Alan Reuther

Q: This is Mike Smith interviewing Alan Reuther at the UAW Washington, DC office on May 7th, 2010. So, Alan, I guess this is the way I start just about every oral history interview. Let's start at the beginning. When were you born and where were you raised?

A: I was born September 26th, 1949 in Detroit, Michigan. And my parents were Roy and Fania Reuther. I grew up in the suburbs of Detroit, Michigan.

Q: May I ask which particular city?

A: The mailing address was Orchard Lake. The school district was Bloomfield Hills. Actually, my parents looked for exactly that situation because they wanted us to get a very good education, but politically, they didn't want the mailing address to be Bloomfield Hills. That's the house we lived in from when I was ten on. Before that we lived at a house in Birmingham. It was actually a small carriage house. But my early years, when I was growing up, until I was ten, our house was very isolated. There were only a few other houses within walking distance. And partly, I think, that was done for security reasons. When I was born, Walter and Victor had just been shot, and so at that time, my dad had a bodyguard. There was a dog pen that

went around three sides of the house. We had a German shepherd dog. It was not a pet. Our front door was thick and had bulletproof glass in the center. And the thing my brother and I remember -- I had an older brother who was three years older.

Q: And what was his name?

A: David. Growing up in that house there were Venetian blinds made out of metal, they were bulletproof Venetian blinds. We both grew up thinking that all Venetian blinds were like that. We didn't realize that that was unusual. As a kid, I was oblivious to what was going on, but it was a very isolating existence. And as I said there were- only a couple other houses within walking distance. I grew up with my brother being my primary playmate. The couple of other kids in the area were my brother's age. So I grew up competing against older kids that way.

Q: I'm curious about the bodyguard. How old were you when you first recognized that there was this person hanging out with your dad? How long did your dad have a bodyguard?

A: He kept the bodyguard until we moved into our new house in, I think, 1960. At that point, he decided that time had passed and he was tired of living that way. The house we moved into in Orchard Lake didn't have all that security, and he stopped having a bodyguard. But, I think from the

time I was five; at that point, I'd heard the stories about shooting and all that. And so I realized it was a bodyguard. But I also vividly remember it. For a young kid, it's like cops and robbers. And my dad was very close obviously to Walter and Victor. Many, many evenings, we would drive out to Walter's place. When I was five, I'd see Walter. I would go bang, bang, bang, and pretend like I was shooting him. Now I think about. Jesus Christ. But, for a little kid? So, that was my sense of it at the time. I don't think I really appreciated what was going on.

Q: Was it a bodyguard 24 hours a day?

A: No, I think he left in the evening, but would come and pick up my father and then would be with him throughout the workday. I think the sense was probably once he got home and was inside this fortress that he was safe.

Q: Right. That is an experience that most of us cannot relate to.

A: The other thing about growing up. After we moved to Orchard Lake, we were in a very conservative area. I remember in high school, a class of 350 kids, there were maybe three Democrats. So I grew up with a very skewed view of most of the world. These were mostly kids whose parents worked for the auto companies or related things. I

had lots of friends and all that, and I was elected senior class president. I didn't have problems as a result of that. But, it was just a very different environment.

Q: I would think so. Of course, there are legendary stories about your dad and his brothers and the way they grew up. For example, there was the famous story that they would practice speeches after their Sunday dinner, that your grandfather Valentine Reuther, who was an uneducated, or I should say, a self-educated man, insisted that they should know the issues of the day, and that they practice their speeches, because Valentine Reuther would ask them to debate points after the dishes were cleared after Sunday dinner. Did you have any kind of similar experience?

A: No. There wasn't that type of formal thing. I think we did have the experience as I said of often going out and being with Walter and his family. And then there were also lots of family trips to go see my grandparents in Wheeling. And growing up, again, as a little kid, I vividly remember my grandfather telling stories, particularly the story about him seeing children going into the mines, and then them bringing the bodies of the dead children out, and going before the legislature in West Virginia to argue for a child labor law, telling the legislature there'll be blood on your hands if you don't do

it. So I think I absorbed a lot of the background from visits with the grandparents and being around Walter and Victor a lot. Take trips to Washington, and be with Victor. But it wasn't the formal thing with my dad of, "OK, stand up and do debates." Part of it was my dad traveled a lot. In fact, I have this memory -- I don't know if this is true -- but I have a memory of one year, my dad looking over the records at tax time or whatever, and realizing he'd been traveling 250 days out of the year. So, I'm sure that had a tremendous impact on my mother. But I actually didn't have the experience of, oh, my dad is going to be at home at night. Actually, growing up, it was my mother who would help me with studies all the time, not my dad.

Q: What was the expectation regarding studies from your parents? Regarding your studies and their expectations?

A: I think early on, the type of kid I was that I was a good student, always getting things completed. So they didn't have to be on me on the studies. I think from early on, [in subjects] like Spanish, I would take flashcards and have my mother quiz me. I remember preparing for exams in high school. I'd study my notes and then I'd give them to my mother and recite them back to her. But it was very much my mother being the hands-on person. Because my dad

was gone so much. And I think partly it was -- I think the central influence for me growing up was being competitive with my older brother. And so I think my being a good child and doing well in school was partly how I was being competitive. I think I mentioned before my brother was my primary playmate. We had a Ping-Pong table in the basement. And we had lots of Ping-Pong games and battles. And one side of our rec room -- this was the new house after I was ten. There were sliding glass doors. And, if I beat my brother in Ping-Pong, he would throw his paddle at me. And so, I'd have this tension: if I dodge the paddle, it's going to hit the window and break it. So I actually learned after I hit the winning shot to run out of the room before he could throw his paddle at me. My brother and I had a close relationship, but it was competitive. And my brother went to the University of Michigan and I followed in his footsteps. In high school, I took a bunch of the classes that he took. At one point, I did debate club because he had done it. So he was certainly a huge influence.

Q: What did your brother do for a career?

A: He went on to be an editor-publisher of children's books, very successful.

Q: He didn't go the labor union route?

A: He did not.

Q: You come from a famous labor family. That's well established. I'd like to ask you about some individual characters, and maybe end up with your dad. But let's start with your mom. Could you tell me a bit about your mother? Her role with your dad, her role with labor?

A: My mother and father met at Brookwood Labor College, in the early '30s, I think. And then my mother was part of the Women's Brigade in Flint, Michigan [during the Flint Sit-down]. Actually got arrested. My mother was born in Russia in a small village near Minsk, and lived through the pogroms. A couple of her oldest brothers escaped from Russia to avoid having to serve in the Czar's army, and made their way to this country. And then, the father died and the rest of the family came over. My mother came through Ellis Island, they arrived the day Harding died [August 2, 1923]. So Ellis Island got shut down, and they had to spend an extra day there.

Q: And how old was she?

A: I think she was nine when they left Russia. And she was, I think, the youngest child in the family. She grew up in the Cleveland area and got involved with the young socialists and went to Brookwood Labor College. Anyway, during the Flint Sit-down strike, she was thrown in jail

with a bunch of the other folks. I remember her talking about how she was worried they were going to deport her. But it didn't happen. The funny thing is my brother and I had always thought, well, OK, this is how my parents met, and they got married. And we knew they didn't get married till right after -- towards the end of World War II, 1945. What was not told to my brother and I, until my brother actually had been married and was getting divorced, we learned that my mother had actually been married to someone else, a person named Hy Fish. During the Flint Sit-down strike, apparently, there was a group house that a whole bunch of folks lived in. My mother, Hy Fish, and my dad were rooming there. So it really makes me wonder what the dynamics were.

Q: To be sure, they met at Brookwood. So, this is prior to the Flint Sit-down?

A: Yes. And Hy Fish was at Brookwood. And my mother married him. And then sometime after Flint, I don't know, late '30s, early '40s, my mother got divorced from Hy Fish, and then, eventually, got married to my father. It always surprised my brother and I that we never learned growing up that this had happened.

Q: When I was writing a biography -- not to digress from your oral history -- writing a biography of Leonard Woodcock, I

discovered that there was an early wife that no one knew about. It happens.

A: Anyway, my parents got married, as I said, right at the end of the war. I think my mother was older then. So it was: let's have kids, like everyone did right after World War II. And, then the other interesting family story. My mother came from a Jewish family. And the story we were told growing up was that my father offered to convert and everyone said, oh, you're so much of a mensch; it's not necessary. Well, the truth of it was my mother's mother was very old at that time, and they just didn't tell her that my mother was marrying a non-Jew. Eventually, she passed away. Anyway, my brother was born in '46 and I was born in '49. I was six weeks premature. And I think I was about three and a half pounds, and spent the first six weeks of my life in an incubator. But my mother stayed home after we were born, as was the norm at the time. I've always thought that had a huge impact on her, because even though she didn't have a lot of formal education, she was pretty sharp. And she wound up -- well, first of all, very isolated during the first ten years of my life in a small house in Birmingham. But, even after we moved to Orchard Lake, as I said, the community we were living in was very conservative. No other Jewish families, no other labor

families. I just think it was probably very, very isolating for her. And I think she was probably frustrated that she didn't have a job. But, she lived her life through my father. It was all about the union. I often tell people my brother and I didn't grow up with any religious training. We didn't go to church, we didn't go to synagogue. In place of that for us was the UAW. That was our religion growing up. And just constantly talking about the labor movement, about politics, especially, because that's the area that my dad wound up in. And my mother was totally involved in that. Talking about it, but not doing it herself anymore. But living it through my father.

Q: She really wasn't active at all?

A: No.

Q: Did she go to events with your father?

A: Yes. Some.

Q: Sort of a UAW wife, if you'll permit?

A: Yes. Yes.

Q: But yet, you did grow up in an environment where issues were talked about at the table or your mom and dad would talk politics with the children.

A: Yeah. All the time. In fact, I remember in early grade school, doing papers. And they would just be spouting the

Democratic line. Why Stevenson was good and Eisenhower was bad. We absorbed all of that. I think the other thing, maybe just to flag; that I've always thought was important for me. Of the four Reuther brothers, I was the youngest of all of their children. And I'm the only one who went on to work for the UAW. And I've always thought that there was some relationship there. But I think I grew up seeing Walter, Victor, my dad, these powerful men. And always talking about very exciting things. Going out to Walter's house and hearing him talk about the latest stories of meeting with the President or meeting with civil rights leaders or international labor leaders. It just always seemed so exciting to me. I think that was the attraction to me. What else could you possibly want to do? It's just the most exciting best thing in the world. I sometimes analogize it to a kid whose father is the priest or minister. And the thing about Walter, especially, was that I think part of his power was he was always so convinced of the righteousness of what he was doing and his point of view. So, there was this moral authority. It wasn't just I'm doing this or that. It's this is the right path, this is social justice. And my dad had the same beliefs, but it wasn't the same sense of total certitude that everything you're doing is 100% right. Seeing more both sides of

things. But Walter was so charismatic. Victor too. Although, in a different arena. I think it was just very, very attractive to me. Everything seemed so exciting about what they were involved in, and having the ability to influence what was happening in the world. I think that's what drew me into wanting to follow in their footsteps.

Q: When did you decide you did want to follow in their footsteps?

A: Growing up, my brother and I often talked about what we called the Debs-Joyce paradox. We thought there were only two possible paths in life, one was to be like Eugene Victor Debs, and become a labor leader slash politician and fight these noble causes. Usually losing or getting put in jail or suffering because of that. But doing the good fight. The other path was to be like James Joyce. You go into exile and you write the great American novel. And after I graduated from college I had three years off between college and law school. And the last year of that I spent a year over in Belgium working for the Belgian Metalworkers. And it was my effort. OK, I'm going to go to Europe and I'm going to be a writer, was really why I was going. But, I was too scared to just go over there without a job. Through Victor I got this internship with the Belgian Metalworkers. Anyway, while I was over there,

I learned that if you're going to be a writer, that involves being by yourself and trying to write, and I didn't like that. My personality was I would always much rather have interactions with people. So I came back from that and decided to go to law school. But I knew from the beginning I didn't want to go out and practice corporate law. I wanted to be a labor lawyer. I also made a decision. For a while I thought about well, should I go into the plant and get seniority and try and have a political future in the union. I ultimately decided against that, because I thought well, then I'll always be measuring myself against my dad and against Walter, and I thought that's not a good thing. I thought it was different enough if I came in as a lawyer. I thought, well, I'll still be doing good by working for the union, but it'll be my own career.

Q: I find that very interesting, that you're actually at this point consciously making decisions in regards to, not only your personal desires, but your family's influence amidst the reality of politics on the ground in the UAW. That even if you're an educated person -- and tell me if I'm wrong -- you go into the plants because you make your bones a certain way for a certain career. Do I have that accurate?

A: Well, the rule in the UAW was that, to have a political career, you had to have seniority in the plant. Now, there were a number of examples of people just going in the plant for 90 days and then being put on staff. But you had to do that at a minimum. You couldn't come in as a lawyer and have a political career. And I talked to Irv Bluestone, I talked to Ken Morris. I had the option of going the route of trying to go in the plant. And then thinking about it, I thought for the reason I said that it just seemed like not having my own life then. It would have been always trying to replicate what Walter did and my dad did. When I was in law school -- I should back up. For a while I thought about: should I get a job with a union and go to law school at night? I actually had an offer from AFSCME [American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees]. This is when Jerry Wurf was running AFSCME. To do that, to be an assistant to him. I would have gone to law school at night. But then, I thought about it, what a long hard slog that would have been, and opted not to do that. Probably would have gotten fired by Jerry Wurf, like everyone else. So it was probably a good thing. But when I was in law school, the first summer I did an internship with the UAW. Second summer, I interned for a labor firm out in Los Angeles, Abe Levy's firm. Abe Levy had been an

old friend of my parents. In fact, he was at their wedding. I loved California, but I realized I liked working for the union directly rather than being in a private firm. And so, it comes near graduation, and I checked back with the UAW. The general counsel at the time, John Fillion, said, "love to have you." I had done good work for them. And I had great grades in law school and all that. But he said we have no openings, sorry. So, I started checking around at other labor organizations. The law firm that did AFSCME's work was run by Abe Zwerdling, who was also an old friend of the family. And so I reached out to him, and after some time, got a call saying come to Washington so we can talk. So clearly, there was a job there for me. This was right before Christmas. I said, I'll be there anyway for the holidays in a couple weeks, why don't I see you then? Great. And a little bit after that, I get a call back from John Fillion saying, "well, turns out there is an opening. And we'll take you on staff." I said, "well, that's great, I'm not sure what I want to do. I have this other offer." And in my own mind at the time, I was thinking, well, maybe it's better to go work for the Zwerdling firm and AFSCME because I won't be just doing UAW. It'll be my own labor path. So I show up at Zwerdling's office in the Christmas holidays

and he says sorry, we don't have anything. Why did you ask me to come here? I didn't have the guts to ask him that directly. So I went to work for the UAW. Years later, I ran into Zwerdling, I think at a UAW convention. And I asked him, finally, what happened? He says, well, what happened, between the first time I talked to you and the second time, the UAW had made an offer. And I'm sure what happened is, when I told Fillion that I had this other offer from AFSCME, somebody from the UAW got on the horn and told him you better withdraw that offer. So, looking back, I don't regret a minute, having gone to work for the UAW. But, it is ironic that my life direction was being influenced by other people deciding where I ought to go.

Q: So it wasn't inevitable that you would go to the UAW. You just knew that labor law was your passion. Before we go too much farther I want to step back to discuss a couple points, but we can stay on this train at the moment. What was your undergraduate degree?

A: History.

Q: History. At the University of Michigan?

A: Yes. Sidney Fine was the main professor. I did my senior thesis on the reaction of blacks to Roosevelt and the New Deal. I got to interview Roy Wilkins and Robert Weaver. Anyway, I enjoyed history. And I thought one path might

have been going on and trying to get a Ph.D. in history. But I decided on law school.

Q: And then, there was the three-year hiatus you mentioned. You also mentioned the Belgian Metalworkers. That was for a year or so. What did you do the two years before that?

A: I was a conscientious objector during the Vietnam War and did alternative service. My brother had been a conscientious --

Q: Were you drafted then?

