

## The Foley Speakership

**Mr. OLESZEK.** It's my pleasure to introduce Jeff Biggs as our moderator for the Foley speakership. Mr. Biggs was a long-time press secretary to Speaker Foley. I want to point out that Mr. Biggs and Speaker Foley co-authored a book on Mr. Foley's career in the House, which I recommend to all of you, entitled *Honor in the House*. It was published in 1999 by the Washington State University Press. Today, Mr. Biggs is the director of the Congressional Fellowship Program of the American Political Science Association {APSA}. With that, let me turn the podium over to Mr. Biggs.

**Mr. BIGGS.** Thank you, Walter. All of us on the podium would like to thank the Carl Albert Center, the McCormick Tribune Foundation, and particularly the Congressional Research Service {CRS} for having sponsored this special day. I would like to extend a special thanks to the Congressional Research Service. For some 50 years, the CRS has helped prepare the journalists, political scientists, RWJ {Robert Wood Johnson} health policy fellows, a Native American Hatfield fellow, domestic and foreign policy specialists from the public service, and international congressional fellows for their 10-month congressional staff assignments on the Hill. This year's 40 APSA congressional fellows are part of the audience today. In fact, I believe that every Member of Congress in the audience today hosted a fellow during their congressional tenure.

Memories are short, and the two commentators on our panel did great honor to the institution of the U.S. House of Representatives during their years in Congress. They deserve more than a cursory introduction. My thanks to Congressional Quarterly's *Politics in America* and National Journal's *The Almanac of American Politics* for their admirable biographies of the Members of Congress. On my left is former Congressman Bill Frenzel. Before arriving in Washington, DC, he was an executive in his family's warehousing business, and served four terms in the Minnesota State legislature. His moderate brand of Republicanism appealed to his Third Congressional District constituents in 1970, and they never tired of it. Over two decades, his Twin City supporters always returned him to office with more than 60 percent of the vote. While he would come to be regarded by his colleagues as one of the intellectual guardians of GOP economic orthodoxy, he maintained his moderate views on many social and foreign policy issues. Over the course of his congressional career, Bill Frenzel became a senior member of the Min-

nesota delegation and emerged as one of the hardest working and most influential Republicans in the House.

Described by *National Journal* as “loud and brainy, partisan and thoughtful,” he put his stamp on every debate in which he participated. With intellectual ability, oratorical skills and the work habits of a true legislator, Bill Frenzel left his mark in both policy and institutional arenas. As the ranking member of the House Administration Committee, he introduced a bill to create the Federal Election Commission in 1974. His interest in congressional ethics led to his participation in writing an ethics code in 1977. On the Ways and Means Committee, he became the Republicans’ leading voice on trade matters and, along with Tom Foley, was an outspoken advocate of free trade.

But if he fared well as a Member of Congress, his party did not. Frustrations began to emerge. He must frequently have recalled 19th century Republican Speaker Thomas Brackett Reed, who was once asked by a Democratic Member, “What is the function of the minority?” “The function of the minority, sir,” the Speaker replied, “is to make a quorum and to draw its pay.” Bill Frenzel’s frustration with what would become the 40-year Democratic majority in the House, from 1954 to 1994, rose to the surface in early 1989 when he threw his political weight behind Representative Newt Gingrich’s effort to vault himself into the Republican leadership. Bill Frenzel nominated Mr. Gingrich to be GOP whip. As a respected senior member of both the Budget and Ways and Means Committees, Frenzel was just the kind of legislatively-oriented, older generation Republican who would have seemed a natural adversary of Mr. Gingrich’s confrontational, partisan style. But support from Members such as Mr. Frenzel went a long way toward explaining Mr. Gingrich’s upset victory. Bill Frenzel was a formidable legislator and advocate during his congressional career in the minority.

He retired in 1991 after 20 years of service. One can only imagine what the talents of this moderate Republican could have achieved in the majority. Bill Frenzel is a guest scholar at the Brookings Institution and, along with Messrs. Fazio and Foley, serves on the American Political Science Association Congressional Fellowship Programs Advisory Committee. I guess that’s my third plug.

Former Congressman Vic Fazio is on my right. As was the case with Speaker Foley and our Republican commentator, Mr. Frenzel, Vic Fazio is one of that unfortunately diminishing breed, an institutionalist in the U.S. House of Representatives. During two decades representing California’s Third Congressional District in the House, he carried an enormous amount of water for his colleagues on both sides of the aisle. He took on responsibility for what most observers would characterize as an insider’s portfolio. He served in what one might regard as the trenches of House politics. He did so without losing sight of how these tasks also served to improve the

operation of the U.S. House of Representatives as the great deliberative body of our Nation. As one of the so-called "college of cardinals," the 13 Appropriations subcommittee chairs, Mr. Fazio chaired the Legislative Branch Subcommittee responsible for such unpleasant housekeeping chores as defending congressional pay raises and congressional office budgets. His willingness to bear those burdens warranted the respect and gratitude of Members from across the ideological spectrum who were glad to have someone else take the heat for what they wanted.

During an era of heightened public antipathy toward the Congress, a phenomenon which seems ever with us, Mr. Fazio added to his burdens when he chaired the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, served as the vice chair, and then chaired the Democratic Caucus. He accepted a position on the House Ethics Committee during the period it reviewed the case of Speaker Wright. In 1989, he co-chaired an ethics task force under Speaker Foley which, among other reforms, eliminated speaking honoraria for the Members of Congress. A strong, unapologetic partisan, these were roles which unquestionably added burdens at home in what was becoming a marginally Republican district.

To the end of his time in the House, Mr. Fazio was outspoken against those Members whose electoral instincts were to vilify the House in order to gain political advantage, particularly incumbents who ran for reelection as purported "outsiders," criticizing the very body in which they served. At the same time, he was sensitive to the public perceptions of Congress and its possible excesses. During the 101st Congress, for example, he pushed for substantial reforms of the congressional franking privilege despite the criticism of his colleagues. He was a politician in the very best sense of the word. For Vic Fazio, there is life after Congress. He is currently a partner at Clark and Weinstock. And, according to his wife Judy, he is overly involved in non-profit and charitable activities.

