

**Warren Featherstone Reid**  
Assistant to Warren G. Magnuson, 1964-1981

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**Interview #3**  
**The Commerce and Appropriations Committees**  
(Thursday, July 16, 1981)  
Interviewed by Donald A. Ritchie

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**RITCHIE:** Could you elaborate a little more about the divisions of the staff between a senator's personal office and his role as chairman of a committee?

**REID:** Well, first my own definition of staff: I've used the word "tool." When I think of a tool, I'm thinking of not only of something intellectual but something physical. A tool that helps members do their job. Some might disagree with the choice of the word tool. I don't mean to dehumanize the staff, but staff must remember that they are there to assist the member to do his or her job, and that they are hired for both intellectual and physical reasons to do various things in capacities and assignments that the member might give to them. Whenever staff or the member forget this, they are both in jeopardy.

One of the problems that a staff has, whether it's personal office or committee, supporting a member, is having access to the member, because a member is just like you and I. He only has so many hours in every day that he can focus on any one thing. As a member acquires more responsibilities—higher seniority, subcommittee chairmanship, committee chairmanship—the pressures of staff to gain access to him, get his attention, get his answer, get his direction, this creates problems. In the case of Magnuson, he did have the advantage that a newcomer today would not have, because he came here in the days when a House member only had two rooms. He was over in Cannon [House Office Building]. A

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House member only had maybe two or three staff. So Magnuson survived politically, stayed here from '37 to '81, and went through quite an institutional change, quite an increase in the number of staff. He also dealt with a number of problems over those years, so in many ways our job as staff was different than it might be for others, because we joined an organization that he fashioned that was perhaps somewhat unorganized.

There was no real table of organization that the military might have. There was little compartmentalization. People might have a general responsibility in legislation, but they'd also have a constituent mail. They were housed together without any great thought of compartmentalization. The only staff people in our office that enjoyed the privacy of a single room was the press operation. Normally, the press operation was a single unit in a single room. Everybody else was jumbled up, and there was a lot of interplay among that staff, whether it was two or three or whether it got up to the point where it was in the low twenties here. At the same time, when he acquired chairmanships, he acquired real estate, so that some of the staff of that committee or subcommittee were across the hall, where there could be the interplay. So it made it possible for the staff, collectively, to be aware of what other people were doing, sometimes just by osmosis, because you're in the same room, and you know how these rooms are. They are not soundproof. Your little cubbyhole in your little corner of the room isn't soundproof. You just hear what's going on. Constituents or others come in to talk to a staff person, or other people in the room, at least some of it seeps in.

open. As the staff increased, there were AA's that thought they might attempt to be a gatekeeper, but Magnuson never allowed them to be a gatekeeper. He never got himself in the position that Mr. Nixon did with Haldeman and Ehrlichman. Anybody on the staff could come in at any time they could find him and throw their question at him, and they did. The only failure, perhaps, in this process is that Magnuson preferred to deal verbally and face-to-face with a staff person when a question had to be decided. There might be a piece of paper that would have been put on his desk earlier in the day, or earlier in the week that he might look at, when he's dealing with you on that issue, but he'd get away from the piece of paper, he'd give you the answer, and if you made any notes, and they stayed in the office records, fine. But Magnuson didn't hang on to memos or notes. He always trash-canned those memos that might come to his desk. He preferred to deal verbally. So the historical record in his office files on staff interaction is very slim.

There was the push and shove between committee staff (and of course Magnuson had two committee staffs, Commerce and Appropriations) and personal staff for access and for his personal time. Now people could always gain access, but they might have very limited time. Often these times were concurrent. There would be a time late in the morning, or late in the afternoon when the word got out: "Magnuson's in the office." Everybody showed up. You might have four or five staff people with four or five different problems, and they'd all be standing there together. When they could get in [snap fingers] they got in, got into the conversation. I think this was very beneficial, because they weren't staggered and they weren't in and out. They were forced to stay there and listen

to the other guy or girl's problem. So there was osmosis going on there. They were forced to wait their turn while the other staffer made his presentation, and usually the first or second man didn't leave the room, but stayed to listen to the third or fourth or fifth.