A: Yes. Well, the whole story is you apply for alternative service and then you're drafted like anyone else, and then, they assign you to do alternative service. And at the time I did it, what they were doing was routinely denying everyone, making you come in for an interview. And I vividly remember going to that interview. Everything was so unfair because it just depended on your local people and whatever. But I'd filed for the status before my lottery number came up. And I think that influenced them. I think the fact that my brother had been a CO before me influenced them. Anyway, they gave me the status. I worked I think for about three months for a hospital in Boston. The rule was that they let you find an acceptable job. This saved the draft board the trouble. But it had to be like a hospital or a nonprofit. And it had to be away from home.

Anyway, after about three months, I transferred down to Washington, D.C., and worked at a place called the International Student House, which is on 18th and R basically, doing janitorial and clerical work for them. That's partly where I also got the desire to eventually go over to Belgium, because I saw the foreign students living here and I really wanted to get the experience myself of actually living in another country as opposed to just going over for a summer European tour type thing. After I'd been working there, I don't know, maybe a year and a half, one day in the mail I got a notice that there'd been a court case that had been brought by the ACLU, unbeknownst to me, saying that they had illegally drafted about 2,000 COs. This was the time when Nixon was calling for a moratorium on the draft, to defuse political pressure. But they didn't stop calling COs. And I just happened to fall in one of those things. So, the notice from the draft board said the court says you don't have to serve anymore. That's what ended my service, although I kept working at the student house till the end of the year until the Belgian thing got lined up.

Q: That is interesting. Were there any notable activities or influences or events while you were in Belgium that maybe shaped some of your future thinking?

A: Well yeah. It was a profound experience to live there. One thing, I'd only studied French for a very short time. Actually in school I'd always done Spanish. So, I took one year of French before I went over. Anyway, I was a very weak French speaker. And so I had the experience of what it's like to be in a country where you can't speak and you can't communicate that well. Now, by the end of the year, I was pretty good. But I think it's given me more empathy for immigrants in this country now. Just what it's like when people perceive you as not being fluent in the language. It was also just interesting to see the differences in the labor movement, and realizing that the way things are done in the US aren't necessarily the way they're done in other countries. Good and bad. Also I saw the Belgian unions' hostility, for example, to Caterpillar, who they were having a dispute with. And feeling that, but also at the same time, it was a time when there was great unemployment in the US. It's like, well, if you don't want the jobs, we could sure use them back in the United States. So I remember that tug-of-war with my own feelings. I've always felt very good about having that experience. Just giving me a broader perspective on both the labor movement and the world generally.

Q: And then you go to law school in --

A: ’74 to ’77.

Q: And then, it’s into the UAW.

A: I graduated from law school on a Saturday morning and flew off to a [UAW] convention in I guess Long Beach or wherever it was that year, and started [with the UAW] that day.

Q: And you graduated magna cum laude I might add, and was a note and comment editor for the Journal of Law Reform.

A: As an editor, I think that year the journal had three articles on labor law issues. One I wrote and two that I had people I was overseeing write. So, I’m sure people thought gosh there’s an awful strong emphasis on labor topics.

Q: Well, before we get into the specifics of your career in the UAW, I would like to step back to your family life. Again, you come from a highly influential labor family. We talked about your mother a bit. Maybe, before we talk about your father, you could tell me about his brothers that you knew well. You spent a lot of time with these folks. And they had some influence upon you. Let’s start with Victor Reuther.

A: Well, Victor was always the more exotic brother because he’d lived in Europe and he drank wine -- Walter and Roy almost never drank. Victor was just much more -- I don’t know if cosmopolitan is the right word. But when we’d come

on vacations to Washington, we'd get to listen to Victor talk about all the international people he was in contact with, and talking about the British trade union movement or the trip to India. Again, it was opening my eyes to how big the world was. It always seemed so exciting. I often thought Victor was maybe the best speaker of all three brothers. He had this ability to let his emotions come through, even in later years, his ability to go up and down. It wasn't just a harangue when he would speak, it would be very well modulated, great emotion, intensity, and then dropping back. I guess I was always a bit in awe of his ability in that way. But, one other actual memory I have of Victor is when I was at the student house they used to have programs, various speakers, people from embassies and State Department officials. And so one time, I invited Victor to come. He comes into the hall and he goes around and he works the audience before, introducing himself to all these students from different countries, and he was able to speak a word or two of their languages. Most speakers would just come in and be behind the podium. So he 'wowed' everyone that way. And then, in his talks -- most of the speakers would have said the State Department line, and here was Victor with a very much more progressive line. But, pro-American. I remember one of the questions

[he received] was critical of America. And he took issue with the questioner. But I was very, very proud of just how he related to all the foreign students. And then, I remember it was over, and I walked him out, and he just walking down the street by himself. No entourage or anything. The other story, jumping ahead many years -- when would this have been? It must have been 1970. This is when I was in college. I did an internship for Senator Gaylord Nelson. And so, I stayed with Victor and Sophie that summer. I was at their house the night the call came about Walter and May's plane going down. That was the same day as big demonstrations over Nixon's invasion of Cambodia. Victor and Sophie and I and others had been out at the demonstration during the day. In fact, I remember being with Victor as he tried to get behind the podium to ask them to let him read a statement, because the UAW executive board had finally broken with the war and issued a statement condemning the invasion. But, he didn't have the right connections, and they didn't let Victor speak. But anyway, we went back to the house at night. We were expecting some of the demonstrators to come and bunk on the floors of his house. And 10:30, 11:00, whenever it was, I hear the shouting upstairs. Figured it was just Victor and Sophie fighting as they often did. And then, Victor came

down to tell me they'd gotten a call from a reporter about the plane crash. I just remember it was like, oh, my God, the world just changed. How devastated Victor was.

Q: The brothers, from the outside, it appeared that they had a close relationship. And, I can tell you from reviewing the records that they sure did a lot of activities together, living in Detroit, especially Victor and Walter. Victor and Walter went on the huge three-year sojourn in Europe. Your dad went to Brookwood and chose to stay behind. But, it seems like they had a very caring relationship, even if there were intellectual disagreements. Is that fair?

A: Absolutely. And I talked before about our religion was the UAW and my mother living her whole life through the union. And maybe it was because the union was so under attack and assault in the early years that I think it made the whole UAW community just -- they did things together. Our family's best friends were the Bluestones. We would go to the Bluestones to celebrate Passover and the Bluestones would come to our house to trim our Christmas tree. And the Bluestones and Nat Weinberg were the people that my parents socialized with. So it was a small tightly knit group.

Q: Before we discuss Walter, since you brought up Irv, maybe we could speak about him. Please tell me your opinions and

interactions with Irv Bluestone.

A: Well, when I was growing up Irv was the chief of staff to Walter. He had this beautiful voice. It's just -- you always loved listening to him, because he sounded so wise. And, he was such a warm individual. The one event -- and I know this has been written about in books -- was the famous Passover dinner where his son Barry and Leslie Woodcock confronted and engaged in a debate with Walter and the rest of them over the Vietnam War. As I said, we went to the Bluestones for Passover every year. And some of those years, Walter would come with his wife. Barry was at the University of Michigan at the time, involved in SDS, and he was also involved with Leslie Woodcock at the time. So it shows how closely intertwined [UAW leaders were] we all were. But the Passovers were always about social justice. There's a part in the Passover service where there's a story about how the pharaoh would have the Israelites build bricks and they would work pretty hard and then the pharaoh would say, OK, you have to build that many bricks every day. And, at that point, Irv would mumble about Ford's speedup and Walter would say yeah, the Russian version of that situation that they had experienced. We thought that was part of the text of the Passover service. They turned it into it's all about labor struggles. And so, this

particular Passover, at the beginning, Barry and Leslie said, well, "do you mind if we read a poem?" And the poem was an antiwar poem. And that started, as I remember, an hour-long debate about the Vietnam War with Barry and Leslie pleading with Walter to break with Johnson and come out against the war, which he wouldn't do. Well, "Johnson is working on it; he's going to bring it to an end" [Walter said]. And plus, to Walter, LBJ's Great Society was the dream come true of everything they were accomplishing. At that time, I'm in high school, and I'm just in awe that Barry is taking on Walter. He's taking on Walter, my dad, and his own dad. And, going toe-to-toe with them. And I just was, oh, my God, how can you do this? I also often think about poor Zelda sitting there, her holiday dinner being taken over with this debate, with her son challenging her husband's boss. But, I think it also does illustrate how tightly knit the community was.

Q: Well, speak a bit about Walter Reuther. In labor history, one could argue he was the most influential labor leader in American history considering his social agenda, the Vietnam War aside. Perhaps you could speak about having such a famous uncle and your impressions of him?

A: Well, I think I talked before about going out to their house quite often and listening to the stories that he

would tell. And Walter was always like the conductor of the evening.

Q: Was he clearly the leader?

A: Yes. He had to be leading. That's good and bad. As a kid, I was in awe. These great stories. It was all so exciting. But I do think it took the oxygen out of the room for anyone else. Because it was all about the union and all about what Walter was doing. Things that have been written are true. There was this view that it wasn't just about negotiations, it was a social movement, it was about advancing social justice for everyone. And, the labor movement was an instrument for doing that. I was totally enthralled by it as I said.

Q: Well, let's speak a bit, if you don't mind, about your father. The standard interpretation is that your father was a bright man, a committed unionist, and the kinder, gentler Reuther who was in the background and who could smooth over some of the conflicts that arose. Anyway, if you would, I'd really appreciate if you'd give us a rendition of your father, and perhaps, his influence upon you.

A: I think the general description is correct. He was the warmer personality. In the family gatherings, he would be one to make self-deprecating jokes about himself. And he

was also more concerned about other people. Whereas Walter had to be the center of attention, my dad didn't have to be. I remember being with the Bluestone family for example, when we were very little, and the younger daughter was not as pretty as their older daughter. My dad went out of his way to pay special attention to the younger daughter, just because he realized she needed more attention. I have this other memory of coming back with my mom and dad from the airport one day. We wound up sharing a cab with someone else. It turned out to be a person who'd had throat cancer and had the operation. So he was speaking through whatever it was. Basically, when he would speak, it sounded like he was throwing up. And my dad talked to him the whole ride back. After we left, my dad said, "well, I kept talking because I didn't want him to feel bad that no one wanted to talk with him." It was my dad's personality of wanting other people to feel comfortable. My dad's area was the political area. I guess nowadays we would talk about him as the political director. He oversaw the Washington office, but it was the political end as opposed to the lobbying end that he did.

Q: Maybe you could explain the difference at this point.

A: Well, the lobbying end would be actually going up to the Hill talking with members of Congress to advance a bill

this way or that way. And, I think on major issues, my dad would do that. But, I also think he was much more the guy in charge of the overall political effort to get members of Congress elected. And, of course, people, knowing his close relationship with Walter, gave him added influence. I guess one of my earliest memories was at the Democratic convention in 1960, being there at the convention in the stands watching it. And, we'd planned a family vacation coming back. But, my dad was asked by the Kennedys to head-up a voter registration effort. He wasn't the named head. I think there was Congressman Frank Thompson. But, he was the guy behind Thompson who was really doing the work. My dad's contribution was to focus registration efforts in the African American districts, which turned out to be crucial in Illinois and other states. Nowadays that's thought of as, that's routine. But, back then, that was a new strategy that folks hadn't thought about. My dad went on, got later appointed by Kennedy to a commission that looked at the whole registration-voting situation, made a bunch of recommendations. But, that was always a passion in his life. There are a couple stories he always used to tell. He was involved over the years in civil rights struggles a lot. In fact, Walter didn't like to go to funerals, and he often had my dad attend funerals for

him. I remember my dad coming back from the Medgar Evers funeral and talking about the white crowd spitting at him. Using words that he was a traitor: that he was down there showing support. Another story he told, which must have been ’57 or ’58, when they were trying to get civil rights legislation through. Southern senators were blocking it, including LBJ. My dad ran into Bobby Baker, LBJ’s right-hand guy off the Senate floor. And they got into a nasty dispute and, I think, some harsh words were spoken. By the time my dad got back to Detroit, Meany, Dubinsky and, I think, LBJ, had all called Walter demanding that he fire my dad for having gotten into this fight with Bobby Baker. My dad said he walked into Walter’s office and Walter said you’ve been busy. He told what had happened. Walter said, “oh, that’s OK.”

Q: So your dad wasn’t above losing his temper once in a while?

A: Apparently not. The conversation with Bobby Baker was Baker said, “oh, we’re a broad party. We have a lot of different views.” My dad said, “then why are you twisting arms to get our people off of their positions?” I guess it degenerated from there. The other story is the signing of the civil rights bill. LBJ was there with all the pens lined up in front of him. And when he finished signing everyone rushed up, except Bobby Kennedy remained seated,

because it wasn't that long after the assassination [of John Kennedy}. He was still depressed. The story, as my dad told it, was that Sorensen, came over to my dad and said, "This isn't right. Bobby is not going to get any pens. Why don't you take him up there? My dad said, "why me? But he then proceeded to take Bobby Kennedy by the arm and basically dragged him up and Bobby Kennedy is going no, Roy, no. My dad is going, "Make way for the Attorney General." Dragged him up right behind LBJ, and LBJ gives Kennedy a pen and a bunch of pens for his assistants. And then he said, "Anyone else?" And Bobby Kennedy says Mrs. Kennedy, meaning Jacqueline. And LBJ gives him a bunch more. Anyway after that, of course, my dad stepped in and got a pen for himself. One of my prize possessions is that pen there [framed, in Alan Reuther's office]. Another story I remember a lot with my dad was the whole farm worker thing. I think he was the first national labor leader to go out to Delano to support the farm workers and the grape boycott. I know you've probably seen the pictures later of me and Walter dedicating the hall there to my dad. But besides that, my dad also got involved with farm worker struggles in Texas. I think it was in the last year of my dad's life. And apparently one of the farm workers there had been killed by the Texas rangers. And my

dad went down there and wound up speaking on top of a car. Open air speech. It was very moving to him, because he came back and said I haven't done that since Flint. We later got a recording of it after my dad died because the Texas rangers were there tape recording the speech.

Q: It was your father then that really started the liaison or support for the farm workers? Or was this with Walter's approval? Or did your father just --

A: Oh no, it was definitely with Walter's approval. But I think my dad was the guy who actually went out there.

Q: He thought it was a good idea. What influence do you think your father had on Walter? Could anyone influence Walter?

A: Well, I think the stories I've heard are that my dad was the only Reuther who got along with George Meany. And I think that was again partly because his personality was less harsh than Walter's. I also think they realized that in the larger political agenda it was important to work together. I guess I like to think that my dad was able to influence Walter about the need to work together. I do remember in '64, I guess, my dad talking about -- I guess the union made a $1 million contribution to the LBJ campaign. My dad had the check. How it was hard to turn over the check. He'd never had a $1 million check. I also remember the whole question of whether Humphrey was going

to be picked to be the VP candidate. My dad talking about how the LBJ folks were coming around saying, well, give us three names who'll be acceptable. They kept saying back there aren't three names, there's just one name. Because they knew if they gave them three, they'd get the third choice rather than the first. And then, one of the stories I vividly remember with Walter, being at his house one evening, him talking about LBJ calling him up and saying I'll give you six reasons why Humphrey can't be the nominee. ADA background, no war record, he's not Catholic. Walter said give me a few minutes, I'll call you right back. And then he called back and rebutted each of the ones. That's the type of story that made me so enthralled, hearing that type of interacting with LBJ on who's going to be the VP. I remember Walter talking about the'68 convention. Humphrey calling him up about the VP selection. And this is after the riots and everything. Walter saying to him this should be the happiest day of my life, I just want to cry. Because it was a dream come true to have Humphrey nominated.

Q: I can see why those are major influences and heady times. The UAW in the '60s was powerful. And if the President was concerned about what Walter and Roy thought about Hubert Humphrey, and the reasons why and for and against, I should

say, it's got to be pretty heady. What you see of yourself in your father or the influence that he directly had on the way you operate. Is that a fair question?