And now to the subject of this panel: Thomas Stephen Foley. Thomas Foley would never have described himself as the predominant Washington, DC, "type A" personality. He rose to the top of the leadership ladder without displaying the type of vaunted ambition usually associated with such success. Even his first candidacy to represent the voters of eastern Washington's Fifth Congressional District in Congress was reluctantly undertaken at the urging of others. In 1974, he chaired the Democratic Study Group, which served as the strategy and research arm of liberal and moderate Democrats. The next year, he became Agriculture Committee chair under unusual circumstances. His predecessor, the elderly and conservative W.R. Poage of Texas, was targeted for removal by the huge bloc of reform-minded Watergate-baby Democrats. Ever the institutionalist, Foley backed Poage. But when Poage was unseated anyway, the Democratic Caucus turned to Foley and promoted him chairman of the committee.

Foley continued to rise within Democratic ranks. After the 1980 election, the position of Democratic whip opened up. And when Mr. Rostenkowski (D-IL), chief deputy whip and first-in-line, decided to take over the Ways and Means Committee chair, Speaker Tip O'Neill and Majority Leader Jim Wright, both looking for someone with parliamentary skills, chose Foley as the party's whip. When Speaker O'Neill announced his plan to retire at the end of the 99th Congress, there was no guarantee Foley would ascend to the majority leader's spot. A number of Members wanted a more partisan figure. In the end, no challenger to Foley emerged and the same dynamic was there in 1989 when Foley rose without opposition to the speakership.

It sounds like a happily-ever-after story. It wasn't. Not only was Foley the first Speaker from west of the Rocky Mountains, he was a rare Speaker who did not represent a safe seat in his marginally Republican district. The higher his Democratic profile became, the greater his vulnerability. Ultimately, he was the first Speaker defeated for reelection since 1862. Maybe it could have been avoided. But he felt putting your career on the line, and at risk on principled stands, was a test of doing the job right. And he did so in favor of gun control and in opposition to what he viewed as an unconstitutional Washington State term limits referendum. Later, the Supreme Court after the 1994 elections confirmed his view. Foley had built his career and reputation in part on being a facilitator and conciliator with the ability to appreciate opinions on the other side of the aisle, and in part on congressional reform initiatives.

As Speaker, Foley inherited a Democratic Caucus which had gotten too used to big majorities and now struggled to find the discipline to marshal tough votes. In the seventies, he had played a key role in the reforms which opened up the Congress to the press and the public, and challenged the power of committee chairs by making their appointment subject to a secret ballot in the caucus. As Speaker, his reform instinct was called forth to counter what emerged as decades-old institutional abuses, such as the House bank. The abolition of the bank led to the appointment of a House administrator, the elimination of long cherished perks, and the appointment of a bipartisan panel to look at more sweeping reforms. Foley initiated a program under the direction of Representative Martin Frost to provide congressional assistance to the emerging eastern European democracies. Most of these changes remain to this day.

His long-admired bipartisan instinct was newly challenged under the unified government of President Clinton. Foley undertook to pass a legislative agenda, including a budget proposal that failed to receive a single Republican vote, and comprehensive health care reform which ultimately failed to make it to the floor of the House. These brief illustrations highlight the value and importance of the qualities that Foley brought to the House for three decades. He placed a premium on governance following an election,

whether the President be Democratic or Republican. He stressed a legislative search for solutions, rather than the perpetuation of the campaign. He urged a willingness to accept bipartisan compromise. He recognized the international role of the Speaker. These were qualities which remain essential to the institution of the Congress and remain part of his legacy to the speakership of the House.

**Speaker FOLEY.** Thank you, Jeff. I'd like to begin by repeating what others have said about the Congressional Research Service, the Carl Albert Center, and the McCormick Tribune Foundation for their support of this wonderful day for me, and for many others. The day provides a chance to see so many friends and associates of past years, and a chance to reminisce over three or four decades of one's past life. It is a special pleasure for me today to be with Jim and Betty Wright, my predecessor in the Office of the Speaker. And later with Newt Gingrich, my successor. The day prompts many pleasant memories of Carl Albert and Tip O'Neill. I am also delighted to be here with Bob Michel, who was the Republican leader all the time that I was Speaker and a man for whom I have unbounded admiration as a model of congressional and public service. And as Speaker Hastert said today, we all are saddened by your wife's recent death.

Looking back at the time that I first came to Congress, I recall a story I've told before. I hope those who have heard it may forgive me. I joined the Congress in 1964 as a part of the 89th Congress. It was a young and rather large Democratic majority. In those days and today, the parties meet in December to organize their work and to offer newly-elected Members a chance to familiarize themselves with their responsibilities. Speaker John McCormack addressed us newly-elected Members at that 1964 December meeting. He said that the leadership probably would have to make a judgment 2 years later about whether we had been elected seriously by our constituents or by accident. Members are sometimes elected by accident, he said, and we won't really know which you are until you are reelected, if you are. With that warm greeting, we proceeded into the orientation program.

One of the speakers was Michael Kirwan from the State of Ohio, who was a powerful member of the Committee on Appropriations. In fact, he was "Mr. Public Works." You couldn't get a footbridge built in the United States without Mike's approval. He leaned forward to tell us that he wanted to warn us about the single greatest danger that could occur to a new Member of Congress entering his or her congressional service. We leaned forward to hear what this was—an ethical problem or whatever. He said that the danger was thinking for yourselves! Avoid that, he said, at all costs. Avoid thinking for yourselves. You must follow the subcommittee chairman, follow the committee chairman. Support the chairman of the Democratic Caucus.

Follow the majority whip. Support the majority leader. And especially, above all, support, defend and follow the Speaker.