This process of meeting with staff, Mike Pertschuk I think came up initially with the phrase, it was what we called the "Children's Hour." That took place late in the afternoon, early evening, when the Senate might still be in session, there might be a late vote, and Magnuson would sort of hold court. It was a relaxed affair, and half a dozen or as many as a dozen staff members might come in. They would discuss all kinds of things. Usually these were not formal decision sessions, although if you hadn't gotten your answer, that was the time that he was most receptive, because it was a relaxed affair and there were no inhibitions. Magnuson was never critical of staff pushing him to try and get an answer, except that he did not want to commit himself until he had to. You were free to advise him: "Here's something that's coming, and it's troublesome." But Magnuson wouldn't commit his position, if there was any doubt in his mind, until he had to.

By and large, I don't think there were too many problems, vis-à-vis the various staff. There were some jealousies. Staff are really picked on the basis of their intellectual and physical capabilities. Their individual personality often enters in later. There were personality clashes, like there are in any group of people. Although we were a family, it was a large, complex, and extended family and some people didn't like each other. But I don't think that ever interfered with the efficient operation.

**RITCHIE:** How did the fact that Magnuson was on the Appropriations Committee, and had very important subcommittees there—HEW and Independent Offices—and was chairman of the Commerce Committee, affect the relationship between his staff? In effect, one of his committees was funding the products that were coming out of the other. Was there any tension over money issues like that?

**REID:** No, except that if Appropriations in its funding and oversight look at, say, the ICC, Interstate Commerce Commission, and came up with something that they thought maybe should be cut, you might have the people at the ICC going around to their friends on the authorizing committee, the Commerce Committee, and saying "Look, Maggie's people over on Appropriations are trying to do us in on this. Can you help?" That's always true with agencies. If the House tries to cut them, then the agency runs to the Senate and pleads their case. So there might be a little of that, but I can't remember of an instance where there was any real problem between staff on Commerce and Appropriations.

There were many times that the Appropriations staff, because they didn't know the field as intimately as maybe the Commerce staff knew it, that some kind of informal network developed between the staff on Appropriations and the staff on Commerce. I know when we took over Appropriations, we tried to encourage even more of that, because it is important that the appropriating people understand what the authorizing people are up to, and the interplay between those staffs can be very helpful. I know in our own operation on HEW, in student assistance we had very good

relations with the people on Labor and Human Resources in the Senate, Pete Williams' committee, and Senator Pell's staff, who were handling the student assistance programs at one time. Rick Jerue, Letitia Chambers and others that were on the staff of Human Resources, we had informal discussions with them many, many times. We even had some input, from our vantage point, our view, when they were working on authorizing legislation. And they in turn would come to us when it came time to appropriate funds for new programs that they had authorized. But I wouldn't say there was ever any policy conflict. It was more a community of interest and an effort to make the programs work better.

**RITCHIE:** In my readings, the one person I've been coming up against the most in terms of HEW appropriations is Harley Dirks. He seems to be very much a major figure. Could you tell me a little bit about him, what type of a person he was and what his role was in all of this?

**REID:** Well, he came to the staff shortly after I came back in '63, '64. He originally worked with the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee. He was from the state of Washington, from eastern Washington, from Othello. He was a very personable individual. He came to us because it was a political favor to somebody else. One of those things where a politician leans on a politician. It was a politician in the state of Washington that knew Magnuson that leaned on Magnuson and some of our staff people, Fred Lordan, our AA at the time. It was done as a favor, "help Harley out."