A: Yeah. I guess I'd say maybe the softness. Seeing more that there may be two sides. Being less abrasive, I guess I like to think that came from him. I think I talked before about my mother and my education and her helping me with that. I think a lot of skills came from her that way. I think one way I'm different than my dad, I think my father, like Victor, had the ability more to let his emotions out speaking, which I think is a tremendous ability. I've never really had that. I think people hearing me speak would say, well, he knows his stuff; he's really organized. But I don't think anyone would describe me as a passionate speaker. So I think my personality is different that way.

Q: As long as we're on this track, if you don't mind me asking about other people who had influence on you, because as you've pointed out to us, you grew up with your parents, your uncles and their friends who operated on the world stage. And not too many of us in America have that kind of influence growing up. And I wonder if there are other particular individuals that you would say had an influence on the way you operate or the philosophy you keep in mind

as you work.

A: I talked before about my brother being a major influence. We were intensely competitive, as I said, but we also remained close and I've always looked to him for advice at different times. One of the things I most remember and thank him for is that I wanted to play basketball in high school. I was on the JV team. My junior year, I went out for the varsity, got cut. And then, I did the debate [team] because my brother had done the debate. Come my senior year, the question was do I make another run at going for the basketball team, or do I do debate, because you couldn't do both. And I talked to one of the teachers I was close to. The advice was, well, you should do debate, because you're going to use those skills the rest of your life, which is true. And then I guess my brother, who was home from Michigan, and so I asked him. And he said you should go out for basketball. You're never going to have another chance to do that in your life, you're going to be doing the debating the rest of your life.

Q: Which was true.

A: And I wanted to do the basketball. He gave me the rationale for why that was the right thing to do. It was the right thing, because that's where my heart was. And I did make the team. I didn't play very much. But I'm

always glad I did that. And at Michigan I was a freshman, he was a senior, and he broke me in. I wound up beginning my sophomore year taking over the house where he had lived with other folks. So I had my place to stay because of him. Advice on courses. Take history of art classes. You'll learn something different. I wound up loving it. Sitting in a classroom looking at slides of pictures seemed like a pretty fun thing. Or his advice during my senior year: take something you would never otherwise take. I took a figure drawing class. So, he was definitely a major influence. The fact that I became a CO probably wouldn't have happened except my brother had already done that. Work wise, I've had two mentors in my career. I started out working in the [UAW] legal department and John Fillion was the general counsel. He was a wonderful man. And I guess I credit him with instilling in me a sense of ethics and integrity as a lawyer. I don't remember the details. But, early on, there was some point where we had to do some affidavit on something. And I wanted to take some shortcut and he was the stickler. No, you can't do that. At that time in the legal department, it wasn't just churning through cases. We were given the freedom to think of doing test cases on different issues -- part of the time, which turned into disasters. But it was really a great time to

be working there as a lawyer. I think I got excellent training, and I'm thankful that he was there to guide me and be supportive. Eventually, I was tired of being in Detroit and I was attracted to politics, and so I asked to transfer to the Washington office. And, he [Fillion] was supportive of that.

Q: This was in 1982, when you transferred to the Washington office?

A: Yes. I remember, after I'd gotten the OK from John Fillion, going to see Doug to ask him about that. And he said, oh God, [Don] Stillman has been in here asking to transfer. And then, I thought, that's the end of it, because Stillman was at a much higher level and a close confidant of Doug's at the time. So it just sat there. And, I didn't know the people in the Washington office then, I just knew I was interested in politics and wanted to transfer. Then, during negotiations, at one point, I was over there with the lawyers, staffing different issues, and Doug called me in and said, OK, we worked it out, and he was going to transfer Stillman and me.

Q: So you've worked with Don Stillman for nearly 30 years?

A: Well, we both came in '82. Don was always in a totally different area, international affairs. When he came it was envisioned that he would be also the liaison to the

Democratic administration. But what happened is we had a bunch of Republican administrations. So that part of the job for many years wasn't there at all. And Don, because of the international affairs stuff and just his own personal desires, basically worked the night shift schedule. So, day-to-day, we actually didn't have that much contact. When I came here, Dick Warden was the legislative director, and he's the other main mentor in my life. Probably in terms of my working career, [he was] the major influence. When I came here for various internal political reasons, I kept the title of associate general counsel. But, I really acted as a lobbyist. Dick pretty quickly began to rely on me a lot and showed me the ropes and showed me how to be a lobbyist. Dick had been on the Hill for Congressman Jim O'Hara. And then he was over at HHS as the top legislative guy under Califano. And then he'd come back to the labor movement and the UAW. So he was just known by everybody. In fact, the early experience with him, at that time they allowed lobbyists to stand right off the House floor. They don't do that anymore. And there was a pecking order. Evy Dubrow had her little chair that the guards let her use. But then, Dick was like the next senior lobbyist and would stand first in line there. And the members would come in, and the members

would stop to talk to him, because they would ask him, "OK what's the procedural situation, what's going on?" It was just fascinating. Everyone knew him. It was great to watch. He began to take me around all the time. He was always much better about that than I have been as director in terms of, hey, why don't you come with me to this meeting. I just had a tremendous education from him. He was a tremendously hard worker. And incorruptible. When he eventually retired, he was showered with offers from the corporate side to go lobby for them. And he didn't take any of it. The other thing, when I first came [to Washington] it was August, and I had all these wool sport coats and suits. And thing about Dick is that he loved hot weather. He didn't use the air conditioning in his car. And so, we'd drive up to the Hill and by the time we got there, I'd just be drenched in sweat. And Dick thought it was great.

Q: And you're a Northern boy.

A: Yeah, my metabolism was different.

Q: Let me ask one other question at this point, and then, maybe we'll take a little break. Being a Reuther and moving into work in the UAW and, as you pointed, out the only Reuther second generation who did move into the world of the UAW, were you treated differently? Let me ask a

more open-ended question. Did being a Reuther, how were you treated?

A: On the Hill, there were obviously a fair number of people who knew the name, made the connection. And so I think it made me more recognizable early on. I think also it was like, oh, there's no question about where my heart lay. Later on, speaking for the union, I think it helped me, gave me maybe more clout than I otherwise would have. With Dick Warden -- I was a very hard worker when I came, and I think I was a big help to him. I know I was, because he had begged for someone to come and help him out, because he was dying from the workload. I knew none of that when I got there -- just myself, I knew I wanted to go to Washington. I wanted to do legislative stuff. And, I guess I was fortunate that, at the same time, he was talking to Doug about really needing some help here. But maybe it also gave him more confidence in using me. Hey, I have a background in the union; I know the union.

Q: I guess I am also curious as to your situation when you first went to Solidarity House, the UAW headquarters. Your first job in '77 – was it, ah, here's a Reuther?

A: Well, two things. Early on in my career in the legal department they started using me on sensitive internal things. One, I remember there was a case of some of our

people involved with CETA contracts. Falsifying people and getting paid for that. And I was the person who went out to investigate. It led to, when we uncovered it, we were able to prove it. Doug Fraser fired the [UAW] rep who was involved. I vividly remember meeting with Doug and the regional director. They had reasons. Oh, if you fire him, that'll be bad. And Doug just cut him off. This guy is guilty of corruption and he's gone. I always tremendously admired Doug for that. But there were a series of things like that. They obviously were using me because they figured, my background, it's sensitive. I finally went to John Fillion and said please, enough. I don't want to do just a diet of this type of thing. But I think that's one way it influenced me. Another thing, early on, one of my jobs was campaign finance. I became the guy in the legal department who advised our CAP reps about campaign law. So early on I gravitated towards the political end of things. Just the whole picture, because it wasn't unanimous 100% admiring. I talked about having flown from my law school graduation out to the convention the first day on the job. So, I get to the hotel and was registering, checking in with the UAW. I run into a guy named Dan Luria, a leftist, who used to be in the research department. And I get introduced to him. And his words to me, which I still

remember, were “Reuther, Reuther blood is poison.”

Q: Damned before you even started.

A: Yes. Well, that’s a different perspective. Not what I expected on my first day with the UAW.

Q: That’s a great story. Well, since we’ve spoken quite a bit about a number of personalities, I think I’d like to continue in that vein. You are in a unique position, if we consider your childhood, that you have worked with every president of the UAW since Walter Reuther. Obviously, your first encounter as a UAW employee was working directly for Doug Fraser. But, you knew Leonard Woodcock. You knew Walter Reuther. And obviously, you knew Reuther better than Woodcock. So we’ve spoken about Walter Reuther. I wonder if we could actually go through the presidents and perhaps some other folks like other union leaders, because you had mentioned Weinberg earlier, Nat Weinberg. So I wondered if maybe we can talk about -- I guess two different shifts. If we could go through the presidents, and, then we’ll step back again and maybe you could talk about other folks you met along the way. So, start with Leonard Woodcock.

A: Well, I probably knew him least of all. My first day on the job was the convention when he retired. So I never really had experience working with Leonard. My knowledge

of him was as a kid seeing him around my uncle and my dad, or seeing him at UAW meetings. But, from what I was told by folks, everyone admired his intellect tremendously. And his dedication. I think he was also very hard-nosed, and could be very profane. I'm told he liked his Scotch an awful lot. And also, mostly stories about him being very much of a loner. Very different from Doug's personality, and the warmth that Doug had.

Q: Well, you began work on the day Doug became president. Well, maybe a couple days' difference.

A: Two days before.

Q: Two days before. Speak about Doug Fraser a bit, please.

A: I already told the story of his firing the staffer who'd been found guilty of corruption. And that strength and integrity always stayed with me. Doug was so good on his feet. So smart. When he would speak, you would see he wouldn't have a text. He spoke from just a handful of notes. But, he was a tremendous speaker. I remember also talking with Don Stillman and our PR guys. Doug would tell a Polish joke at a press conference he was having and get away with it. For him it was sort of authentic. I also remember, and this was as a young lawyer, some dissidents had --

Q: Before we had our technical difficulties, I think the one

story that you told we lost, was speaking about Doug Fraser when you were a young lawyer dealing with a deposition.

A: Yes. There was a case involving a couple of dissident union officials who had actually become the officers in Doug's home local. And, then they were removed for financial improprieties. And they sued. Their lawyer eventually deposed Doug Fraser. I was the UAW attorney assigned to be with him at the deposition. And I was pretty green as a lawyer. And, in the course of the deposition, the other attorney tried to really go far afield. He started asking Doug some sensitive questions about Michigan Democratic Party politics. I was too green to know I should be objecting and stopping the questions. But it turned out I didn't need to, because Doug just said well, I'm not going to answer that. And his authority was so great that the opposing lawyer just accepted that. It was like Doug was being deposed, but he was the judge at the same time.

Q: Well, let's move on to Owen Bieber. You worked with Owen Bieber throughout Owen Bieber's presidency.

A: Well, when I first came to the Washington office, Dick Warden was the legislative director, but I obviously saw Owen come in and testify and all of that. But then, when Dick Warden retired, he urged Owen to make me director,

which he did. So it was Owen who really elevated me to become director, and then who I first worked for as director. And, again, Owen is a strong leader, incorruptible, you always knew he was doing what he thought was best for the membership. Progressive values. I remember him fighting for single payer health care reform when there was a fight within the AFL-CIO, two opposing camps of unions. Owen was one of the leaders fighting for single payer health care reform. There was also the whole South Africa issue, although Don Stillman was more directly involved as our liaison to the African unions and to the whole Free Mandela effort. But, I remember taking Owen to demonstrations at the South African embassy when Owen got arrested. Owen didn't hesitate at all to step up and do that. It's a cause he really believed in. I had a great relationship with Owen of being able to call him directly on any legislative issue and talk it through with him and make my recommendation. Sometimes Owen liked to really chew on things. And he'd chew on them and chew on them and go over it. But, he would eventually get to, OK, here's the decision and give me my marching orders.

Q: He understood the importance of legislative work. And the union was, of course, still well over 1 million members at that point.

A: And he [Bieber] came to Washington quite often, either to testify or to meet with officials in the Clinton administration. And, because we were one of the larger unions, he had influence, was listened to. We probably made an odd couple, because he was so huge, and I was much smaller. One of the traditions in the Washington office is when a president comes in -- at least Dick Warden would do it, and then I followed doing it – we would pick him up at the airport, drive him around. And, at one point, I had a red Trans Am and I remember Owen trying to shoehorn himself into my car. But, Owen never complained about it. One incident I remember in particular. You always remember the meetings you have that start off on the right track and then go in the ditch. And one of the most painful ones -- I can laugh about it now -- as during health care reform, the Clinton effort. Kennedy was trying to move a bill through committee. And it was also when the striker replacement legislation was going on. So Owen came in. And we'd had a full day of meetings with him going around to see cabinet officials and others. But then, the last meeting at night was in Kennedy's hideaway office in the Senate, which is one of the choice hideaways, because of his seniority, it had a beautiful view looking right down towards the monument. We got there before Kennedy. And

I'd been a Kennedy fan going way back. I campaigned for Ted Kennedy for President when he ran. He's always been one of my heroes. And, being in that hideaway, with all the family mementos and pictures, I was just in awe to be there. And so finally Kennedy comes in. Owen has a conversation about where things are at on striker replacements, and that's fine. But then we get to health care reform. We had a problem with the bill that Kennedy was trying to move, because his pay-for in it was to require large employers to pay more. Now I should have realized that that was just what he needed to do to get it through committee. But, I had Owen geared up to say, gee, we don't really want to see that. And this was the time when Mitt Romney was running against Kennedy for Senate. And there was a time when Romney was actually ahead in the polls. Kennedy was under a lot of pressure and health care reform was going badly. Anyway, Owen makes the point about the health care bill, and Kennedy has some answer. And then, I chime in, to counter what Kennedy said. And that happens a couple times. Kennedy gets mad and stands up and says, "Well, if you guys are going to bring down health care reform. and he spirals on and on and on. And then he points at me and says I know what you're trying to do. I'm finished with you. And then he stomps out of the room.

Leaves Owen and us just sitting there with our mouths open. And I'm thinking to myself, oh, my God, what have I done, I've blown up a meeting between my president and Kennedy. Owen just shrugged it off. Whatever. It didn't faze him at all. Which I've always remembered. He didn't leave the meeting and yell at me. He just took it in stride. Didn't faze him one bit. The balance of the story for me was I went back to Kennedy's staff saying what's Kennedy -- did I do something else, what's he referring to. Staff went back and tried to find out. Could never find out any reason for it at all. Some time goes by. I guess the beginning of next Congress there was a whole separate issue on legislation that we thought would allow company-dominated unions. The word comes from Kennedy's staff, senator doesn't feel like he has a good enough handle on the issue, he wants someone from labor to come and explain it to him; he'd like you to come. Me? What?

Q: You thought you were finished.

A: Right. And so I went in there, had the conversation. In retrospect I think maybe that was his way of trying to make up for what had happened.

Q: Maybe a misconception on his part.

A: Well, I think his staff finally just said it's the pressure and the Mitt Romney thing and who knows what the

connections were. Two other incidents. These didn't involve Owen -- just stories of things going badly on the Hill and the aftermath. First one involved Jay Rockefeller. This is when I was a very early staffer here. I accompanied Bill Hoffman, who was the head of our [UAW] Social Security department, to testify at a hearing. And he wound up on a panel with someone from the NFIB and someone else. And we're all testifying on health care reform and should all employers be required to provide it. Of course the NFIB guy was saying no, don't require any employers. And Bill Hoffman's testimony was every single employer should have to. Rockefeller comes in and just tears the heck out of the NFIB guy. Just the most vicious questioning I've ever heard. Your testimony is ridiculous, it's pathetic. But, OK, he's ripping up the business guy. But then he decides, well, he has to be even-handed. So he goes after Bill Hoffman. "How can you say every employer? You've never been to West Virginia." It was very humiliating, and Bill was too stunned to respond. I remember going back afterwards talking to Dick Warden about what do you do when a senator has crossed the line. Well, you can ask to meet with the member of Congress. And so I did. And the word came back. Well, the senator wants to look at the transcript first. They were hoping I'd go

away. But I was young and didn't know any better. So I kept asking. Every week and a half I'd say, "what's happening?" So, finally they set up a meeting for me. And I go in there to his office. He comes out from behind his desk and brings me over to where there's a chair and a couch. Sits down, and does this profuse apology, just up and down. I can't even get a word out. And he's basically done a total mea culpa. I'm thinking to myself I don't want to leave here without having opened my mouth. So all I could think of to say is, the thing was, when you had the remark about have you ever been to West Virginia -- he says oh I know the Reuther -- so I left feeling boy, Rockefeller really cleaned it up. That's pretty good. The next day I get a handwritten note from him. Again apologizing. I thought, boy, that's really something -- the next day I'm attending some Senate campaign committee event, and I'm standing in the ticket line, and turn around, and there's the senator. And he again starts to apologize. And now I'm thinking this guy is a nut. The other story I remember, this was also during health care reform, was with Pete Stark. Nowadays, of course, everyone talks about Pete Stark as being erratic and losing his temper and making inappropriate comments. But back then I didn't realize that. He was just known as a leading health care person.