I remember being quite outraged. I had gotten elected as a new Member of Congress, I thought, to make some contribution to my time in public life and perhaps even beyond. And the idea that I should subcontract my judgment to the political leadership of the party was really offensive. And Kirwan went on to say that in his experience, more people had gotten into trouble in the Congress of the United States by thinking for themselves than by stealing money. That unbelievably shocking statement made me truly angry. Later on, it was my opportunity to become a subcommittee chairman, a committee chairman, the chairman of the Democratic Caucus, the Democratic whip, the majority leader under Jim Wright, and, finally, taking the oath of office as Speaker of the House of Representatives. And I recall that as I was taking the oath, the wise words of Mr. Kirwan came back across a generation of time. How right he was!

But fortunately, then and now, Members do think for themselves. And they not only think for themselves on the Republican and the Democratic sides of the aisle, they think for themselves inside each party. I had an opportunity to talk a little bit with Speaker Hastert today at lunch. We both recognize that one of the problems of the speakership is to deal with very strong and powerful voices within one's own party. I came to the speakership of the House as a former committee chairman, but not the most senior of them. Dan Rostenkowski, John Dingell, Jack Brooks and others had been powerful and wonderfully effective legislators and committee chairmen. They had extensive knowledge and experience in their fields. This is true not only with the committee chairmen, but with subcommittee chairmen, who have proliferated dramatically over the years. I think we had something like 160 Democrats in the House of Representatives who were subcommittee chairmen. Sometimes there were conflicting jurisdictions between Appropriations subcommittee chairmen and authorizing committee chairmen or subcommittee chairmen. There is a problem, sometimes, of managing strong, effective, and powerful personalities. That's one of the jobs that I didn't really anticipate when I became Speaker—how much time is required managing jurisdictional disputes and trying to mediate between conflicts of approach. It's the sort of kitchen work, as my former mentor Senator Warren Magnuson spoke of, in terms of the day-to-day work of a Speaker—conciliating, organizing, trying to move the tasks of the Congress forward.

As Speaker Hastert said, I had a particular notion that it was the institutional responsibility of the Speaker, a special obligation, to be absolutely, as far as humanly possible, fair in the judgments made from the chair. The British model, the Westminster model as it's called, takes the Speaker out of all party politics. My first opportunity to meet a British Speaker after I became Speaker was Bernard Wetherow, who moved from the House of

Lords to become the Speaker of the British House of Commons. He resigned even from social clubs that were overly associated with the Conservative Party, so that his absolute impartiality would never be questioned. By the way, Speaker Wetherow asked me what number Speaker I was. I said, "Mr. Speaker, I'm the 49th." He said that he was the 322d. I said, "Sir, that's what we call in the United States a put-down. I'm the 49th, you're the 322d, or whatever." He said, "Well, we started in 1277 or in 1388, depending on how you count the speakerships in the House of Commons in the U.K." And he said, "And 10 of us were beheaded, 2 on the same day when the king was in a particularly unhappy mood." We don't have that problem here, at least physical beheading. We sometimes have political beheading. I know something about political beheading.

But the role of the U.S. Speaker is a combination, as Speaker Hastert said, of the party leader and the impartial British-type judicial Speaker. It's not an easy task. You are pushed by your own party to move legislation forward and you want to do it. You face the problem that sometimes a motion to recommit with instructions if proposed in a certain way may create great problems. There's a tendency, sometimes, to perhaps cut a little too close on what others feel is the absolute right of the minority. Those are tough decisions. I had, however, the great benefit of having an impartial Parliamentarian, who Speaker Hastert also talked about. The two offices that are voted on that are usually without any controversy are the Parliamentarian and the Chaplain. It is important that the rulings of the chair in critical times can be depended upon by both parties.

We had a few occasions when there was an objection to the ruling of the chair, and someone called for a vote on that decision. I don't think any time that happened that Bob Michel didn't support the chair. He felt, I think, that the chair's ruling had been correct and that it should not be the subject of controversy in the House. On the other hand, the price for that support was that, as Speaker, I had to ensure that the rulings are fair so that they can elicit bipartisan support. In many legislatures, appealing the ruling of the chair is a constant event and takes place routinely. I think in 50 years, we may have had a dozen or so formal challenges to the ruling of the chair.

During the time I was Speaker, I served with President George Bush 41, as we now say. President Bush was President for 3 years of my speakership and President Clinton for 2. It was interesting to me that there is a difference in whether you have divided or united government between the congressional leadership and the Presidential leadership. We have had, for most of the period after World War II, divided political responsibility—generally Republican Presidents with Democratic majorities in the Congress and those have a particular dynamic. There is a tendency, frankly, for relations between the Congress and the Presidency to be as good, and in some cases even

better, with divided government. For some, that might come as a surprise. But the fact is that the need to make the system of government work leads to a kind of elaborate, almost diplomatic, sensitivity between the White House and the Congress to the reactions of the other.

In contrast, if there is united government with the White House and Congress under control of one party, Congress expects that the new, let's say, Democratic President is going to solve all the problems that they want to have addressed and they now think it's possible to go forward with a very energetic and effective legislative program. The congressional majority Members expect all those they appointed in their districts to be happy and satisfied with them. At the same time, the President feels that his program should be taken up without much question and enthusiastically passed by his congressional colleagues. The disappointments that are possible on both sides of this united government are great.

During the period of divided government, I was blamed, along with then-Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, for having talked President George H.W. Bush 41 into agreeing to some tax increases. Some attribute his defeat in 1992 to his having allegedly broken his "no new taxes" promise. As I look back on that period, one of the things that I admired most about President Bush was his willingness to confront internal problems in the Republican Party by taking that decision. It was a decision taken along with spending restrictions on the budget. But an agreement on spending cuts and new taxes was obviously going to be a problem for President Bush and it turned out to be.

I used to say, somewhat jokingly, that there are two sins in politics—one is the obvious sin of not keeping your campaign promises. But sometimes I think that's the more venal sin. The sometimes more mortal sin is keeping your campaign promises. If they turn out to be wrong for the country, wrong for the future of the Nation, then I think whether we're in Congress or the White House, we have to reconsider that. I had great respect for President Bush's willingness to take that risk.