There was a senior person on the Appropriations staff on the Independent Offices subcommittee that

was quite senior and beyond retirement age. There was a move to put Harley over there, and Harley did go over there, and worked there from about '65 through '68. Then, when Magnuson shifted from Independent Offices to HEW—he didn't really want to shift, in fact, it was Richard Russell who, in a way, leaned on Magnuson and convinced Magnuson that he should take it—when Magnuson did take it, Lister Hill, who had just retired, informed him that Magnuson ought to get rid of the person who was there, Herman Downing, who had been there a long time. Magnuson did not get rid of Herman Downing, did not ask that he be retired or fired or anything like that. He just moved Harley over to be Herman's assistant. In fact, I had worked with Herman before and I had some of the same feelings maybe that Lister Hill did, but I kept them to myself.

**RITCHIE:** Downing was something of an obstructionist?

**REID:** Well, he was a loner. You can look at the record of the subcommittee, prior to Magnuson taking it over. It was almost invariably Lister Hill settling alone listening to administration witnesses. It was very seldom during Magnuson's tenure as subcommittee chairman that that took place. There was usually at least one or two other members there. It was almost unheard of in Lister Hill's day for that subcommittee to hold a hearing without Senator Hill chairing. The opposite was almost the rule under Magnuson. Magnuson encouraged it. He even encouraged minority members to chair. I thought it was a great ploy on his part, because it was one of the ways that he made certain

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that the other members of that subcommittee came to know what was going on in the various programs, because they weren't just allowed to come when their pet was up and they wanted to make some point, but they were encouraged—maybe even stronger words than that—to take over and chair a whole morning, a whole afternoon, sometime during the course of events, and they did.

Well, Harley became a very capable clerk. He had learned the technical process quite well in the '65-'68 period. He learned to work an appropriation bills quite quickly. He discovered that he was much more visible, because HEW with all of the social programs, all of the health programs, came into the fore more during the late '60s, early '70s with the expansion of many of those programs, the expansion of federal aid to education and social services, and the interest groups that were involved of course knew where the money was coming from and were very active in buttering up and everything else anybody that they felt could be helpful. Harley was very capable at meeting people. He's a gregarious type. He did quite well on the technical side and everything else on that subcommittee.

**RITCHIE:** Wasn't he a little overbearing?

**REID:** I would say yes. I don't know why. I was much closer to Harley in the early years that he was here. We worked together quite well from when he first came. We worked together on a number of joint projects in the education field. We put out a little booklet on federal aid for students in higher education, NDSL loans, scholarships and the other programs. We worked together very well until

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about '71 or '72. I think that the fact that he wanted to hire somebody to be on the staff of the subcommittee, and Magnuson didn't allow it, and I told Harley that I didn't think it should happen, I think Harley blamed me for the

fact that it didn't happen. I made no secret of the fact that I disagreed with him on the personnel issue and that I would tell Magnuson so if he asked me. So that perhaps started a cleavage in our own personal relationship that never did get repaired. But Harley was a tough taskmaster. I've heard enough from some of the people that worked under him that they had their problems too. Harley didn't want any of them to have any relationship with the Magnuson personal operation, especially Magnuson, and that was something that I didn't like, because I felt the more people that have access to Magnuson, the better overall advice Magnuson gets. Even if he gets conflicting advice, it's better that he at least hear it. So Harley and I had a disagreement on that score.

**RITCHIE:** I wondered if some committee staff members became so associated with a particular subcommittee that they become sort of minor powers in themselves. I'm thinking of William Jordan of the Appropriations Committee, and Dirks and others. Is it a function of being with something for such a long time that it can go to a person's head?

**REID:** Yes, and I think that we're more susceptible to this on the Senate side than on the House. The fact that senators do serve on more committees makes it difficult for a senator who is on a subcommittee to intimately know all the programs that he's forced to

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deal with. If he finds that a staff member is capable, does give him good advice, there's a deference that he then pays towards that staff member, and there's a price, because that staff member does become a person that others rely upon, not just the subcommittee chairman or the ranking member but others. And this is true on any subcommittee of any committee, but perhaps Appropriations is more susceptible to it. The longer a person stays there, the more able they become, the more intimately they know the programs, if they've got a good memory and common sense, then anytime a member may hit them with a question they've got the answer.