We had this coalition with employers -- auto, steel employers -- to try and deal with the retiree health legacy issue. And so, I said, well, I'll get a meeting for our coalition with Pete Stark. Which I did. But apparently the message hadn't gotten through to him that there were going to be employers in the meeting, too. And so, he walks into this large group meeting and sees the employers. I think it was recently after NAFTA had happened. And, he just goes after the employers. We try and present our case on the health care issue. Well, you're not going to get that. He just becomes more and more abusive. Finally, he ends the meeting by shouting, "fuck you." And, he stomps out of the room.

Q: Lived up to his reputation.

A: And, of course, after the meeting, all the employer guys are saying to me thanks for setting up that meeting! The other related story made me feel better. This also involves Jay Rockefeller, and the same employer coalition. We finally convince three auto companies and three steel companies to each kick in some money to help pay for ads for health care reform. The UAW had just taken the money that was left over from Mel Glasser's national health care operation, over 1 million bucks, and donated it. We got the auto companies and steel companies to each kick in

$50,000. So it was a total of $300,000. And they trotted their check around the Hill. They showed it to Dingell and others. But, finally, it came that we were all going to go and they would present it to Jay Rockefeller who was heading up the media effort. So, we were in there with Rockefeller and they make their pitch and here's the check. And he says I can't accept this, this is pathetic. You guys should be doing so much more. His staff that are there are saying, take the check and then ask for more money. Which they actually did. And Rockefeller was right. It was a drop in the bucket compared to what the companies spend on other issues. But I always thought only a Rockefeller could turn down a check for $300,000.

Q: Indeed. How about Steve Yokich, the next president you worked for?

A: Steve was the most challenging president for a number of reasons. Steve had a very unpredictable personality. Towards the end of his terms of office, I had another officer say to me, that when Steve would call, they didn't know whether it'd be the good Steve or the bad Steve. Because you didn't know if he'd be nice and deal with you on whatever it was or whether he was calling to yell at you. Actually, that made me feel better because I'd always thought, oh, it's just me that he has it in for. But I

realized that, no, that's his way of dealing with everybody. He actually -- when he soon became president, I met with him, had lunch with him here. He told me a couple stories, one of which I should have paid more attention to. It was a story about how as a young rep he had blown the time limit for reopening a contract. And so, he was trying to think of what to do. The story he told was that he called up the company rep and started yelling at him, "why hadn't they responded to his letter?" He hadn't sent a letter. But, the company guy was so taken aback at being yelled at that he went along with this. And I think that Steve's way of dealing with folks often was that way. Because it was a technique he used to get what he wanted. Anyway, I quickly learned that Steve didn't want to have me come to him directly about legislative stuff as I'd been used to when dealing with Owen. At first, the more he pushed back, the more I tried harder, because I felt like, well, I'm going to him asking for him to make the decision, tell me what to do. But at one point, when the White House raised something, and I called him at home on the weekend, which I had been used to doing with Owen all the time -- I wouldn't abuse it, but if it was something I felt he needed to know, I would do it. And I thought this is the White House, I should let Steve know. And he just started

yelling at me, what am I doing calling him at home, he's in the midst of doing his taxes. And it was going pretty badly between me and him. And then, I was given some advice by someone who knew him pretty well, going way back. The advice was basically don't try to keep going to him, he doesn't want that. Instead, work through his AA, Paul Massaron. I knew Paul going way back. I had a good relationship with him. So, even though it was against my instinct, which was I wanted a direct relationship with the president, instead I did that. And it worked much better. Paul was able to get the issues and to get me an answer. And so that's how it mostly operated. Not exclusively. But mostly. The other thing I learned is that Steve didn't want to come to Washington a lot. In fact, he was critical of Owen as having spent too much time in Washington. Steve didn't want to do that. My own interpretation was that Steve didn't feel comfortable, he felt much more comfortable bargaining with union officials in Michigan politics, but not politics in Washington. And so there were very few times when Yokich came in. Very few meetings on the Hill. Very few times testifying. Other thing I found out is that -- and this happened originally during the transition period between Owen and Steve -- Owen arranged for Steve to come in for a White House event

related to the Partnership for a New Generation Vehicles. And we had a written statement all prepared for Steve to read. It's a Rose Garden event. He's up there with Clinton and Gore and all that. And Steve mangled the statement. I later learned that he just was not good reading from a prepared text. I think he may have been dyslexic, because he'd get things inverted all the time. Steve was a much better speaker just speaking off the hip. When he did, he could be a very powerful speaker. So we learned don't give him a text, just give him talking points or whatever. He'll do much, much better. Maybe it was partly because of that experience that Steve didn't feel comfortable. I think the unfortunate thing was it turned into a seven-year period where the UAW president was not in DC very often. And I think that hurt the union. And obviously, I would try and represent the interests of the union, but it's not the same as having the president come in, versus staffers, whoever they are. Now, just one story on the other side. Steve, as everyone knows, was extremely tough. And it didn't matter who, whether it was a company official or member of Congress. If he didn't want to do something that they wanted him to do, sorry, it wasn't going to happen. I remember at one point John Dingell was trying to get the UAW to support a position that he and the

companies were taking against some clean air legislation. Steve didn't want to do it. Not because of the merits, not because he liked the environmental side. But, because he was in a pissing match with the companies, and so he was trying to send them a message. And, so the word came from Steve -- no, tell Dingell no. Well, Dingell wasn't used to being told no. And he asked Yokich, can I come and speak to the [UAW} Executive Board, and make my pitch? Steve let him do that. Didn't change the results. And, I was glad Steve took that position, on the merits on the issue at the time. Because I thought the auto companies were wrong on that particular issue. But, that took a lot of courage from Steve to --

Q: Buck John Dingell.

A: The other thing, and this has been an ongoing process from my uncle [Walter Reuther] to the present day. Over time, there became less authority with the president and more with regional directors. It was never 100% one way or another, but just over time, things have become a little more decentralized. I remember there was a point -- I'm thinking it was with Dukakis, maybe it was later -- in connection with one of the national conventions. We decided to cut a deal basically with the presidential nominee on certain language in the platform. And then, we

would be OK with it on trade issues. So, we negotiated the deal, with Yokich's blessing. And then, Steve said, "Reuther, you and your staff go to the platform meeting in Cleveland and be there to make sure they do the deal." And so we show up there, and the regional director, Warren Davis, was very much on the other side -- "it's no deal, it's terrible." It was just amazing to me that I'm here on instructions of Steve Yokich, and we've got a director who's not on the same wavelength. It was just very unreal. Another aspect of just Yokich not wanting to come to Washington was not wanting to have anything to do with AFL-CIO executive council meetings. Owen had always participated in the council meetings, had been a major player, for example, in the debate on health care and all that. Steve pretty early on decided he didn't really want to come in for those meetings, whether they were in Washington or down in Florida or wherever they were, and he would always find a reason not to go. It even happened one time he was scheduled to go, got to the airport with wife and other staff, and realized he didn't have his ticket with him, and used that; said well, OK, I guess I can't go. He could have gotten a replacement ticket. And, of course, there'd always be the running down of the AFL, oh, it's not worth the time or whatever. But, I think the UAW's

influence within the labor movement, as well as in Washington, suffered during those years.

Q: We've got a few minutes left, so maybe we could end with a little discussion, if you would of your current boss, Ron Gettelfinger.

A: Well, I'm a big fan of Ron Gettelfinger's. First of all, my relationship with him has been tremendous. It went back to having direct communication with him on any issue: here's my recommendation, get marching orders back right away. In fact, Ron is email-friendly, he would use it, so I could get very quick response back and forth. And, we hit it off. I think Ron had confidence in my recommendations. He couldn't have been more supportive. And, if I'd ask Ron, can you call this member or can you do this meeting, he'd call me back, fill me in. Part of what happened with Steve is the times when he would have some communication, I might not hear about it. But with Ron it was always OK, I followed through, here's what happened, which is huge assistance in terms of doing the job. And it quickly became known that if I was representing a position, I was speaking for Ron on the Hill. And that just was a tremendous help to me. Obviously, we've gone through some hugely difficult times, including the whole bankruptcy situation. The most dramatic event being negotiations with

Senator [Robert] Corker, late at night, when bridge loan legislation was on the Senate floor. I was in direct touch back with Ron about, OK, is this language acceptable, is this not? And finally, Ron making the tough decision that we can't accept what Corker is asking. "Draw the line," which I did. My own view is, but for Ron's efforts regarding the whole bankruptcy and restructuring, we would have lost all three companies. He really saved the domestic industry going forward. So it's been terrible times for the union and the workers. But I think Ron has done a magnificent job.

Q: OK. Due to time, I think we'll end part one of the Alan Reuther interview at this time. Thank you very much.

END OF AUDIO FILE

Q: This is part two of the interview with Alan Reuther. This is Mike Smith interviewing Alan Reuther in the UAW Washington legislative offices on July 4th, 2010.

A: June 4th.

Q: June 4th. I said July. Sorry. Already it's off to a burning start. OK. I think that, in the previous interview, we covered most of your background, your childhood, growing up a Reuther. There was one item you mentioned that you wished to address, and that was the internship with the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights

that you attended. Maybe you could discuss that.

A: In 1964, my dad moved our whole family to Washington, DC, for the summer. While we were there, I basically worked as an unpaid volunteer, an office boy, for the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. And that was right in the midst of the campaign to pass the ’64 Civil Rights Act. And so, I guess that was really my first experience in doing legislative work. And, I just remember being thrilled at the time. It made me feel big and involved and all of that. And, of course, my dad, at the time, was involved in lobbying for the civil rights legislation. And enactment of that was actually one of the brightest spots in his life. He actually got one of the pens that was involved in the signing of the law, and that’s one of the prize possessions I’ve always kept in my office. So, I like to think of my work as dating back to ’64.

Q: Well, it obviously left an impression on you, and it sounds like it’s also a “chip off the old block.” Your dad went to Brookwood, and this is similar. Well, the main theme for today’s interview is your actual work for the UAW since 1983 when you moved to Washington, and then, beginning in 1991, as director. I thought maybe we could start with an explanation of your philosophy on working with Congress and the type of work you do. The philosophy you take to your

work. And, my follow-up question will be on UAW positions and the underlying premise for UAW positions. But, the main point is: what is your philosophy on working with Congress? What has carried you through?

A: Well, I've always been proud to represent the UAW's position to Congress because I think our philosophy has always been: it's not just about the interests of our members, it's part of advocating more broadly for policies that we think benefit the entire public. Health care is an example of that. Minimum wage would be another example. There are many aspects that are involved in the legislative work. Sometimes it's preparing testimony that we deliver ourselves or some of our experts from Detroit would come and deliver. We prepare that. Sending letters up to the Hill to indicate what the position of the union is on various issues. And then, a lot of time meeting with either the members themselves or their staff, both to explain our positions but also to urge the members to side with us. An awful lot of time is spent working with coalition partners, working with other unions, working with outside groups, depending what the issue is. It might be other organizations interested in civil rights; it might be groups interested in health care, whatever it is. But, we've always found that there's strength in having a broad

coalition. So, as much as possible, we try and work in coalition. Sometimes we're with the auto companies, sometimes we had opposing views. So it was really a case-by-case situation. The other aspect is: we've always found that our ability to be successful really depended on our ability to get grassroots pressure. Although I feel we were always pretty well respected on the Hill, ultimately, the members of Congress care about getting reelected. And so, if they were hearing from UAW members back home with calls or meetings or letters reinforcing our message, we would be successful often. But, if we didn't generate that grassroots pressure, we were much less likely to be successful. So, part of our job has always been working very closely with the CAP [Community Action Programs] staff around the country, and regional directors, to try and get that oomph from back home.

Q: How much time do you spend on the Hill?

A: Oh, it'll vary, but there's times when we're up there nonstop, entire working day and late into the evenings. There were times we did all-nighters when legislation was on the floor. There's other times, especially over the years with email and all that coming in, you find sometimes it's easier to communicate with people through email now, rather than trying to get them on the phone. So, a lot of

that can now be done from the office. But, when you really get down to the nitty-gritty on any bill, there's no substitute for either a face-to-face meeting or for a direct phone conversation with members of Congress. Just, for example, take the climax on health care reform this year [2010]; trying to round up the votes in the House, it was making calls directly to members of Congress to have that direct conversation with them.

Q: You've been doing the work for quite a few years, and obviously, email and personal computers have had an impact, I don't know if blogs or Twitter have made much of an impact. What has changed in the way you do business over time?

A: The grassroots component has totally changed. When I first came here, I remember then legislative director, Dick Warden. When he wanted to send out a grassroots alert, he would write it, and then, we basically had to get all the clericals in the building to run off copies, to stuff envelopes, to mail it out. And, there had to be enough lead time, because people wouldn't get that mail for three, four days. Nowadays, I'll draft up what we call an e-wire, an electronic alert, bounce it off the folks in Detroit, get it approved in half an hour, electronically we send it out. And the whole thing is done in an hour. It's just an

amazing difference. And I hope in the future the union does even more in terms of beefing up our capacity to interact with our members electronically. I really think that's an important area that we can develop further.

Q: Has Solidarity House moved in that direction?

A: We've been trying but it's a whole process to make sure you get an e-wire system where you really identify the activists and who sign up to get the alerts, and then making sure that people follow through.

Q: We haven't talked about your specific work yet, so I may be putting the cart before the horse. Of course one of the issues you have to deal with is the changing nature of the Congress, of the Senate and the House, as people move in, as Republicans or Democrats vie for control or gain control. Who in Congress and in the Senate have you really liked working with, and who you think you've really had a good relationship with?

A: Obviously the members of the Michigan congressional delegation have always been especially close to the UAW. John Dingell is a champion throughout his career on auto issues and many, many other issues. Representative Sander Levin extremely important on the Ways and Means Committee, a longtime friend of the UAW. In the Senate, Carl Levin for many years. The importance of the Michigan delegation,

with the tremendous seniority and committee chairs and all of that, has always been very helpful to the UAW. Over the years, we had a great relationship with Senator Ted Kennedy. Obviously, he was a great champion on many, many issues. But, the reach of the UAW -- we had friends throughout the country. Part of the job has always been, as new members are elected to Congress, getting to know the new members. At the very beginning of every Congress, we try and schedule courtesy calls with the new members, because they may know our people back in the states who helped get them elected, but then we have to introduce ourselves here in the Washington office. And then try and develop the relationship. Just one example: Representative Betty Sutton of Ohio, who's, I guess, now in her second term and is clearly a rising star. From the very beginning, after she was sworn in, it was apparent she was bright, aggressive -- great on all the issues. So, we moved quickly to introduce ourselves, and then to start working with her on a variety of issues. And, this past year, it led to the enactment of the Cash for Clunkers legislation that she was the champion of. So you try and pretty quickly learn who are the members who are bright, have the respect of their colleagues, and therefore, would be effective in getting things done, as opposed to those

members who just like to issue press releases but the follow-through isn't really there.

Q: Of course, anyone who's read the papers over the last few years in Michigan knows that the UAW has lost a tremendous number of members. I assume this has affected your work. What would you have to say about that?

A: Absolutely. As plants have closed around the country, members [of Congress] who no longer have auto plants aren't as responsive anymore on auto issues. And, it really just shows that members will respond if they have UAW members in their states or districts, constituents who vote for them or against them. But, once you lose that, in some cases you still will have a relationship with the member. They may still be interested in getting financial support. But, it's not the same thing as having a plant that may have 2,000, 3,000, 4,000 people. So, as our numbers have shrunk, sure, our influence has been reduced.