When President Clinton came to office, he was the first Democratic President in 12 years. With George Mitchell in the Senate and me in the House, there were many Democrats who wanted to see the new President succeed and wanted to support his major legislative agenda. Looking back on it, I think that perhaps we could have been more supportive of the administration by, once in awhile, being a bit more candid with the President. I think the new administration came in with great enthusiasm, particularly on health care. The White House overstressed the institutional support of the House. We had to decide, for example, whether to put the President's health care reform bill through the established committees of Congress, such as Ways and Means and Commerce, or push the legislation through a task force. The task force idea I rejected. I thought the legislation should go



through the ordinary committee structure. But that required multiple committee referrals.

Eventually, the Congressional Budget Office was overwhelmed by the demands of individual Members to examine the cost of their amendments. The system slowed down and was greeted on the Republican side with a decision to straight-out oppose, rather than just try to modify, the health care bill. We all know the consequence of that—the bill did not proceed through the end of that Congress. I think this was a contributing factor to the country's disillusionment with the Democratic leadership and the 1994 defeat of the majority in Congress. In retrospect, I think we would have been wiser, as Dan Rostenkowski suggested today, with a more incremental approach such as the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill, a step-by-step process, as opposed to trying to achieve everything overnight in the way of health care reform. We might have been more effective and successful.

Tony Coelho gave me good advice one time after he left Congress. He said, "Don't look back and don't regret." I think that's a good rule. You may have made mistakes. There may have been opportunities you didn't fulfill, but you did what you could while you were there.

In the session on Jim Wright, the question arises as to whether it's better to be more assertive or more cautious. If I have a regret, it's probably been on two or three occasions that I wasn't as assertive as I think now perhaps I should have been. But one of the things that I hoped we would see—and I'm disappointed we do not see today—is a continuation of the kind of relationship between the majority and the minority that existed when I was Speaker and Bob Michel was the Republican leader. We met almost every day and the staff certainly met every day. We went back and forth to the other's offices. I always felt that Bob was an extremely effective Republican leader. It was necessary to know exactly where we wanted to go and to see if we could compromise or find an approach that would lead to some accommodation of the issue, rather than a confrontation.

Our efforts in those times were sometimes rewarded with success, such as was the case with most of our party members in different camps on the 1991 Gulf war. Despite those differences, we had a debate which I still think was one of the most thoughtful and impressive that I can recall in the Congress. There was a full discussion of whether the United States should authorize war and give the President authority to enter the war. It's interesting to me that President Bush 41 wanted this vote to come after the election so it would not be politicized. The vote in the present case came before the election. In any event, I'll never forget Bob Michel coming up to the Speaker's chair, where I was sitting, wearing that combat infantryman's badge, which he won so well in World War II. Here was a big tough guy with tears in his eyes. He said, "This is the hardest vote I think I've ever had to cast because I'm putting young men and women at risk and I know

it. But I think it's the right thing to do." He and I voted differently on the bill, but it was a sense of, I think, the mutual respect that Republicans and Democrats throughout the House had with the differing opinions of their colleagues on an issue of enormous importance to the country.

I regret that in recent years there's been a tension between persons, as well as between parties and policies. There was even a civility conference a few years ago at Hershey, Pennsylvania, where Members of both parties came with their families to try and reconcile those harsh personal relationships in the House and try to get a sense of comity and friendship and a common effort.

The House of Representatives is the voice of the American people, the Senate the voice of the States. That's the way we see it in the House. Former Representative Richard Bolling was once accused of making a derogatory comment about the House, saying it was made up of "provincials." He defended his remark by saying that that is what the House was supposed to be. It is intended to be the place where people represent their districts, represent the differences in our country. House Members represent the communities in which they grew up and where they have their primary residence in life. I think Speaker Hastert reflected that again today when he spoke of returning to his district on weekends and his desire to keep always in front of him the origin of his service in the Congress and his speakership.

Former Speaker John McCormack once said another thing that I'll never forget. He said if the day comes when you look up at the Capitol as you come to work in summer, in fall, in rain or in snow, and you are not individually thrilled and heartened by the enormous honor of representing 500,000 or 600,000 people as constituents, and if you don't think that that is something that you should be deeply grateful for—he said quit, just quit. Because if you don't have that sense of thrill, that sense of great honor and opportunity, he said you've stayed too long. I think that's good advice, and I think that those who have had a chance to serve here will look back on that service, regardless of their party, with a sense of first great obligation and thanks to their constituents.

For over 30 years, my constituents sent me to Washington and allowed me to represent them as best I could. Those of us who have held the Office of Speaker have had a second honor bestowed on us. Speakers have that special sense that they have been chosen by their fellow Members—all of them representatives and delegates of a great national constituency. To be elected Speaker is even a greater honor in many respects than being elected to represent a constituency. And whether we have done the job well or less well, whether we have achieved all that we might or not—and none of us achieves everything we wish—I think we can look back on being Speaker as one of the great opportunities and one of the great honors of our lives. And I am happy today, regardless of differences between individuals and

parties and personalities, to join with others who have had that experience. I thank you all for taking part in this conference. Thank you.

**Mr. FRENZEL.** Thanks, Tom Foley. Thanks, Library of Congress. Thanks to all of you for being here. And thanks to whomever was rash enough to invite me.

Being asked to comment on the Foley speakership creates a real temptation to deliver a eulogy while a body is still warm. And I'm going to have to succumb to it, because it was my great privilege to serve all my time in Congress concurrently with Speaker Foley and have had many opportunities to interact with him.

I remember the first time I really met him was in the early seventies on a trip to Japan. Tom was then a very ancient senior Member of four or five terms, and I was just a rookie from the minority. He showed me around and I remember being very impressed with his reception by the Japanese and with his knowledge of that country and its political system. And, of course, more than 20 years later, it was my pleasure to dine in his house at our Embassy in Japan where he was representing all of us with distinction as our Ambassador in Tokyo.

Of course, distinction has followed Tom wherever he has gone. Those of us who served in the House are wont to say that he really gave politics a bad name. He was forever thinking selfish thoughts about integrity and decency and service and trustworthiness and about doing a good job for the constituents. That really was Tom's hallmark.

