overcoming the opposition from our own Caucus Leadership on a major economic development initiative in Philadelphia. That’s the kind of thing we felt was happening all the time, and it was really being done by DeWeese out of spite of Keller and me because we were interested in the issue, but it was something that hurt a lot of real people. You know, I’m really happy that I was able to be supportive of the school retirees and senior citizens for all these years. But I got to check and remember what else has gone on all these years.

HM: Do you think your legislative issues have changed through the years, or have they remained pretty stable?

AB: I think as I get more experience and you understand the problems in other areas and among other groups of people that they’ve broadened, because everybody comes here having a little bit of the truth and we only start with our own background, and maybe think we have to do battle with people that don’t come in with the same point of view, and then you find out how this thing is working in their area or their community and how

can you adjust that problem or who's really deserving or needing of the greatest protection in that issue, and it's an educational and broadening experience. So, it's been continually broadened, and, you know, I've learned a lot more. Now, my new job as Controller of Philadelphia, that's a constant experience. I've gone into many communities and neighborhoods that I wasn't previously exposed to, and I understand the unfairnesses and the problems confronting those communities, and we work on problem solving for that, and I'm sure if I was working statewide or, or you're working nationally, this is obviously a phenomenon that occurs that the wider you cast your net, the more permutations you run into, and that's fascinating about the job. It's another reason why term limits is a bad idea.

HM: What do you think the hardest issue you ever had to face in the Legislature was?

AB: Well, I mean, in my first year, I had to deal with the twin issues of voting for the biggest tax increase in state history and opposition to school vouchers, where I was under relentless pressure in my District about why I was opposed to the vouchers. Apparently, that was the majority view in my District, but it was a double assault to have to confront both of those issues simultaneously. In the first six months that I was in office, I got about three thousand letters from voucher advocates. So, you have a new Member who – okay, so he got 62 percent. Some people say, “Well, you’re in pretty good shape, and we’re anticipating a tax vote, and how much is that going to chop off of your support?” And then you’ve got three thousand letters from people who say, “This is really critically important to us, and you’re in opposition to us.” It really does focus you, and, you know,

ultimately, I think that kind of thing strengthened me because I kind of got used to it after a while. I've seen some other Members who seem to get shaken by relatively small amounts of feedback or protestation, and it's always like, "Oh, are you kidding? That's nothing. How about if you add three thousand letters saying you're wrong on an issue that's going to give money to a lot of people in your District at the same time that you're voting for a tax increase that aggravates everybody in the District?" And then you have to survive that, and you have to communicate with your public and educate them as to why and so on. I mean, it's painful at the time, but if you do survive it, it helps educate you, and it strengthens you to be a leader in government, because the business of government is not being popular all the time. It is being able to work on timelines where you're eventually going to get something accomplished, and the inherent nature of it is there's going to be some kind of pain along the way. But there was never a time – I can't remember any year that it was easy for me here. We didn't do the easy. Every year there was choices that were wrenching. Every year there was tremendous political pressure and threats to my political existence, and, you know, that kind-of wears out its welcome pretty quickly.

HM: Well, what kept you coming back, you know?

AB: Well, because I wanted to be in government, and actually, I came to realize that the pain was part of success. That the more effective you are, the more headaches you have, and that there's really no distinction between it. That it would be an easier job if I didn't get into every fight, and if I didn't have an opinion on everything that we weren't trying

to lead on policy issues, it would be easier to just ride the wave, but there wouldn't be much value in that. So, as I said, the partnership with Bill Keller and Tom Tighe, I mean, we were just constantly together, and we were just laughing about things and sharing pain in the foxhole, and it really reinforced a camaraderie and that you felt that what you were doing was important and that it was validated by other people who you had respect for. So, it was kind of raucous fun mixed in with kind of the wrenching aspect of it, and it was still the best job I ever had until that time. I mean, before that I worked in law firms. I worked for people. I worked on things that, that seemed to have very long timelines and that you were really disconnected from cause and effect, and it wasn't always clear that what you were doing was a valuable achievement. Often felt like a spectator to things. Here at least I didn't feel like a spectator. I would have liked to have had the opportunity to be more proactive and less of a spectator, which is kind of what I liked in the transition to my new job, and it's what I think is probably frustrating to so many Legislators, is that first of all they're dealing with a group operation which limits their ability to be proactive, and people are supposed to hurry up and wait, both over the long term and during the Session. Spend most of their time hurrying up and waiting for budget initiatives to be presented to them for ratification or not, and life flies by pretty quickly, and you don't, you don't want time to be wasted on waiting too much.

HM: What would you say your fondest memory of serving in the Pennsylvania House would, would be?