Q: Well, you have a number of areas for which you've been responsible for as director. I thought maybe we could run through a few of them. And please lead on, because a lot of this overlaps, and you know the intricacies of it. But, to begin with, what about the CAFE laws and the UAW positions on those? Or please start where you think is appropriate.

A: That's one area where there's been a very significant change in the last few years. If you go back historically, even dating back to when Dick Warden was heading up our office, the UAW generally joined with the auto companies in opposing legislation to increase the CAFE standards. Our position was not exactly the same as the auto companies. Companies tended to not want to see anything. In contrast, we said, we're for CAFE. We can support reasonable increases. But, we never thought the actual proposals were reasonable. One of the most important reasons was for many, many years the proposals were always to have a flat mpg [miles per gallon] number, increase the CAFE standard for all the companies to X mpg. And, we always thought that type of proposal discriminated against the big three because they were full-line manufacturers producing lots of trucks, unlike Honda or some of the others that were more focused on the smaller end of the market. So, because we never thought the proposals were actually fair, we wound up working with the companies to oppose them. For many years, we were quite successful. In 2007, there was a significant change politically and the proponents of having higher fuel economy standards were basically successful in getting legislation that led to the 2007 energy law. I think there were a number of factors. Partly was what you mentioned

before, the reduced numbers of our members. And I think that meant reduced clout for us and the auto companies. Nancy Pelosi being Speaker of the House and from California, she was a strong proponent of tough fuel economy standards. But, even more important than all of that, there was a whole group of people we refer to as energy security hawks who really became convinced that it was in our national security interest to have higher fuel economy standards so we'd be less dependent on oil from the Middle East. And, just to use one example of a member who was influenced by that. Senator Barbara Mikulski, great longtime friend of the UAW. She had been with us in previous years in opposing higher fuel economy standards. I remember her saying that she told her environmental friends that she was green, but she was industrial green. But, she changed in 2007, and it was because of the concerns about energy security.

Q: Of course, this is in the midst of all the turmoil in the Middle East where the oil comes from.

A: So the impetus was there, the votes were there to have higher fuel economy standards. But, the other equally important thing that happened in 2007 is the structure of the CAFE standard was changed. The people who were pushing higher standards recognized that it was important to modify

the law so that it wasn't a flat mpg standard for all companies. Instead, it would basically reflect the product mix of each company. And that made the standard much fairer. We no longer could say, oh, it's an unfair structure. And also in the final law that was passed, we were able to get our anti-backsliding protection included, which was designed to protect small car production in the United States. So, the final law that emerged in 2007 had higher standards, but it also basically eliminated a lot of the structural problems that we had always had with CAFE. It was now fair to all companies, protected small car production. It recognized the difference between cars and trucks. And I think what that really did is it changed the whole debate going forward. We don't have to argue about those issues anymore. The new structure also made it impossible for the companies to game the differences between cars and trucks. There's complicated reasons why that's the case. But, historically, the companies had tried to have some of their cars classified as trucks, and vice versa, to game the standards. In the new structure, you can't do that anymore. All of that is good. So, because of all that, the Obama administration came in and we were suddenly faced with a new debate. OK, California, others, wanted a more stringent standard even than what was

passed in 2007. And yeah, the companies wanted something not quite so stringent. But, we didn't have all these other disputes over the structure. Our emphasis shifted to, well, OK, we understand all these environmental reasons and energy security reasons for higher standards. Give us the resources to help the companies meet those standards and link it to domestic production of the vehicles. And, so our focus really shifted. The other thing that was included in the 2007 energy legislation was the Section 136 program to provide funds for encouraging companies to invest in domestic production of the advanced technology vehicles, the hybrids, plug-ins, etc. And really, ever since then, most of our focus has been on trying to get funding for that program, trying to make sure that any climate change legislation continues that forward and provides funds for it. I'm sure going forward there'll continue to be the pushing and tugging between the environmental groups in California and the companies over how fast can we move forward. But, it's clear the trend is going to be moving forward. I think the union's focus going forward will be, OK, let's let the experts decide how much and how quickly we can actually move forward technologically, but our focus will continue to be let's make sure that these new vehicles of the future are built

here. That enables us politically to actually have a coalition with the environmental groups, and I think that's great politics; I think it's great on the substance.

Q: And you remind me of a national position that's out there, that Detroit, the Big Three, have sandbagged on technology for years and years, and that it wasn't so much that they couldn't develop the technology or did not have it, they were just reluctant because they were making more money off SUVs. The other side of the coin is that it takes a long time to develop adequate technology. I wonder if you have some comments on that perspective?

A: There's no question the companies wanted to make whatever was making them the most money. And, for a period of time, they were making huge profits on pickups and SUVs. And, I guess I would say in defense of the companies, no one held a gun to the head of consumers to buy those vehicles. Gas was cheap, credit was easy, and people were going and saying, yeah, I want those bigger vehicles. At the end of the day, the companies will produce whatever the customers want to buy. But, there's the larger social interest of what do we need to do on climate change, what do we need to do in terms of energy security? And that's why the UAW has always said, we support CAFE, let's find a reasonable path going forward. And that will require the companies to

change the vehicles they make. I think it's very clear the future going forward is electrification of vehicles. And that's a profound change. But, it doesn't have to be bad for the industry. Very recently, the UAW teamed up with the National Resources Defense Council and Center for American Progress to do a study that basically said higher fuel economy standards can actually create jobs because all these new components that you have to put in the vehicles, the hybrid systems, for example, take a lot of labor to produce. But, of course, the issue for us is: are those jobs going to be here in America or overseas? And that's why we want the targeted government assistance tied to making the stuff in this country.

Q: Coming from Michigan, of course, we watch this legislation very closely. And, one of the encouraging recent programs are the high tech businesses that have gone to Michigan to make such things terms as batteries. To say nothing of the wind energy start-ups and other things. I wondered if you were involved with that?

A: Well, that's part of our whole effort in the energy bill, to make sure that there's the funding to help produce the advanced vehicles. Some of it goes into R&D. But we're also very interested in actual production of these things. And we've been pushing the Obama administration now in

deciding who they're going to give grants to, to pay attention to auto communities where there've been closed facilities. And we think it makes a lot of sense to try and direct the new investment into those communities that have been hit hard, maybe have plants that are sitting idle, and try and get companies to start back up. The whole situation with Fisker taking over the GM plant in Delaware is a good example. And now more recently even with Tesla agreeing to reopen the NUMMI facility. And we think that type of approach really makes a lot of sense. So we're hoping to have even more of that going forward.

Q: Do you have any predictions on the future regarding this?

A: Well, I guess I'm optimistic. I think eventually our nation will have to go forward with climate change legislation, and I think that's going to spur investment in a variety of areas. And I think we're going to be successful in getting an auto component to that. So the electrification of vehicles is going to come. I think we can do it the right way so that we actually stimulate auto jobs in this country.

Q: Has the Obama administration been receptive to the UAW on this issue?

A: Absolutely. And they've been a supporter of the Section 136 program. They've been supportive of our efforts to

get, in effect, a continuation of that program as part of any climate change legislation. So we've been pleased with the position of the administration on this.

Q: OK. Is there anything else we should wrap up on that part of your work?

A: We've pretty much covered it.

Q: We covered it? OK. It is important work. And I know we had the uniform federal standards in 2009. Things have changed a bit there. Well, one of the things you've worked with quite a bit is trade. And, of course, one of the contentious issues, still contentious, depending on who you speak to, was the NAFTA, signed in 1992, and ratified in 1994. Were you involved with the NAFTA struggle?

A: Yes, very much. The NAFTA struggle really had two phases. The first phase was they had to pass fast-track authority to consider that. And many people in the labor movement and our allies realized that fast-track was crucial to passing any type of trade deal. Once fast track is in place, it's very difficult to stop any trade deal because it's just an up or down vote, and you can't have any amendments, and a limited time period, no filibuster. So, we and other unions mounted a major effort to try and stop fast track. My memory is that it actually happened under the first President Bush. But, I also remember going with

UAW president Owen Bieber to meet one on one with the Democratic leader in the House, Dick Gephardt, to try and get him to come out against fast-track. Other union presidents lobbied him, too. And, he basically refused to do that. At the time, he had a rationale that, oh, even if there's fast track, the House, under its rules, can still decide not to go forward. And that's the line he used. And, really, his decision to back fast track made the difference in fast track getting approved. Well, our fears turned out to be correct when President Clinton came in. He backed NAFTA, and because it was subject to fast track, the odds were stacked against us. And, we did this all-out campaign against it along with the rest of the labor movement. I remember one of the things at the end that swung the balance in favor of the President was they convinced Representative Esteban Torres to back the deal. Part of it was having these side agreements on workers' rights. I think there was also this -- I think the term was NADBank [North American Development Bank]. It was supposed to be a bank to provide development funds along border areas. This was a real blow to the UAW because Esteban Torres had been a former UAW staff member, a close ally. I think what was really going on, though, was in the Hispanic communities in Texas, California, etc. There were

mixed feelings about the NAFTA agreement. And so, I think Representative Torres and other Hispanic members were feeling cross pressures, and I think that influenced them. Anyway, we lost the vote. I remember during the debate we said there's going to be all these terrible consequences in autos. The other side said, oh, no, it'll be great for autos because Mexico has all these barriers to US autos and the US market is already open. So, we're just going to get rid of the Mexican barriers, and that'll be great for us. And, we said, that's crazy. This'll be a green light for companies to shift production to Mexico. And, of course, our fears turned out to be absolutely correct. There's been a huge movement of auto production, not only by the big three but also by foreign companies, to set up shops in Mexico. And that same debate has always been repeated in subsequent debates over like China PNTR, and other trade deals. The argument from the free traders is always, oh, the other markets are closed and we're getting rid of their barriers. It'll be great for us. And we always say, no, this is about where the companies are going to locate the work, and we'll get the short end of the stick. Anyway, our fears turned out to be correct. The side agreements on worker rights proved meaningless. Our auto trade deficit with Mexico skyrocketed as more and more plants were set up

there. I think the NADBank turned out to be not what was promised. It is one of the disheartening things to me. Right after we lost the vote on NAFTA, within the labor movement, the UAW and the other unions that had been deeply involved wanted to say, OK, this was a litmus test vote. The labor movement should not support anyone who was wrong. And, I learned my first lesson sitting around the table looking at the affiliates. A lot of affiliates who had said, oh yeah, we're with you, we oppose NAFTA, but came time to want to hold members accountable, said well, no, we won't go along with that because we have our own parochial interests. The Letter Carriers [National Association of Letter Carriers] had their postal issues. The building trades had their issues. It really drove home to me how diverse the labor movement is. Something that would be a do-or-die issue, let's say, to industrial unions, is not a do-or-die issue to the other parts of the labor movement. So, the labor movement was not effective holding members accountable on NAFTA. And that same thing has been repeated on a whole range of other issues. Individual unions may decide that they're going to use a particular issue as a litmus test, but the labor movement as a whole finds it very difficult to do that.

Q: Do you think if the vote on NAFTA was held today that you'd have a stronger coalition? 16 years of hindsight, of course, one can predict a lot of things. But, under the same circumstances, and not having it in place for 16 years, do you think labor unions would coalesce better than they have?

A: Oh, I think the dynamic in the labor movement would be the same. Once an administration decides to go forward with any trade deal, and it's under fast-track, looking back over the years, I've realized it's very, very difficult to stop a trade deal. In fact, we've never stopped any trade deal ever. Now, the Korea deal -- they haven't moved forward with yet, because of the opposition we've generated. But, any administration has so many tools they can use to influence members. There's always a group of members [of Congress] that basically will bargain with the administration. Well, if you give me such and such on some other issue, I'll give you my vote on trade. I remember talking with a congressman from Texas on one of the trade bills. He basically said, "My district is very poor." And, if I can get a commitment on funds for this or that, I'm doing what's good for my district. He didn't really care about the larger trade issue or what it might mean for auto jobs. He didn't have any auto jobs in his district.

Q: What do you think the impact of NAFTA has been on the UAW?

A: It's been terrible. We've lost hundreds of thousands of jobs. Other unions, the same thing. There's been a major movement, not only of auto manufacturing but manufacturing generally, to Mexico.

Q: Well, you mentioned the Korea, and then, of course, there is China. Would discuss what's going on with the Korea trade bill?

A: Well, the second Bush administration negotiated a free trade deal with Korea. They basically traded away the auto sector to get things in financial and insurance sectors. On this one, the UAW and some of the auto companies have actually worked together to oppose the Korean trade deal. Our complaint is that it allows Korea to keep their market virtually closed to US-built vehicles, and then, we wind up just giving the Koreans even more access to our market. The independent studies by the International Trade Commission and otherwise bear out our concerns that the Korean trade deal would make our auto deficit with Korea even worse by about $1 billion. So, we just see it as a further threat to auto jobs here, and that's why we've been opposing it. Partly because of our efforts, partly because of problems in other parts of the agreement, Bush wasn't able to move forward with it. And then, with the change in

administration, fortunately, President Obama has indicated that some of the provisions need to be addressed; that it's not acceptable as it is now. Including auto provisions. So far, there's not been any meaningful effort by the Koreans to sit down and renegotiate. So it's an issue that's still in play. But, we continue to monitor it very closely. Our fear would be that they just make some minor tweaks that don't really change it, and then they come forward under fast track again, so we have the same dynamic. It becomes very difficult to stop.

Q: Now as a layperson, it seems to me that during the discussions on NAFTA in the early '90s, there were greater unknowns on how this would affect trade. It seems with Korea when you read Auto News -- which may be a biased paper -- but you read the normal media, the Economist or anything like that, they always point out that Korea has this extremely closed market. And there was a brouhaha a few months ago about this. But yet, the free traders as you say, in Congress just philosophically don't care about that kind of thing? I have a hard time as a layperson grasping why anyone wouldn't see the barriers Koreans have put up, especially after the example of Japan, which may not be quite as strict, but is still the same.

A: Part of it is the philosophical orientation of some members to be for free trade. But, I think the larger issue is that, any trade deal covers a wide range of issues, and for some sectors, some industries, the Korea deal is a good deal. In fact, the proponents of the deal will argue, and this is accurate, that if you look at our overall economy, it's beneficial to the US. And, you go to specific members, for example, someone who represents a district where there's a lot of cattle. They might say, well, we're going to sell a lot more beef to Korea. Or rice farmers. We'll export rice. Or, districts that have a lot of insurance or financial businesses. They'd say, hey, this is a good deal for us. Our firms are going to get more business. And so, it goes back to what I was saying: they may not be that concerned about this as bad for the auto sector. We recognize that in any trade deal, there's a balancing of different interests. You're not going to have a trade agreement where the U.S. wins every single thing. There are always tradeoffs. But, we just think they did a lousy job on autos. And we're out there saying, hey, we want a better deal on this sector. It's not fair what the current conditions are. But, that's where the difficulty comes in lobbying the issue.

Q: It's hard to understand the anti-auto philosophy in the country. Certainly, with the financial crisis we had in 2008, 2009, there are plenty of people around the country have shown that they care about the auto industry. Yet, the two biggest industries in the world, or the most glamorous, or most influential, appear to me to be computers or related paraphernalia and hardware and software, for lack of a better term, and automobiles. Am I describing that accurately?

A: Well, I think animosity towards auto has increased since the bailouts. But, even among people who don't have animosity towards the auto industry, you'll have a large group of members who just say, I hear what you're saying and it may be bad for you, but for my district or my state it's positive. And I'm hearing from constituents who say, this means jobs for our state, so I'm going to vote for it. And then, there's another group of members who don't care that much either way, but maybe trade their votes for some other benefit that the administration might promise them on this or that. Again going back to what was raised before with the smaller numbers. There are a smaller number of plants around the country, so there's not as many places that have a direct stake in the auto issue. So that's made a difference too.

Q: You mentioned China as another issue that you're working on. Perhaps you could give us the general parameters of your work and position on that.