I have served with only four Speakers, all of them Democrats, and all of whom I consider friends. And so I'm not really anxious to get into comparisons. But one of the things that I enjoyed about Tom and his leadership—not just as Speaker, but as majority leader, as a committee chairman—almost certainly from the time I came to Congress, was that he could be a real Democrat, a “big D” Democrat, but still respect and be respected by all of the Members of Congress, be they Republicans or Democrats.

I don't know if that arose from the fact that Tom came from a fairly competitive congressional district where you had to make friends with everybody. Perhaps it did, or perhaps it simply originates from the fact that he is that kind of a person, respectful and respected.

In watching him, I learned that you could be a party loyalist, but still remember that you had representational responsibilities to the whole country, to all the people within your district. And remember, too, that you have to be fair to every Member of the House, especially when you're the boss. As he spoke of trying to work compromises with my great hero Bob Michel in the House, with whom I was also favored to serve, I thought that with great men like that, compromise does not represent weakness. On the contrary, it represents the strength of our system. That made me terribly proud to be a part of the system.

The House is a very tough political environment. Compared to the other body, it is like the difference between professional football and chess. The majority has an important duty to move a program. Often, it is moved over the dead bodies of the minority, or by stretching the rules a bit. But that's not an easy chore, because the majority has to put its troops together.

And I can imagine that when Tom got ahold of the gavel and got up there on the Speaker's podium, he was praying that every one of his caucus would follow the admonitions of Chairman Kirwan and follow the Speaker's wishes. But sometimes they didn't. And that's one of the reasons that it is rash to compare speakerships. The House is different at all times. It has different Members. It has different issues. It has different cross-currents. There are different coalitions. Everything is different. And Speakers are different, too. And while their problems are similar, they are by no means the same.

Tom presided over the House in what we now recognize was a period of the decline of the Rooseveltian coalition, which was beginning to come apart. It apparently had good, strong majorities. But, on the other hand, after 62 years of ascendancy with two small imperfections, most of its Democratic Members believed that they were born to rule and that their rule was ordained by the Almighty.

That was a nice feeling, except for Tom. It gave him an army of all generals and no foot soldiers. And it was not a really easy matter to put all of those people together in a single place for any bill. He also ruled at a time when the committees were manned by very senior "old bulls" in the party. As everyone knows, when they are at full strength, the Speaker is never quite at full strength.

Jeff touted him as a conciliator, a facilitator, a mediator, and so do I. He was, for me, just a remarkable affirmation of what our system should be. As a member of the minority, I trusted and respected Tom Foley.

Now remember, I didn't vote with Tom Foley a lot. I thought he was kind of squirrely in his voting habits. But he was doing the best he could. You remember Dennis Hastert gave us his admonition, which is people expect you to keep your word. For me, you could put Tom's word in the bank. And that's pretty hard to equal. That's about as good as you can do in Washington in my judgment.

I saw Leon Panetta out in the audience and I was just remembering that there was a time when Leon and I went to see Tom about a matter that had to do with the Budget Committee. Leon was then chairman and I was a flunky. Leon said, "Mr. Speaker, can you help us with this problem?" And the Speaker said, "Of course. I think you're right on this." The Speaker made one phone call and resolved our problem instantly.

The following year we were back with the same problem. I said, "Mr. Speaker, can you help us with this problem?" And the Speaker said, "No,

I can't do that for you." Since I was the minority person, I had to challenge the statement. I said, "Why not, Mr. Speaker? You did it last year." And he said, "Ah, but I was new in the job and then I did not know the limitations of my power."

So if you think it is an easy job to be Speaker, forget it. But also, if you think it's going to be easy for any future Speakers to live up to the reputation and achievements of Tom Foley, abolish those thoughts as well. As far as I'm concerned, he was the greatest.

**Mr. FAZIO.** Jeff, thank you and the Library of Congress for including me in this discussion of the speakership. I think it is the most important, most difficult, most under-appreciated and least-understood leadership position in American Government, second only to the President. There's no question that I tend to agree with a lot of what Bill Frenzel has said. I'd like to concentrate on the question of Foley's marginal seat and the impact it had. I think he's the last—not just one of the few as Jeff said—but the last Speaker who will come from a district that was evenly balanced and could go either way in any election.

Tom Foley was elected to the House in the midsixties during a Democratic ascendancy. He kept the district with some tight races for 30 years, largely because of the force of his own personality and his effective representation of the wheatgrowers and all the other elements of that district. He always put the needs of his constituents first. That was his first and most compelling assignment and he always carried it out well. But the speakership had evolved to a multifaceted, 24–7 job. It became not just the internal collaborative leadership that the Speakers are required to provide, but also the "outside job," the fundraising, the Sunday talk shows, the speeches in faraway places—not just to help your colleagues with their fundraising and their reelection campaigns, but as a way of projecting the party on issue after issue and raising money for the Congressional Campaign Committees. It means that inevitably the district fades to some degree. And it's not just the fact that you can't be there as much as you may have been, but it's also the reality that you have to take more partisan positions than they are used to hearing you express at home.

So inevitably, I think, Tom Foley's career in the eastern district of Washington State ended when his speakership did because not only was the Democratic Party in eastern Washington State weakening, but the traditional Democratic Party that Bill Frenzel referred to as their Rooseveltian coalition was disintegrating as well. The style of leadership that Foley brought to the speakership was also changing. No question it influenced how he ran the House. Tom Foley was like Tip—a man of the House that he grew up in. That was why Speaker Foley was so much a regular order kind of guy.