AB: I mean, there's a lot of fond memories. The day that we won and Casey signed the senior tax repeal was a great day. The day that we won on the committee Chairmanship seniority was a great day. There were times when we really felt that justice won out and that I only had a couple jury trials in my life as a lawyer, and each time I did it was an uplifting experience because you'd have a dispirited group of people, maybe without experience, and you would expect them to be biased, and the experience would be that they paid close attention to the case, and really the idea of the jury system really did work in the end. People did sort out the difference between one party and another party, and they came to a reasonable conclusion, and the group of people rose to what was conceived to be the level of jury. That was also true here. Here you would find that as individuals Legislators could be scared, or they could be overly political in their approach, or they, you know, some of them could be craven, but that as a group, they often would end up doing the right thing. The balance of personalities would work in a way that the right thing would be accomplished, and that was, we really felt good about that, because you had a front row seat to see that the system was thought out well and that these institutions could function in a way as advertised, that they can really protect the public and that they can really, you know, give the average person a stake in things. There's so many bad days where you feel that the bad guys are going to win or that nothing matters or that the most cynical explanation is going to win out, so it's the moments when that was overridden that were really fun.

HM: You've listed so many of your accomplishments. What do you think your political legacy will be?

AB: Well, I hope it will be as somebody that was a little bit ahead of his time and saw around corners and was able to identify things that we could do that will move us forward. I think preliminarily to that it will be as somebody who is independent and not afraid to run counter to conventional wisdom and to kind of expose or, you know, demonstrate the true condition of things, true condition of problems.

HM: Do you have any advice that you would like to offer to our new Members?

AB: I think they should really select their friends thoughtfully and support each other emotionally and be thoughtful. I think it would help if they are students of the process and if they know their stuff, they know their subject matter, and they have some personal strength and philosophy because often the intensity – your people can tell when you really believe something, and they'll often give you some leeway and support even if they disagree with you on the outcome of an issue if they have an idea of where your conviction is coming from and they believe that you're honestly responding to that conviction, and that really does involve a lot more work than it looks like. I mean, I think you need to be well read and versed on how these situations are handled by all sorts of governments. I think you have to be intellectually curious about ways to help improve particular areas of life, and I think you have to be, really, a student of psychology and how to be persuasive of people in small groups as well as how to be able retain the confidence of the people that elect you, but you should be responsible for yourself. The worst thing is to allow your decision-making to be stolen from you and to end up having

to be responsible for a stupid decision that somebody else foisted on you, because I think the worst thing when – I don't think you asked me what the worst thing was, but the – I mean, the worst thing for me was after that first tax vote to feel that I had been hoodwinked into voting for something that I never would have supported. In fact, it was misrepresented to us when the staff explained what was in the bill. They did not tell us how it worked. They said it was actually an expansion of the poverty exemption, so to find out that you were misled because you trusted the system, and as a result, you let your people down, and now you have to explain to your people a defense which you don't really believe because you know that you did get hoodwinked is the worst thing. So I would say Members who sacrifice their own independent judgment to just go along with things that after they really thought about it and learned about it they really think it's the wrong thing. I think that's the worst thing they could do.

HM: What do you think went into your decision to run for the current position you hold?

AB: I was always interested in the way systems work and, I mean, the Controller's job gives me an opportunity to analyze a broad range of issues and services and to figure out how to build a better mousetrap, along with the fact that I'm by nature a numbers person. So, the language is very easy for me, and it put me in a position where I didn't have to spend all day persuading fifty or one hundred other people to do something. I was able to take proactive action and take a policy position and then begin pressing in the outside world for it. So, I think it's fascinating because there's everything that the city does, and many things that are done in the country economically are influenced by the pension

funds that I'm a trustee of, so it gives me a limitless range of ways to connect in a productive way. I think that what I learned in the Legislature just honed my education in terms of the various kinds of people in Pennsylvania and the various kind of people in politics and government and what is effective in dealing with them and what's ineffective, and it gave me a grounding in Pennsylvania government, and it was the first opportunity that came for that kind of responsibility. It's been a fact of life both in the Pennsylvania Legislature and in Pennsylvania government and in Philadelphia government that there's been a lot of stability in place for probably the last twenty years. I mean we probably are coming at the end of one of those twenty year cycles, because all of a sudden there are vacancies and suddenly people are in transitional phases in their life and therefore, this kind of opening would occur. One of the things that I told Dwight Evans and Jonathan Sidel [Philadelphia City Controller, 1989-2005] was that I was kind of frustrated that they didn't get their own lives in order quicker because they were kind of holding up the parade for the rest of us. Neither one of them thought it was really funny. *(laugh)*

HM: Well, I appreciate all the time that you took to be with us today. This concludes our interview.

AB: Thank you.

HM: And your insights have been very, very interesting to me and I hope to everyone else. I appreciate it.

AB: Okay, thanks.