A: Well, the big fight was over granting China Permanent Normal Trade Relations. For a long time, it was every year they had to renew it. It was a big fight. And then, I believe it was the first President Bush who negotiated the deal with -- maybe it was President Clinton. I'm fuzzy on the years. But anyway, it was the deal on China being allowed into the WTO [World Trade Organization] and Permanent Normal Trade Relations. I think a lot of members thought it was a step that needed to be taken because of the importance of China in geo-political terms. But, once again, we said, this is going to be terrible for manufacturing. And, we ran into the same argument of the free traders saying, oh, this will be getting rid of Chinese barriers and our market is already open. So this will be positive. And we said, no, once you have Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China, that's a green light to companies that they can get even lower wages than Mexican wages by shifting production to China. And once again, we were proved to be correct. That's what's happened. The auto trade deficit with China has been steadily growing. The overall trade deficit with China has mushroomed; it's

enormous. And, there's no meaningful worker rights or human rights protection in China. So, we think all our fears have been borne out. One of the most painful things about the whole debate over China PNTR was, at the time, when Representative Sander Levin decided to back the deal. And, that was very influential in providing the votes to get it passed. That really hurt, having one of our staunchest allies from Michigan giving the green light to that. One other trade battle that I remember -- there was a time when the Clinton administration pushed to renew fast-track legislation. We and the broad coalition opposed that, again, because we realized fast track is what greased the skids for more trade deals. And, that's the only time we ever won the trade battle. We were able to ultimately stop the Clinton administration from getting the votes to pass the fast-track renewal. I'm proud of the great lobbying coalition effort we did. But, I realize in retrospect, that the reason we were successful is that Newt Gingrich was sitting there, and he didn't want it to pass, because this was one of his ways of attacking the Democrats. And, what was happening is: every time the administration would twist arms and pick up some Democratic votes, Gingrich would just peel away some Republicans. And, I think, at the time, we had 60 or 70 Republicans who

were prepared to vote against fast track. I think that, at the end, the Clinton vote counters realized that they'd never be able to get 218 votes, because no matter what they did on the Democratic side, Gingrich would just go make sure. And, on none of the other trade votes have we ever had that many Republicans with us. So years later, I realized that it wasn't just our efforts that led to the victory. The other story in connection with that, that I remember, is the story that I often recount when I'm speaking to UAW groups to illustrate how important grassroots communications are. There was a time when the fast track was being considered in the House Ways and Means Committee, and it was going to be very important how many Democrats we could get to oppose it. And there were a number who were undecided, including a congresswoman named Karen Thurman from Florida. I had been in to see her and talk to her a number of times, and she was still on the fence. On the day of the markup in the Ways and Means Committee, I decided to take one last effort and I called up her office and asked to speak to her. Her chief of staff came on the line and said, I'm sorry, the congresswoman can't talk to you now; she's on the other line with President Clinton. And, my heart sank thinking, we're done for, I can't compete with that. And then the

chief of staff for the congresswoman said, don't worry; your retirees have had her phone lines lit up all morning. And, at the end of the day, she voted with us. So that was all because of the grassroots pressure. And I'm sure she was on the line saying to President Clinton, I'm sorry I can't be with you, because I got to go with my constituents on this.

Q: This is tangential, but I have a question. When you call up most congressmen and senators, will they speak with you?

A: It varies. Depends the nature of the issue. A lot of times, they'll have a staffer call back. Or sometimes, if it's a real important issue like on health care reform, what often happens is the staff would say, OK, we'll arrange a time when the congressman will call you back. Congressmen are running around, have so many meetings, it's often difficult to get right through. But, oftentimes, it's OK at such and such time. And, a lot again, will depend on: is there a personal relationship? The last thing on trade is under Speaker [Nancy] Pelosi. There came a time towards the end of the Bush administration when the Bush administration basically tried to ram an extension of the fast-track through. No. It wasn't fast-track. I think it was one of the smaller trade deals. And Speaker Pelosi basically said, well, I decide what the rules of the

House are on any piece. And, she structured a rule that basically negated the fast-track authority for consideration of the trade deal and stopped it from going through. The only reason I bring this up is that it's exactly what Dick Gephardt had said he could do to stop NAFTA, even if there was fast track. But, he didn't do it when NAFTA came up. And years and years later, Speaker Pelosi did use that authority to stop one of the trade deals the Bush administration was trying to push. So I've always wondered, well, if Speaker Pelosi could do it why couldn't Dick Gephardt do it. An interesting historical question.

Q: Right. One might never know. But Dick Gephardt was also considered a friend to the UAW as I recall.

A: He was a great friend. But, I think he had actually mixed feelings on trade issues. He was thought of, in many quarters, as a big opponent of trade, and on labor's side. But, I think he always had his eye on running for President and so I think that made him not want to be known as the person who killed NAFTA. I guess what I'm suggesting is he may have pulled his punches a bit and tried to have it both ways.

Q: Politicians do that, do they?

A: Occasionally.

Q: We talked about trade a bit. How about campaign finance reform? This has been going on in this country since -- according to the sources that I've read -- about 1867 when the first financial reform package went to Congress, as meager as it was at that time. And, of course, finances in campaigns have been an issue since this country was founded. So I know you worked on that some: we've had this big legislation in 2010. So, I wonder if you would address some of your work in campaign finance reform?

A: Well, over the years, even before coming to the Washington office, I've been involved in the area. One of my jobs as a lawyer back in Detroit, when I started with the UAW, was to be expert on campaign finance laws and advise our CAP reps around the country. Then, since coming here to the Washington office, I've been involved in various battles over the years for reform of the campaign finance laws. The UAW has traditionally supported public financing of presidential elections and congressional ones, efforts to try and limit contributions by wealthy individuals, and more disclosure. We supported the McCain-Feingold legislation. The specific issue you mentioned relates to the Citizens United Supreme Court decision. There's actually a long history on that that involves me personally. When I was a young lawyer in the UAW legal

department, just starting out, I think it was in 1978 there was at that time -- the Supreme Court issued a decision in the Bellotti case, which basically, to the surprise of a lot of people, said states cannot prohibit corporations from spending their treasury money on ballot issues. And the rationale of the court for that was: there's no danger of corruption, there's not a candidate there. So there's no reason to prohibit it. At that time in the legal department, we prided ourselves on trying to look to test cases or some cutting-edge legal theories. And so one of my areas was campaign finance. This really sparked my interest and I did this whole analysis of, well, if the court has now said that you can't stop corporations from spending on ballot issues because there's no danger of corruption, the same theory should apply to independent expenditures. Because if they're truly independent of the candidates, there can't be any corruption. And so, I proposed that the UAW should bring a test case to establish the right of unions to spend their treasury funds on independent expenditure campaigns in support of or opposing candidates. I did up this whole analysis, and together with the UAW general counsel, we flew to Washington to meet with the AFL-CIO general counsel to run through our analysis. And the AFL-CIO general counsel, who was named

Larry Gold at the time, said well, your analysis is pretty good. The court might rule in your favor. But, if they rule in favor of unions doing this, they would say corporations could also do it, and corporations have infinitely more treasury money than unions. And so, politically, this wouldn't be good for us. And the UAW general counsel and I said, oh, we hadn't thought of that. You're right. I guess maybe this is not a good test case to bring. So, we shelved the idea. Fast-forward to now, the Citizens United case, all these years later. In fact, the Supreme Court came down for corporations in exactly the same theory I had posited back in 1978, independent expenditures, no danger of corruption; corporations can spend their treasury money. Ironically, one of the things that's changed is that the AFL-CIO filed an amicus brief in the Citizens United case arguing that unions should not be prohibited from using their treasury money for independent expenditure campaigns. And you'd ask, why would they do that? And what's changed over the years is the change in the labor movement and the rise of the public sector unions? At least some of the public sector unions think that, well, whatever happens in the private sector, maybe in the public sector, it's to their advantage to be able to have the flexibility to use the treasury money. And so,

you have a difference of opinion within the labor movement, even on this question now. I'm hopeful that, despite those differences on the law, that the labor movement will in the end be united in supporting this legislation that's now moving, to try and counteract the Citizens United decision by requiring tougher disclosure and a number of other reforms. But, I do feel like it's ironic that, after all these years, unfortunately, the Supreme Court picked up on the theory that I had thought about many years ago.

Q: You were ahead of your time.

A: Unfortunately.

Q: What impact do you think it's actually going to have?

A: Oh, I'm very worried that corporations will funnel millions and millions of dollars to front groups that will engage in all sorts of media campaigns bashing candidates that are more progressive. I think it can have a horrible impact.

Q: There was another thing that I noticed, and I don't know if it had much of an impact, but the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2001.

A: That's the McCain-Feingold.

Q: Were you involved with that?

A: We did support it. One of, I think, a few unions that did. Again, it's part of the tension, especially with some of the public sector unions. We thought again it was more

important to have the limits, even though they might limit unions in some cases; that it was more important to stop the special interest and corporate money. I think part of McCain-Feingold got ruled unconstitutional. And so, at the end of the day, it probably hasn't proved to be that effective.

Q: Seems to me there's quite a bit of press out there that oh this is simply going to open the floodgates for the unions, that union dues shouldn't be spent on this.

A: Well, I think the right wing is trying to say that to counter the efforts to pass the legislation. They're going to try and say it's unfairly structured to benefit unions. But, the truth again is corporations just have infinitely more resources than the labor movement.

Q: You've been involved in a number of activities, so I'm just going through the list here. Health care. You mentioned John Dingell earlier. His father before him and John Dingell, the longest serving congressman, pushed for health care. The UAW has pushed for health care reform for almost its entire existence, but in particular, since the '50s and '60s. So we passed health care in 2010, at least, a version of it. So, I wondered if you could address your role in health care over the years?

A: Well, it's I guess one of the two issues that I've worked on most continuously since I came to Washington. The very first bill I worked on when I came here was legislation to provide health care for unemployed workers. That was '82, '83, we were right in the midst of a recession. Lots of people thrown out of work. And, we worked with Dingell and Henry Waxman to pass the bill through the House of Representatives. It was killed by Bob Dole over in the Senate. Very familiar story. But I really cut my teeth on the whole process of a bill moving all the way through the House. I worked with bringing a UAW member who was laid off to testify at one of the hearings. And then, going forward, I can remember in preparation for the whole Clinton effort that there was first a huge debate within the labor movement over what type of reforms we should push for. UAW was in the camp of the unions pushing for single payer. And, there was another whole camp that didn't want that, especially, a lot of building trades unions. In retrospect, it's ironic. But, it became this major fight within the labor movement over in which way presidents were going to vote and who would have the majority on the [AFL-CIO] Executive Council. And I remember, in the end, John Sweeney was the vote that swung it away from single payer. To me, it all seems ironic now given that Congress wasn't

about to pass a single payer bill. But, anyway, we had the huge effort under President Clinton to pass health care reform. One of the most painful experiences I ever went through. We had such high hopes and there was all the effort into crafting the plan. And then, to see it go down the tubes. I remember I even canceled -- I had a week's vacation scheduled for August at the beach because Congress always adjourns in August, and they didn't that year because they were still trying to get health care reform. It was just agony watching the bill die in the Senate. And then, in the House, they weren't able to get it through some of the key committees. And that was also one of the disheartening things at the time. As much as we were committed to the bill, and working round the clock here -- and the UAW spent a lot of money in support of that effort -- the UAW grassroots pressure was not there. Talking with our folks later, the reaction of many UAW members was: what does this have to do with me, I've got good health care under our contracts. And I think a lot of them got scared by the GOP propaganda, the Harry and Louise ads, and is this going to make things worse for me. And, despite the long history of the UAW being for national health care, when the Clinton effort was made, we didn't have our own membership behind us. At least not aggressively telling

their members you got to vote for this. The other thing I remember about that effort was one small piece of the Clinton plan was dealing with early retirees. It would have been a particular benefit to auto, steel industries that had a lot of legacy costs. And, we worked this great coalition up with the auto companies and steel companies to specifically lobby for that provision. We thought we're so smart, the business-labor, this will really be successful. And we found it was an absolute disaster. Liberal members of Congress looked at it and saw the corporations and said this is terrible; this is just a boondoggle for corporations. Republican members looked at the union part of it and said, we don't want any part of that. It was like the Titanic. It just went down the tubes. I remember vividly taking the coalition in to meet with Representative Pete Stark. Stark had not realized corporations were going to be in there and came in the meeting, and saw the companies, and went berserk and became abusive and wound up swearing at the companies and stomping out. Anyway, it was a lesson to me that sometimes having coalitions like that is not the most effective way. Sometimes you're better just working your own side of the aisle. Anyway, there were efforts at incremental reforms like the SCHIP expansion and all of that. But, obviously, the culmination

was the Obama effort that finally succeeded. This time around, I think UAW members were more engaged. I think one of the impacts of all of a sudden what happened with the auto industry and the restructuring, people realized, hey, our health benefits are not that secure. And so, I think that made a difference in the reaction of our own membership. I'm very proud of the role that President Gettelfinger played within the labor movement. It wasn't clear in the key days at the end that the labor movement would support the bill because some people were upset about the excise tax on health care plans, even though we had been able to moderate it. Other people had other separate concerns. And, as is often the case, when they would have the calls of the Executive Council members, the people who have a complaint sometimes speak up more loudly, even though they may not reflect the broad view. But, President Gettelfinger spoke up very clearly and strongly saying the time has come, we've got to seize this opportunity to pass health care reform. I think it was very helpful in getting the majority saying, yes, the labor movement, the AFL-CIO, is going to go on record urging people to vote for this. And, we contributed a lot of money to the Health Care for American Now coalition that spearheaded the campaign for reform. And, we were involved in the crucial final days

trying to round up the votes in the House. That was an example where we had the list of who were the undecided members, and I set up phone calls with a lot of them, went to visit a lot of them. I even remember a particular meeting and talking with Representative Jim Cooper. The thing about Jim Cooper is he had been a member of Congress during the failed Clinton effort, and been a fairly conservative member. And, he had been a critic of that. We had had great debates then and we were never able to convince him. And then, he got defeated and was absent for a while, but then, he got reelected to a different district. So here, all these years later, he's now once again a member of Congress and we're now faced with the Obama effort. And, meeting with him, talking about we've been through this before and we don't want to go through another failed effort. And, yes, this is an imperfect product, but if we fail and get nothing, everything's going to be worse. It'll be even worse on not having cost containment; it'll be worse on not having coverage. And so, let's get this job done, finally, even though it's not everything he would want or I would want. And to me, it was just an indication of, I guess, two old veterans of the battles and the benefits of wisdom of seeing what's happened in past battles. Anyway, it was a huge thrill for

me getting it passed. And, I went to the event that the White House scheduled at the Armory for all the advocates of health care reform to witness the signing. And, the President coming by later, after the formal White House signing, to talk to folks. All of us in the room there were: we can't believe it's finally happened after all these decades. And, there were so many good friends that I'd worked with over the years, who also dedicated their lives to health care reform. Anyway to me, it's probably the proudest accomplishment of all the years. I feel good in retiring that, well, the year I retire is the year this piece of our dream was finally realized.

Q: Retire on top. As I understand it from your earlier remarks, you've literally been involved with working on health care for about 27 years here since you came in '83.

A: Yes.

Q: So, it's been a consistent thing for 27 years. How do you feel about the new bill?

A: Well, I think it's amazing. We have our work cut out for us ensuring that it gets implemented properly. And there's going to be the attacks from Republicans to try and undermine it. There'll be lots of regulatory battles in the states, but providing coverage to 32 million people, it's incredible. I think long term all the steps to

contain health care costs are going to be critically important. I know a lot of people don't realize it, but in the law, there's all these demonstration projects, pilot programs on how to deliver quality care more efficiently. So we hold down costs. And I think that's going to be crucial going forward. One of the immediate benefits of the law is this Early Retiree Reinsurance Program, which will be very important, I think, for helping to preserve coverage for early retirees. So, insurance market reforms, the whole exchange system that'll be set up in the states, will hopefully provide coverage more efficiently, especially to people who are in the individual market.

Q: The bill must have faced fierce opposition from the insurance companies.