I was thinking earlier today about the health care legislation, still referred to as the Clinton health care plan. Other names have been attached over the years, but the bottom line is this Speaker felt regular order needed to prevail in order to bring a health bill to the floor that could pass. I am sure Danny Rostenkowski remembers meeting after meeting in the Speaker's office when we tried to put together the votes, either in the Commerce Committee or the Ways and Means Committee, to begin the process. We didn't have those votes and could not move the legislation. I realize now what Newt Gingrich would have done, and we did it regularly in the next speakership—put a task force together. Denny Hastert earlier referred to them as, he said, a way of undermining the committee system. But Speaker Gingrich would not have hesitated about moving a bill of that importance to his party and his President through by irregular order. He would have found another way to do it and it somehow would have gotten to the floor and probably passed by a couple of votes, as so often has been the case since 1995.

I respect Tom Foley's approach. He knew his caucus was not as unified as it needed to be and most of all he respected the committee system that had served the House so well. He was a product of that tradition. It was also regular order for Speaker Foley when it came to supporting the Clinton administration. Having observed the conflicts between the O'Neill speakership and the Carter Presidency, Tom Foley took a different, more supporting approach. You remember it was Hamilton Jordan, Carter's Chief of Staff, who was frequently called "Hannibal Jerkin." There was real antipathy there. Most Democrats saw, in retrospect, that the discord didn't necessarily aid the Carter administration in their difficult reelection quest.

Speaker Foley, as he's already indicated, did all he could possibly do to help implement President Clinton's agenda. All those who were members of his last caucus look back with pride on that budget vote in 1993 which brought us, Democrats believe, a balanced budget and a decade of prosperity. It also probably contributed significantly to the decline and ultimate defeat of our majority. I remember later when we took the crime bill to the floor, we had a very tough choice to make. Do we move the assault weapons ban as a separate, stand-alone piece of legislation, or do we make it part of the omnibus crime bill, however difficult that would make it for many moderate and conservative Democrats with strong NRA constituencies to vote for it? Parenthetically, we even had some on the left voting against the crime bill rule because they didn't support any provisions relating to the death penalty. It was a very good example of how fragmented and diverse our Democratic Caucus had become, and how difficult it was to bring it all together. We chose to, as I think my friend Leon Panetta said, give the President a victory

and pass that bill with the assault weapon ban in it. But we also had tremendous negative fallout for many of our Members just 1 year later.

Speaker Foley personally paid the price for the bill in his own race. He lost the NRA's support for the first time in his career. There's no question that Tom Foley liked to work with his fellow committee chairs. He was one of them. He came through the Agriculture Committee to be its chair, then moved into the elected leadership and ultimately the speakership. He respected the diversity within the bipartisan committee process. Remember, it was an era when you put out bills with as broad a bipartisan majority as you could get. When possible, you worked with the Republicans during those years in the majority, in part because it gave us more impetus, more momentum when we got to the floor. After all, we weren't always sure where all those elements of that Democratic coalition were going to be at vote time. Fragmentation had set in within our caucus, and the committee structure normally gave the Democratic leadership the broader support it needed to pursue its agenda on the floor.

Tom Foley's time in the leadership was already an era when we were closely divided. But it was also the era when the one-party South, the Democratic majority in the South, had totally disintegrated. It was also a period where the diversity that had become one of the keys to changing our caucus in the eighties and into the nineties, worked against us. We didn't all know or empathize with each other. We didn't share common experiences. And that certainly was true of the House in general as well as the Democratic Caucus.

I remember hearing stories about Bob Michel and Danny Rostenkowski driving to and from Illinois together through many of their years in Washington. That sort of friendship, that sort of personal relationship above and beyond party, had almost vanished during Tom Foley's speakership. What existed was a more divided House with little community. It's a trend that has continued to this day. Families live in their districts, not in Washington. Two- and three-day weeks are common with jet travel back and forth to the district. There is pressure on the leadership from the Members to come in late and go out early. These circumstances contributed to an incredible amount of disarray, not just in one party, but in the House in general.

On top of that, we suffered greatly from the internal troubles brought about by all of the so-called "scandals" that the House came under scrutiny for—the bank, the post office, and so on. We had elements of our caucus, generally older Members and those from safe seats, who felt that if we would just hold tight, these problems were transitory and they would all blow away. Other elements, people younger and more marginal in their seats, were under such pressure in their districts that they couldn't go home for a weekend without coming back fully inflamed about what these problems that they didn't really know much about, or hadn't participated in, were

doing to their reelection chances. So Tom Foley had a very tough time reconciling the generational shift that was going on within his caucus—the large influx of people in 1974, plus the Members who carried over for 30 and 40 years, and a lot of people who had been elected in the late eighties and into the nineties whose tenure was quite tenuous.

And so I think Tom Foley epitomized modern collaborative leadership in this very difficult environment. He worked very hard at bringing people together, brokering compromises, working with State delegations and the exploding number of informal caucuses, dealing with committee assignments, and assigning legislation to one or more committees. These kinds of one-on-one, small group gatherings are leadership requirements that are really the hallmark of the speakership. It wasn't just that other strength he has of being a great stentorian speaker and floor leader. It was also the personal touch. The need to be putting your arm around somebody, bringing together a compromise that might otherwise have been lost.

There's no question when you ask Members to look back on their years in the Foley House, they will relate to his ability to go into the well and extemporaneously make remarks that actually moved votes, and, I believe, probably on both sides of the aisle. He was also great in our districts. For those of us who had him come by and speak to our contributors and our supporters, it was always a positive experience. He has wonderful rhetorical skills. I think back on all those stories that I came to know almost so well that I could repeat them myself—the words on Jefferson's tomb were the basis for one of my favorites. And Mike Kirwan—a far more familiar figure with the American public today because of Tom Foley's stories that you heard a version of earlier. This was a man who could communicate in every sense of that term. He was someone whom I was proud to serve with, and I look back on that time very fondly. Thank you.

**Mr. BIGGS.** We still have some time and would welcome questions.

**Question.** How important is it for Congress to be more assertive in foreign and defense policy? That concern has come up in a couple of different speakerships, and I think in today's climate it is an appropriate question.