A: Yeah. They led the opposition. The Obama administration did a lot of smart things to try and isolate the insurance industry, and make sure there was the coalition that was needed to pass the legislation. Obviously, the expanded Democratic majorities as a result of the last two election cycles, was crucial, too.

Q: It also seemed, again, as a layperson just reading this all through the papers and whatever media I read, that all of a sudden Obama started digging in on this. Do you have any perspective on what changed in his attitude to make this

happen?

A: Well, I think he was told by Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid that he needed to use the bully pulpit. Without that presidential oomph, you weren't going to be able to get the votes. And then, I think it was WellPoint that did him a favor by all of a sudden announcing they were jacking up their rates an incredible amount. And that, I think, really helped crystallize, or gave the President a point he could talk about to crystallize, what the reform effort was about. I think that really had an impact on the public. And then, I give tremendous credit to Speaker Pelosi. She was really single-minded about we're going to get this done; we're going to find a way to get the votes in the House. Even when people said -- after the Massachusetts special election that deprived us of the 60 votes in the Senate and it became clear the only way forward was this two-step process of having the House pass the Senate comprehensive bill, and then, separately, using budget reconciliation to do a fix-it bill -- it took an enormous effort for the Speaker to persuade the House Democrats to go along with the Senate bill as the first step. But, she was just relentless and persuasive. I think she deserves all the praise for being able to get it done. She's been a very, very strong Speaker. This was an indication of that.

Q: Well, it's a major, major bill for the United States. Many of the pundits believe and many historians that it's the most influential bill since the 1964 Civil Rights Act. What would your position be?

A: I absolutely agree. And then, going back before that, maybe, the Social Security. I think it ranks right up there in that same category. The Civil Rights Act of '64 changed our whole nation and I think the health care bill will have that same impact. Health care has such an important impact on the overall economy, not to mention the well-being of the American public. So, yeah, I think it's enormous.

Q: Another issue of your many would be pensions. You've done some work with pensions.

A: That's the other area where really it started from the time I came to Washington, continuing to today. When I started as a lawyer in Detroit, I also worked a lot on pensions, especially, plant closing situations. This is when the lawyers would get brought in. One of the specific horror stories I remember was Lear Siegler closed its automotive division in Detroit. Even though the parent company Lear Siegler was very profitable, they were able to terminate the pension plan covering the automotive division and just dump it on the PBGC [Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation],

and PBGC didn't guarantee all the benefits. So there were these losses. Now, we sued the company, and through litigation, were able to recoup the pension stuff. But, it was an illustration of some of the abuses that were going on. And so, the very first pension bill I worked on was to reform the whole Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation to change its structure to prevent these types of abuses. And actually at that time a portion of the employer community also wanted reforms because the good employers were worried about irresponsible companies just dumping liabilities on the PBGC and shifting the cost to everyone else. And the interesting thing in that pension effort was that it was the first time we used the budget reconciliation process to short-circuit the normal legislative process. We basically went to the House Labor Committee and said, stick this in your budget reconciliation package and we can zip it through. And that happened, but then, we got involved in a huge jurisdictional fight because the Ways and Means Committee wanted to control it. So, they stuck a competing version in their reconciliation package, and the House actually passed both things at the same time, two contradictory pension bills. Then, we went over to the Senate and were able to get them to act. I always remember that, normally, when you have a fight between the tax

committees and the labor committees, the tax committees always win, because they're just stronger. And, we thought that's what was going to happen again. But, when that conference on the pension legislation came up, it just happened that the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, Dan Rostenkowski, needed something else on a tax bill, and so, he basically backed off on the pension stuff. We were able to get most of our version through and it got enacted in 1986. I felt great at the time, that here's this thing I had worked on that -- I actually brought in a person from the Lear Siegler automotive division, a retiree, to testify about the abuses that had happened. And so, I really felt, boy, we really solved it: we now solved the pension issue for all time. What I didn't realize is every three, four, five years, Congress has always come back and had to do another pension bill on some other aspect. There was a big funding bill that happened, I think, in the early '90s. And then, when the Republicans were in control, they came back with very a draconian pension bill. We had a big fight. And now pending, right now in Congress, is another more minor but a pension funding bill to try and provide some relief. So, I learned it's an example of how issues keep coming back over and over again. The other pension story I remember is when the Republicans were in control.

They were pushing this terribly draconian pension bill. It's after the steel companies and the airline companies dumped their pension liabilities on the PBGC. The Republicans basically hated defined benefit plans so they structured this bill that was so draconian on the funding rules that it'd basically drive companies to get rid of their defined benefit plans. And we tried to fight it. There were also other provisions that limited the benefits that plans could offer that would have basically forced the auto companies to have to freeze their pension plans so that, even though people kept working, they wouldn't have earned any more pension benefits. The Republicans were in control and we kept telling them this makes no sense, this is bad, but they weren't listening to us at all. And, the auto companies didn't want this draconian pension legislation to pass, and they kept saying, well, we'll try and work behind the scenes. They didn't want to offend the Republicans. And so, we kept trying to work with them behind the scenes, and we just got stiffed totally. Finally, we decided, OK, enough of this behind the scenes; we're going to unleash our grassroots. And so, we went to folks at grassroots and said, this pension legislation means your pension plans are going to be frozen. At first, some of our folks didn't believe it. Oh, the Republicans

wouldn't do that to us. We had to get the actual bill language and show our people. When that happened, our people went berserk in the plants. We were passing cell phones down the line, and the calls started pouring into some of these Republican offices. And, all of a sudden, I had Republican members calling me saying, OK, what can we do to fix this? All of a sudden, I got called to a meeting -- myself and the GM lobbyist. I always remember it. With then Republican Majority Leader John Boehner and Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee Bill Thomas to talk about, OK, what do we need to do to fix it? We gave them the fixes that would stop our pension plans from being frozen. They took the fix, and then, we went along with the pension legislation. Again, it was a vivid illustration to me of the power of the grassroots, because before that, our inside the Beltway lobbying wasn't making any difference at all. The other thing I remember -- we then had the struggle with what was happening with the legislation in the Senate. And, it then came down to this House-Senate conference. We still had problems with various pieces of the legislation we were trying to improve. And, the focus of the problem was the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, Bill Thomas, who was notorious for having a hot temper. Everyone went around afraid of him. For some

reason, I was at the UAW convention at the time when this was all happening, and I spent a lot of the time on the phone talking with folks back in Washington. At several points, instead of the companies, it wound up me being the one that had to talk to Bill Thomas. You asked me before: do you get through to members? Well, getting through to the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, usually that doesn't happen; usually you talk to staff. But, what I didn't realize was Bill Thomas had a thing, and he didn't let his staff negotiate for him, he did it himself, and so several times, I'd have to call back to Bill Thomas, and they put me right through to him. And, I'm sitting there on the phone quaking, but I had these direct phone calls with him. And, we're on diametrically opposed ends of the political spectrum. At another point in the conversation, we thought everything was finally worked out and one of the Republican members on the Ways and Means Committee mentions to Bill Thomas, he sees him and says, well, I'm glad it's all been worked out. Bill Thomas didn't like it that he was hearing this from other places and threw a fit. And so, I had another Republican member of Ways and Means calling me up and saying, this is a Bill Thomas management problem, you've got to call Bill Thomas to smooth over the ruffled feathers. I'm thinking, you're asking me to do

this? But, I wound up doing that. Again, they put me right through to him. I remember the last phone conversation I had with him, he basically was trying to chisel me back on certain provisions. And, well, what if we modify this? He was trying to modify it so that it would only protect GM and not Ford. I'm saying we got to be even-handed. And then, I'm trying to say, if you do all this, we'll support the final product. He comes back and he says, oh, I don't want to give you that much to get your support. I'm not going to give you that much. I have to try and say, well, we really want to get there all the way to be supportive. At the end of the day, we got there. But, I'll never forget it. It's like I got in the position of UAW labor lobbyist being the one who's talking to Bill Thomas about it. Not the corporate guys.

Q: The lion tamer.

A: Yeah, it was bizarre.

Q: Of course, you hear especially over the last few years a lot of folks say: just forget about defined benefits, period. Just have everyone contribute to an IRA -- if the company can afford it put a few bucks in with the IRA, OK -- and leave everyone to themselves. What's your position on that?

A: Well, UAW has always been against that because -- and what

happened during the 2008-2009 financial collapse illustrates that. People who thought they were sitting pretty with their 401(k) s and IRAs, all of a sudden weren't anymore. All the experts say a defined benefit plan gives greater retirement security, greater protection. But, clearly, the long-term trend has been away from defined benefits. I think we were fortunate at the UAW that we maintained the pension plans in the auto industry; defined benefit plans. But, in many, many other places, the labor movement has lost them. My fear is that the public sector is where the next battleground is, with a lot of the states trying to get rid of their defined benefit plans. So, it's a continuing struggle.

Q: I'll step back slightly: there was something I was going to mention earlier -- the VEBAs. We've talked a bit about health care, a bit about pensions. This is somewhat in between. I understand that you're not involved in contract negotiations, but were you involved in the 2007 contracts that set-up these VEBAs.

A: Yeah, I was not involved in the direct negotiations, but the whole auto restructuring, obviously, had a mixture of, yes, we renegotiated the contracts with the companies, but it was also with the direct involvement of the Obama administration and congressional leaders, too. During the

whole auto restructuring, there was this huge effort to try and explain to people that, look, the UAW has been giving concessions steadily over the years. 2005, 2007, and now, once again with the auto restructuring. Because there was this myth out there of auto workers being paid $76 an hour. We were deeply involved in preparing the testimony that President Gettelfinger gave twice in the fall of 2008. And those were very, very difficult because the public animosity towards the CEOs just overwhelmed everything. It was very difficult to get people to focus on: what's going to happen to the workers and retirees? And, you had the right-wingers who were all, oh, these autoworkers are overpaid, the retirees are overpaid. So, we were continually fighting that. And, fighting the crowd that just said, let them go down the tubes. It'll be fine. The Japanese transplants can just pick up the slack. And, of course, that all -- it ignored what would happen to the retirees. The retirees would have been hurt the worst. And then, with the ultimate restructuring, the stock going into the VEBAs, then there was this whole other debate. Again, I think a lot of it pushed by the right wing commentators; how it was somehow unfair that a portion of the stock was going to the retirees, and more should have gone to the bondholders, which always blew my mind. Most

of the bondholders were institutional investors. To me, it's just so clear that it's more important to protect retirees who gave their whole life working for a company and who are now totally dependent for health care on the VEBA. It's going to be a big issue going forward to try and make sure in terms of what happens with the VEBA. We're involved right now in trying to make sure that the VEBA participates in this Early Retiree Reinsurance Program that's part of the health care reform law.

Q: I imagine those were heady times for you here during the restructuring, since obviously it couldn't have occurred without the Obama administration's involvement.

A: Well, maybe I should back up from the beginning of the whole --

Q: Right. We segued into the topic.

A: During the early summer of 2008, we started to hear from the companies. And, I guess, they were looking at what was happening to sales; that, oh, my God, they might be in deep trouble. And the initial legislative effort beginning in the fall of 2008 was to pass extra funding for the program that provides grants and loans to the companies if they invest in domestic production of advanced vehicles.

Q: This was under the Bush administration.

A: Right. And, in the past, the companies had always paid lip

service to that, but weren't terribly interested. With the financial crisis, all of a sudden they saw, oh, maybe this could help them get an infusion of money, a backdoor way of having a bridge loan. And, so we had that effort, which ultimately was successful in getting the money. But, it clearly became apparent that that wasn't going to be nearly enough. Then, the push came for, OK, we need a bridge loan. And so, the first step was the hearings, and as I said, it was very frustrating. The main focus seemed to be the hostility towards the CEOs. It was very upsetting to me that, even some of our Democratic friends were more interested in taking potshots at the CEOs, just to do grandstanding, as opposed to it's really important for hundreds of thousands of retirees and workers and communities to get this assistance. So, we got the legislation finally through the House, but in the Senate, it was clear that the Republicans were balking. The climax came when Senator Corker put forward his alternative proposal. I got a call from Majority Leader Reid's people asking, well, is there any basis to negotiate with Corker? We had looked at the Corker amendment, and there were really three components to it. One was, I think, half of the -- maybe it was two thirds -- of the bondholders' claims had to be converted to equity. We were totally fine

with that. The second was on the retiree health piece of it, to convert that to equity. And then, the third piece of it was in the compensation for that: it was needed to go down to the level of the transplants. And, we had problems with that. So, we said to Reid's folks, yeah, we think there's a basis to negotiate. And so, I got called in the middle of the afternoon to go up to the Hill, [Chris] and wound up in a room with Senator Corker and Senator Dodd was there and part of the time Senator [Richard] Durbin and various staffs, to try and negotiate an agreement. It was somewhat galling, though, because the House had already passed a package that the administration had signed off on. So, we felt like, hey, why are Senate Republicans not going along with the Bush administration? But, be that as it may, it was clear Corker was now their point person. One of the interesting things about this negotiating session was that the companies were kept out of the room. So, it's the UAW and Corker. And, in the very first five minutes, I say to Corker, we're fine with the bondholder claims being exchanged for equity. Regarding the second piece on the VEBA, we need clarification. The way your amendment is written it says, every time the companies are required to make a cash payment to the VEBA, at that point in time, they'll convert part of it to stock. Is that what you

really mean, it's not an up-front thing, it's as you go along. He said, yeah, that's what I mean. We said, well, we're fine with that because you just value however much stock you need at the time based on its price, but you're getting the same value. And so, for the two most significant economic things, we really agreed. There needed to be language written up. There were drafting issues. But, there was really no debate over the guts of his proposal. And, all the rest of it was on the third piece of it, which was how our compensation had to be dragged down to the level of the transplants. What we said to him was, look, our contract that we've already negotiated provides for this lower new tier for new hires, who are going to come in now much lower [of a pay rate] than the transplants. So, already this is going to happen. It's just a question of how quickly people are going to be hired and we don't know that. It depends on the economy. And so, it doesn't make sense to say that, by such and such a date, this has to happen. We went round and round and round and, at the end of the day, my memory is: we reached a deal with Corker on a provision that would say there has to be changes, but not specifying a date, just that there need to be changes; that whomever the administration appoints to oversee the restructuring will say are

sufficient. And, if that administrator says it's not the stick would be, the companies would be forced to file for bankruptcy. It's not what Corker wanted. It wasn't a date [that is] certain you're at the transplant level. But, my memory is he said, OK, try that. Well, he took it back to the GOP caucus and my understanding is he didn't try and sell it. And, it got hooted down. The word came back very quickly that they're rejecting the whole thing. And so, we were at a stalemate. And so, [Senator Harry] Reid then just put up what had passed the House, the Republicans blocked it, and that was the end of it. I'll add that during this whole negotiating session with Corker, I was constantly on the phone talking to President Gettelfinger and our general counsel. So, it wasn't just me by myself. This all went till about midnight that night, and it's the most incredible atmosphere I've ever been in because there was such intense focus. At one point, I think, about 8:00 p.m., I stepped out of the room to go down the hall to the bathroom. I didn't realize the media was all camped out. I step out and here's these blinding lights and cameras and all the reporters are yelling at me. I just never experienced anything like that. The other thing was just the worry that well, if this goes down, there's no bridge loans legislatively; this could mean the end of the

companies. Now, in the discussions with President Gettelfinger, he said through some of our contacts, we've received some hints that the Bush administration will not let the companies go down, that they will act on their own with the TARP money. I think that gave us a little bit of encouragement that we didn't have to go along with Corker's original proposal. Corker later said publicly that he felt the signals that the administration sent undermined his attempt to negotiate with us.

Q: Corker came out of nowhere with that. He was not a well-known senator and it appears had not made a name for himself with any other major issue. And, all of a sudden, he comes up with this proposal.

A: Yeah, I think you're right. After the legislation went down, he was on all the talk shows playing it as hard as he could. And, that was very distressing to us. But, yeah, I think he earned a lot of points in the conservative community. He's the guy who took on the UAW. And, when it became clear by the announcement from Treasury that they were going to act to do the bridge loans, Corker, of course, started discussions with them. He eventually got his provisions into the terms for the bridge loans. I remember he called up President Gettelfinger again, because he wanted to try and negotiate further with us. And

President Gettelfinger had me call him back because, by this time, we didn't trust him at all. Because we'd seen how he just ran to the media with his spin on everything. When I talked to Senator Corker on the phone and said I'm returning your call from President Gettelfinger, he didn't want to talk if he couldn't talk directly with Gettelfinger. It just confirmed to me that it was all about him wanting more PR spin.