**Speaker FOLEY.** I think it's obviously important for the House and the Speaker to have their voices heard on foreign policy. The President, by some constitutional opinion, inherited the powers of George III to make foreign policy and to command the military services as commander in chief. But the power of the purse, the power to implement foreign policy, which is essential today in any foreign policy undertaking, requires the House and the Senate to be involved. I think the Speaker must be involved in that. We talked earlier here today about Jim Wright and the work that was done with the Reagan administration. Looking back, for example, on Tip O'Neill's service—I was a whip when Tip was Speaker—I never saw a case where President Reagan called and asked Tip O'Neill to do something that Reagan



thought was in the interest of the country's foreign policy that Tip didn't agree to do it. But he would also tell the President what he thought about various foreign policy issues. He told him privately and told him candidly. But, on the other hand, Tip felt very strongly that the Speaker should be supportive of the President on those issues where he could conscientiously support him in the interest of the foreign policy of the country.

I want to take the opportunity again to express my regret at the sort of permanent campaign we have under way now. It's a function of both congressional and Presidential politics that the campaign never really ends. Fundraising goes on constantly, and preparing for the next election almost begins the day after the returns come in from the last one. That has consequences for the ability of the House or the government to work together after an election to move the country's agenda and purposes forward. It can be a very critical problem, obviously, in foreign policy.

So, how do we get over the political consequences of the permanent campaign and restore a sense of comity and trust that both branches are trying to move the country's agenda forward? As a Democratic Speaker, I also wanted to see a Republican President succeed in every way when I could conceive it as being in the interest of the country. Anyone who doesn't want a President to succeed, who wants a total failure, is, as they say, no friend of the republic.

I should also say that one of the things I felt when I was in office was that we needed to have opportunities for Democrats and Republicans to find ways to talk together outside the formal debates of the House. There was a case that occurred when I was Speaker in the 102d Congress when we had one of those briefings for new Members. I was telling the new Democratic Members that I thought they should take an opportunity—I didn't think the press was present—to miss a vote. Not a serious vote, not one that would affect their reelection, obviously, or affect public policy, just miss some kind of ordinary, routine vote so they could never, ever think about having a 100 percent voting record. I mentioned this because we had a couple of Members who had 100 percent voting records. When one of them finally failed to get back to the House in time, he wept on the floor after missing the first vote after 17,372 consecutive votes. I also recall that former Representative Bill Natcher came from the Bethesda Naval Hospital on a gurney, on life supports, to vote so his consecutive voting record would not be broken.

I told the new Members to avoid that situation. Just sit through a roll call vote on approving the *Journal* or something—you get 99.99 percent, but you can't get 100. Second, I said that you ought to travel, if you get a chance in your committee, to some place where the committee's jurisdiction is involved. You'll learn something important about the committee's work. But you'll also have a chance to have some association with your col-

leagues. There's nothing like being together on an airplane for awhile, and being in a foreign country, to make Members who don't usually have much opportunity to see or talk to each other do that. You learn that there's a lot of wisdom and judgment and good character on the other side of the aisle, if you had any doubts about that. If you needed a political reason for travel, sometime later in your career you might get a vote from the Republican side of the aisle on something the Member had no particular interest in except the fact that you and he were together, or you and she were together, somewhere on committee business.

Anyway, it turned out there was a press reporter in the room, and the next day he reported that Tom Foley, as Speaker of the House, told the Democrats of the 102d Congress to miss a vote and take a junket. Fox Morning News the next morning said they were shocked to learn that the Speaker of the House had told the newly elected Democrats to miss as many votes as they could—miss as many votes as they could—and never miss a chance to take a publicly financed trip abroad.

There is a need for Members of Congress to have this opportunity to get through the divisions that we have on committees, the divisions that we have across the aisle, and to have a chance to know each other and to learn the kind of respect that follows from that. I think it helps in the legislative process. I think it helps bring about an opportunity for compromise and common effort.

When you sit down here and reminisce about the past with other Speakers, I am reminded that I always had the problem of being mistaken for Tip, in part because Tip and I were about the same weight. Naturally, we both have white hair and big Irish mugs, as Tip said. When I became Speaker, I weighed about 283 pounds. I weigh about 90 pounds less than that today. But I remember I went to a gym in New Orleans when I was Speaker. A very old retainer of the club had been very helpful to me, and I thanked him. He said, "Don't thank me, Mr. Speaker. It's been an honor and pleasure to have you here, and I'm going to tell all the club members we had the Honorable Mr. Tip O'Neill here in our club today." I didn't know what to say except thank you. A year later I was in Nordstrom's in San Francisco with Tom Nides, who was on my staff, and I bought a shirt. As I was leaving the counter, I heard the two clerks talk and one of them said, "Do you know who that was?" And the other said, "No." He said, "That's the Speaker of the House of Representatives." He said, "Tip O'Neill?" The other said, "No, dummy—Jim Wright." Anyway, it was an honor to have followed both Tip and Jim.

**Mr. BIGGS.** We've got time for one last question.

**Question.** You talked about carrying out the speakership through processes of negotiation and coalition building that had to span both sides of the aisle. That's a mode of operation, as we've heard today, that goes right

back to the “Board of Education” room and Sam Rayburn, if not before. I remember having the impression that when the *New Yorker* magazine did a profile of you during your speakership, that in a lot of cases the negotiations you were engaged in tended to be putting together different factions within what was a very large Democratic majority. We’ve also heard commentators say today that we’re now in a more partisan era where a lot of the coalition building tends to take place within the majority party.

To what extent, then, did the necessity of carrying out coalition negotiations—just to hold the large and diverse Democratic majority together—contribute to the situation in which the minority tend to get more and more left out of the coalition process? Did this trend contribute to a more partisan operation in the House?

**Speaker FOLEY.** I think there’s some truth to what you say. I think in recent years a close majority in the House and the Senate put an emphasis on getting legislation through with your own troops, and keeping the core coalition of your own party together. And that inhibits reaching out very much to the other party. It all depends on time and circumstances. In the Democratic Party, frankly, we had many more Members who were on the conservative side politically than Republicans had Members who were very liberal. There were a few, but I think the spectrum in the Democratic Party was much broader than it was in the Republican Party. So we had to deal with the possibility that Republicans would attract some support from Democrats. We had a committee chairman, I should say a subcommittee chairman, who somebody calculated had voted against the Democratic position on key bills 85 percent of the time. I had to justify our continued support for him by the fact that he voted to organize the House, which was an important vote by the way.

Coalition building also depends on whether there’s a closely divided House and what party is in the White House. If you’ve got a Republican White House with a Democratic majority in the House, that requires greater consultation. It is true, frankly, that Republicans, I think, felt much more abused—I don’t know what the right word is—much more ignored or much more overridden than the Democrats felt they were overriding or abusing. So it’s a perception problem, in part. Now Democrats tell me whatever we did then pales compared to what the Republican majority is doing to the Democrats in the minority.

I remember Speaker Hastert saying about a month ago, when this issue arose in the press, that at least the Republicans didn’t take away the Democrats’ parking spaces or office keys. With great respect to the Speaker, who I do admire very much, I can never recall us going so far as taking away a parking space or an office key. That would be really intervening. But it’s always as seen by the beholder. I guess the other thing that’s gone, in my judgment, is this kind of bipartisan social relationship. There was, I think,

a tendency to become almost like the British parties. There is a tension not only on policy and even on party principle, but even personal tension. That is the degree to which, I think, the situation has gone too far and where it has had a deleterious effect on the House and its operations.

Actually, my admiration and interest goes to the great Speakers of the 19th century, who were pretty authoritarian Speakers, by the way. My favorite is Thomas Brackett Reed, who was an enormously powerful Speaker and a very witty one. As legend has it, he was asked one time if he was going to go to the funeral of a political opponent. He said, "No, I'm not going, but I approve of it highly." Somebody suggested that he might be a candidate for President himself and he said, "They could go farther and do worse and they undoubtedly will." One Member was excited on the floor making a speech and said, "Mr. Speaker, I'd rather be right than be President." The Speaker leaned down and said, "The gentleman need not exorcise himself. He has very little chance of being either."

**Mr. BIGGS.** Could you speak for just a couple of minutes about something that is a little extra-legislative, and that is the whole idea of the budget summits during your speakership?

**Speaker FOLEY.** The budget summits are the only time that I have a twinge of nostalgia about not being in the House anymore. And I don't understand why because budget summits were great periods of tension. We had two or three of them when I was a majority leader and Speaker. They involved various problems. One was the stock market crash of 1987. We had to do an emergency reduction of the budget in order to strengthen the market, along with the Federal Reserve's quick infusion of a lot of liquidity. I chaired a bipartisan House-Senate committee at that time—a task force, I guess. Senator John Stennis asked someone if that young Foley was chairing it. They said, "Yes," to which he responded, "I like young people to get their chance." I treasure that remembrance.

We also had budget summits with President George H.W. Bush and it involved constant meetings in my office and other places where Nick Brady {Treasury Secretary} and John Sununu {White House Chief of Staff} and Mr. Dick Darman {OMB Director} would come up and we would work over the various alternatives. I remember the famous budget summit we had over the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings bill. Senator Fritz Hollings said his name on the end of the legislation was a sure way to anonymity because the proposal generally became known as Gramm-Rudman.

This is an interesting form of the previous question. The House was then in Democratic control and the Senate was in Republican control. The summit was between House Democrats and Senate Republicans. We sat around my office—Senator Pete Domenici, Senator Warren Rudman, Senator Hollings, and others. The question was whether we should invite the minority to take part in it, that is, House Republicans and Senate Democrats.

It was one of the Republican Members, who shall remain anonymous, who said, “No, no, no. We are the governing coalition, the Democrats of the House and the Republicans of the Senate on this bill. And if we invite in the minority, yours or ours, they will have no particular incentive except to obstruct and delay.” I didn’t think that was right. I thought we should have invited the minority Members. But it was overruled at that time. Budget summits also can lead to very serious consequences. I think the defeat of the budget summit by the House under Newt Gingrich’s leadership was a seminal event at the time.

By the way, it’s interesting for me to recall that single events that don’t seem to be connected can have significant consequences. For example, Senator John Tower was appointed by President George Bush 41 to be the Secretary of Defense. He ran into the opposition of Senator Sam Nunn, and the Senate Armed Services Committee failed to report his nomination affirmatively. This was an embarrassment for the administration and they decided, I think, that they needed someone to appoint as Secretary of Defense that would be instantly confirmable—unanimously confirmable. They decided that person was Dick Cheney, who was then Republican whip. He was taken from the House whip’s job, nominated as Secretary of Defense, and unanimously confirmed by the Senate. Cheney’s departure led to a race in the House between a moderate Member and Newt Gingrich to replace Secretary Cheney as GOP whip and Newt won by one vote. All this came about as a consequence of the opposition of some Democrats to John Tower’s nomination to the Secretary of Defense job.

Events have consequences. There are connections and some of us are old enough to recall them. By the way, I think Dick Cheney did a very credible job as Secretary of Defense and that, I think, led to the possibility of him becoming Vice President of the United States. So these things are interestingly connected.

I’m generally not very much in favor of these extraordinary legislative vehicles like task forces and budget summits. But in times of emergency, sometimes regular order just doesn’t function that quickly and that responsively to a crisis that exists in the country.

I’d like to—because he’s here and others are here—just say a word of great admiration for Dan Rostenkowski. He talked about Tip being a great legislator. I think Dan Rostenkowski was a great legislator. He also was a legislator who worked between the two parties in getting legislation out that was otherwise difficult to do. He would charge the President, if it was President Bush or whomever, to take care of his side of the aisle and he would take care of the Democrats. People I’ve talked to over the years remember with great respect Dan’s service on the Ways and Means Committee. They have always commented that Dan kept his eye on the ball, knew where the legislation had to go, and was extraordinarily effective

at getting things done. It was an era of great figures like Dan and John Dingell. Both of them were great figures because they were both great chairmen.

**Mr. BIGGS.** Thanks to Messrs. Fazio and Frenzel, Speaker Foley, and the audience. We can now declare a recess until the next session begins.