Q: Grandstanding.

A: So the Bush administration did the bridge loans essentially putting in the Corker terms. So, the Obama administration comes in, and the UAW's original thought was, well, we'll go to the Obama folks and we'll get them to take out these provisions we think are too onerous. That turned out to be a total miscalculation. It became clear pretty early on that the Obama administration didn't think they had any latitude to start monkeying around with the terms of the bridge loans. It also became clear that if anything -- well, as it turned out in the restructuring negotiations with the Obama folks, they wound up setting terms that were even harsher than what Corker had been negotiating for. Now, the industry situation had gotten even worse by that time, but in the end, we became convinced that the guiding point for the Obama folks was they wanted to make

absolutely sure that, if they were going to give more money, that the companies weren't going to fail six months down the road. They were going to be so tough and so austere in what they'd give in the restructuring that the companies would survive, even if auto sales continued along at 10 million units a year. And so, they were even tougher on bondholders, but they were also much tougher on the VEBA. We didn't get stock every time a contribution was due: we got stock up front. And, it was whittled down from the amount that we thought we were entitled to. The active workers had to take further cuts in compensation that's much more drastic. So, I know a lot of the right wing folks like to attack the Obama administration for having favored us in the renegotiations. We don't view it that way at all. They were extremely tough and there was a lot of very hard stuff that we had to accept as part of the restructuring. Having said that, we also realized that, but for that assistance, GM and Chrysler wouldn't be here, and if they had gone down, Ford probably wouldn't be here either. And, more of the suppliers would have gone down the tubes, too. Most of the actual negotiations with the Obama administration on the terms of the new contracts, that was done by President Gettelfinger and our general counsel and others. So, we [UAW Washington Office] weren't

as directly involved in that here in Washington. But, we were involved a lot, then, in explaining what was being done and trying to justify that to people on the Hill and giving talking points and trying to respond to some of the Republican propaganda that was still attacking us.

Q: By all appearances, President Gettelfinger did a fine job of negotiations and presenting the UAW perspective. Would you agree with that?

A: Yeah, I think he did a fantastic job. I think it was the most difficult situation any UAW president has ever faced.

Q: Clearly.

A: And, knowing that there were terrible, terrible things in the new agreements -- benefits being lost, increased risk for the retirees, dozens of plants being closed -- and yet the alternative of losing everything was even worse. And, trying to preserve as much as we could for the existing folks, realizing that going forward new workers, it's a different deal. So, I think he did a magnificent job under incredible pressure. We had some staunch allies on the Hill. John Dingell, Sandy Levin, the Michigan senators. But, it was disheartening to see so many other Democratic friends be more interested in responding to the concerns of auto dealers or concerns of other stakeholders and not so concerned about what was happening to UAW active and

retired members. I think again it goes back to: members respond to what's in their district. And, members that didn't have an auto plant, maybe the only real thing for their district was auto dealers. So, you had all these conflicting interests of different stakeholders.

Q: It appears to me as a historian -- of course, this is very recent history -- that one of the successes in this is that the UAW still retained a good measure of influence within the American automobile industry, influence that could have easily been totally wiped out leaving the UAW without influence. Is that a fair assessment?

A: Yes. As I said, but for the assistance by the Obama administration, GM and Chrysler would have ceased to exist. And, we think that would have dragged Ford down too. So half the UAW would have disappeared.

Q: Which goes back to numbers.

A: So, yeah, I think that the whole future of the union would have been very much called into question. The cuts were painful. The membership losses that were sustained were very painful. But, the union remains. Things are starting to swing back now. I think we're poised to continue the fights going forward. And, I think Ron Gettelfinger can take credit for that. One analogy I use with some folks. The Revolutionary War for the United States, when George

Washington went through Valley Forge and all the setbacks that they suffered, and yet in the end, keeping things together to finally win the victory. I feel in a way that keeping things together so we didn't lose everything so that we kept the companies and we kept the union intact [was similar]. And I think he deserves great credit for that.

Q: Another area that you've been involved with has been Social Security. Perhaps you could address your work with that?

A: Well, once again, one of the very first issues I worked on when I came to Washington was, at that time, the plan to financially put Social Security on a better basis; the whole program that went through in 1983. And the UAW strongly supported the package at that time. Ironically, one of the group of unions that opposed it was the federal employee unions because they brought federal workers all into Social Security. We supported that because we thought -- I say it's ironic because I wound up marrying a woman who now is the lead lobbyist for the federal employee unions. But, the more recent effort on Social Security, of course, was the effort by the Bush administration to privatize the whole system. And that's something we worked very closely with other unions in opposing. I feel proud of the campaign because we were concerned; Republicans

control Congress and the White House, are they just going to roll this through? I think, thanks to our efforts and the grassroots pressure again, we were able to get the public aroused that this was really a threat and would be a bad deal. Of course, the collapse of the stock market, too, I think, exposed the fallacy of the privatizers. I feel the labor movement and the UAW did a great job in being part of the coalition that stopped the privatization efforts. Now, of course, with the whole discussion about deficits, there's going to be another set of battles. People want to try and use the deficit as an excuse to privatize or slash Social Security. I'm sure going forward we'll be involved in trying to prevent that.

Q: And there were talks of course of privatization in this round as well.

A: Right.

Q: Well, another area that you worked with -- well, I'd like to know how closely you worked with, and how the effect has been, with the National Labor Relations Board?

A: Well, the whole area of labor law reform has been a continuing area that we've worked on. I must say it's probably the -- if health care is the area I feel proudest of in terms of our accomplishments, the area of labor law reform is the area I feel I guess the worst about, that

we've never been able to make the type of progress that we hoped for. The first major campaign that I recall was the whole fight over the striker replacement legislation. That's the legislation that would have changed the law to prohibit employers from being able to permanently replace striking workers. It's a weapon that companies have used to really break unions, undermine unions, to dictate collective bargaining terms. And, it was really the UAW and other industrial unions that spearheaded the move to make this a big issue. I remember bringing in a UAW member who had been permanently replaced in a strike to testify at a hearing. It was very moving to me, these people who basically had their lives destroyed by employers using the tactic. There were even some in the labor movement who didn't want to make this a big issue. But, it's something that really resonated with the rank and file. So, we and other industrial unions started a campaign basically. And the AFL-CIO eventually had to get on board. We were able to pass legislation in the House, but again ran into the problem of a Republican filibuster in the Senate. I think there were two separate efforts we made, two successive Congresses. Of course, our hope was with Bill Clinton coming in that he would be able to help swing over the Arkansas senators. That turned out not to be the case

despite the lip service of the administration supporting it. They never twisted arms, or at least, were not effective in twisting their arms. And, we never got their votes. I remember the last time the vote came up in the Senate was during a UAW convention. I actually delayed going out to the UAW convention because of that, because I felt I had to be off the Senate floor. I remember calling back to President Bieber to report that we had lost again. When the news was communicated to the UAW convention, of course, there were lots of groans. I don't regret at all fighting for that cause. In retrospect, I'm not so sure we did the right strategy of when we didn't have the votes by still pushing to have a vote. I remember at the time Senate Democratic leaders saying, you really want us to push it to a vote, because we're going to lose. But we just had gone so far that we felt we want to have people on record. We can't go back to our members and say we never got a vote. So, we got the vote, but that was the nail in the coffin. The issue went away. We couldn't ever come back to it because it was always clear that we didn't have the votes. And, we didn't ever really try and explore well is there a compromise that'll get us the votes. The other major campaign of course has been the campaign for the Employee Free Choice Act, which we spent several years

educating members of Congress about, and then we were able to pass the bill through the House with President Obama and the expanded Democratic majorities coming in after the 2008 elections. On paper, we said, OK, we have an opportunity now, we have a President who'll sign it, and we think we on paper have 60 votes in the Senate. Immediately, we ran into House members saying well, get it through the Senate first, and then bring it [to us], but we don't want to walk the plank if you can't get it through the Senate. And so, there were very intensive efforts to try and nail down the votes in the Senate. Arlen Specter and Blanche Lincoln and some of the others made it clear that they needed modifications. So, there were negotiations going on. And, we were still hopeful that it was going to be a package this time. We'd make some compromises, but we'd nail it down and get it done. Then, the Massachusetts election happened and it was clear we no longer had 60 votes. Once that happened, a number of the conservative Democrats backed up. And so, we're once again faced with: we don't have the votes now. This time, I think, we're smart enough that we're not going to call for a vote until something changes. But, it is very frustrating to see once again on such a crucial issue for the labor movement that we're not able to get the ball over the goal line.

I think going forward we may be looking at: are there some vehicles that we could use where we could circumvent a filibuster? Just like in health care reform, we found a way to get around it. So we may try and explore that. But, it's obviously critically important for the future of the labor movement, our ability to organize new members.

Q: Do you think it can be passed?

A: Not now, but I'm glad the labor movement is not giving up. I think we have to continue to press the administration and Democratic leaders to help us find a way to get this done, that it's not acceptable to do nothing. Going back on the striker replacement, just to put that in a bit of historical context, we went down to defeat in '93. And, that was the same year the NAFTA was passed. I think the combination of the two was -- and health care reform failed. So, the combination of all three of those things I think is what resulted in the election debacle of '94. A lot of people were focused on health care, but for our members, I think they said, we just had this administration do NAFTA to us, this administration didn't get striker replacements passed, and then, maybe they had their mixed feelings about health care. I think a lot of it just led to our base just sitting on its hands and they saw no reason to go to the polls. So, a lot of the writing about

’94 doesn’t talk about striker replacement. But, for our members and a lot of the labor movement, that was very, very important.

Q: What do you think about changes for the NLRB? It was notorious under the Bush administration for not reviewing cases or taking forever to review cases or putting pro-company people on the NLRB.

A: And, you had a whole series of terrible NLRB decisions. Brown University case. Decisions that took away people’s rights to have a union effectively. And, it’s a good example of the difference the election makes. Now, with President Obama, we’ve had two pro-worker people appointed to the board. We’re hoping, that slowly, they’ll start to revisit a lot of the bad Bush decisions and reverse some of them. But it’s going to take a while to undo the damage that the last administration created. We try to use that as an example in talking to our folks about why elections make a difference. There’s a concrete thing. You also see it in a lot of the other appointments to positions in the Labor Department. Having someone in the wage and hour administration who’s serious about enforcing fair labor standards, that’s another example. That’s a whole other area of labor law where we’ve been deeply involved over the years. Under the Republicans, they would push the comp

time legislation, which was a way of undermining overtime protections for workers. And fortunately, we were able to block those efforts. They never succeeded. But, separately, the Bush Labor Department changed the regulations on defining who's eligible for overtime and basically wound up exempting millions of workers. And, we tried to block that in Congress but were not successful. Over the years one, of the issues that's come back repeatedly, is the effort to increase the minimum wage, which Republicans blocked for many, many years while Bush was in power. But, finally, we were able to get an increase passed. I think I've talked before about issues that keep coming back over and over again, and the minimum wage is a good example of that.

Q: Speaking of administrations, much like you've worked through several administrations of the UAW, you've worked through several presidential administrations. You started when Carter was President, but that was at the UAW headquarters. But when you came here in '83 you were working with -- not working with, pointedly -- but within the realm of the Reagan administration. And then, you went through several administrations. What would you say was the most difficult to work with and the best to work with?

A: Well, obviously the brief two years of the Clinton

administration when we had President Clinton and we had control of the House and Senate, that was the high point. And now, with President Obama, the same situation. But, that's the ideal situation where you have friends controlling both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue. Obviously, the absolute worst was when you had the second Bush President and you had Republicans in control of both. That was terrifying because then there was always the fear that there's no ability to stop terribly bad things from happening, the only lever being the filibuster in the Senate. But then, the worry was always: can you keep enough Democrats together to sustain a filibuster? I must say, during all of the '80s, we had Republican Presidents and, for part of the time, we had the Republicans in control of the Senate, although that flipped back and forth. But, we always had the Democratic House. The Democrats had control of the House for so long that there was this attitude that that will always be the case. So, '94 was a huge, huge shock, to wake up with Republicans controlling Congress including the House, realizing that there was no ability in the House to stop anything. We eventually were told by the Democratic staff, look, we'll make a lot of noise, but at the end of the day, you have to realize we will lose every vote in the House. That's just

what happens when you're the minority. There was one point when I used to think about how my dad got to live through President Kennedy and President Johnson and the Great Society. Civil Rights Act and Medicare, Medicaid, all that. And then, I thought, well, my legacy is all these Republican Presidents and Newt Gingrich, and that's what I get to work with. I guess it's made me cherish even more now, with President Obama being in, the things that have happened these first two years, even with the terrible economy and all the problems in auto. So, I tell our folks, we got the stimulus bill passed. Cash for Clunkers enacted. The SCHIP [State Children's Health Insurance Program] expansion. And, the comprehensive health care reform, hate crimes prevention legislation, the Lilly Ledbetter law. It's a pretty impressive list of things that are the law of the land. And, I guess, I have more perspective knowing how difficult it is. Some of these things that were worked on for health care were talked about. Hate crimes prevention legislation I think was an eight-year battle. Lilly Ledbetter took years and years, too. Just makes you realize how special it is. Our founding fathers set up the whole system of government because they distrusted government. So they made it difficult to get things enacted into law. I remember a

similar feeling after the 12 years of Republican Presidents with Reagan and the first Bush, we finally get President Clinton, and very early, I think, within the first six months, we had family and medical leave finally enacted. Motor voter. And, I think the Hatch Act reform. But I remember being in the Rose Garden for the signing of the Family and Medical Leave bill, and a lot of the lobbyists who'd worked on it, saying God, this is what it feels like to actually make it to the finish line. So, I now cherish these moments more.

Q: What would be the one piece of advice regarding your work? I'm sure you could give plenty of advice to me if I was coming in behind you to take your job and I was fresh and I was going to start to work with Congress. What would be the one axiom that you might give me if there is such a thing as just one? Or two?

A: I guess one of the hardest things about being a lobbyist is realizing that people who may be your friends or your enemies on a particular issue, next week or next year, there's going to be another issue, and things may be different. So, just because someone votes against you on one thing, you got to think about you may have to go back to that same person in the near future to ask them for their vote on something else. And so, it's a fine line to

walk on being strong in what you're advocating for and communicating the passion and the importance, and you don't want to convey the impression that we don't really care how you vote: we do care very much. But, to do that in a way that's respectful and thoughtful and that preserves the ability to go back again on the next issue, even if someone hasn't been with you. I told the story about Jim Cooper. Again, conservative member of Congress who we had very difficult battles with, and who wasn't with us when the health care reform went down under Clinton. And yet, I was able to go back to him and have conversations and get his vote in 2010. So, I think that's a thing effective lobbyists do -- the easiest thing in the world is for a lobbyist to just always be critical, here's our position and we're against everyone else. And anything, they're doing is a sellout and not good enough and we're not for it. And, there are some unions where they take that position. I often think, well, they do that so no one can ever criticize them for having done a compromise to get something accomplished. But, when you do that, then you're always outside the legislative process. You're always not satisfied and you're always just attacking folks. I guess at the end of the day, I've always viewed this as we're about trying to get things actually accomplished. And it

may be a half a loaf, but we'll take a half a loaf now and come back later. I guess that's a lesson my uncle and my father taught me about the collective bargaining side. You never get everything you ask for in bargaining, but you get it brick by brick. In that sense, I think the legislative situation is similar, being able to preserve your effectiveness of: you win some, you lose some, you get compromises on a lot of things, and still come back to fight on the next battle.

Q: I was going to ask you a question: what do you think was your greatest achievement? You've answered that. What was your biggest disappointment? You've answered that as well. Is there anything else you'd like to add to the narrative we have so far?

A: No, I think we've covered things pretty thoroughly.

Q: Thank you very much.