I know that in the case of a Bill Jordan, he listens to the news and he reads the news and he knows when he sees a certain article in the *Evening Star* that he'd better get on the phone because he's going to have conversations the next day with members and he's going to have to have more answers than the *Star* had. I've seen them do it. I've done it myself, because I knew that Magnuson was an avaricious reader and that he was always tearing things out of the paper, and the next day he'd ask me. The better staff people do that, and they do become major powers. But again, they are really tools, whether they're a subcommittee clerk or a subcommittee secretary, or a receptionist, they're a tool. They are there to help the member do his job. If they start going out on their own, there is trouble. If members don't keep them on some kind of a leash, there is always trouble.

A good staff member should come up with things from his own perspective, he *sees* a problem and he should raise it with the members and say "Look, this is something that may be a problem, should I look into it?" Almost

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invariably he'll get an okay to go ahead, and he does it. Well, then the people he's looking at, the agency or the program, they may accuse him of being off on a frolic of his own. If he's on a frolic on his own, he's courting trouble. But if he's brought it up, and checked it out and cleared it and gotten the go-ahead, he's got the support of the members.

**RITCHIE:** Well, Dirks eventually ran into trouble by printing a hearing that never took place. Was that a sign to Magnuson that he's gotten too independent and uncontrollable, perhaps?

**REID:** There were earlier signs. For at least two or three years there had been communications to Magnuson of a certain overbearing approach. Within the departments, especially HEW, there was a phrase "Harleygram." These were handwritten notes that went down to people. They were often of a nature that would disturb anybody who might receive one. When Caspar Weinberger was secretary [of HEW], there was a time when Caspar Weinberger himself personally raised Harley Dirks with Warren Magnuson. Now, Caspar had no qualms about doing this, because Magnuson and Caspar Weinberger had known each other for quite some time. Caspar even communicated with Mike Pertschuk, because of something that Harley was doing that was upsetting them. They went to Caspar, and Caspar went to Mike. And there had been some other incidents. Harley had appeared in Jack Anderson a couple of times on other things that disturbed Magnuson.

In this context, perhaps I should digress a moment. For whatever the very personal reasons, Senator Magnuson always avoided verbal praise

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directly to staff members. He only evidenced such confidence in very subtle ways. For those who might need constant stroking, this was frustrating, to say the least, and some staff found this difficult to accept. The furthest he'd often to go would be to say "that was a good meeting" or something like that and you had to infer whatever personal credits there might be.

More often he would praise an absent staffer to others, like his AA or his private secretary—especially Jessie Robertson—with the hope, if not expectation, that his comments would be passed along. He often did this through me and at first, I must admit, I found it strange, perhaps even amusing.

By the same token, correction or possible disciplinary action was difficult for him. When the infraction was minor, he would just suffer it with silence. When it was major, Magnuson would escalate that silence by finding ways to ignore that staff member and he would also use others as "conduits" for some comment.

In Harley's case, that happened on occasions before the phony transcripts. Magnuson used his AA, Stan Barer at the time, and on one occasion I believe Jerry Grinstein, his former AA, was even pressed into carrying messages to Harley, and he used me. Because my own relations with Harley in 1974-75 were sour, I was not very successful. Harley weathered those storms.

But the events of the hearings that never took place, the record that was manufactured almost out of whole cloth, were done deliberately. I know that it hurt Magnuson deeply that Harley's actions hurt Magnuson and hurt the committee. It was not a good scene. At one point, Magnuson

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said to me, "Well, you've never liked Harley." I said, "Magnuson, it's not a matter of liking. I don't have to like the people who work for you." But the change had to be made and Harley was relieved of any responsibilities on the Labor-HEW subcommittee. The eventual arrangements for his termination were handled by Senator McClellan, as chairman of the full committee, and his staff.

**RITCHIE:** Last week we introduced the whole question of oversight in the Senate, and the relations between a subcommittee and a whole department like HEW, or with the Independent Offices. Oversight is perhaps the least publicized role of the Congress. You were involved in it for a long time and I wondered if you could explain a little about how the whole congressional oversight process works.

**REID:** Well, unless it involves the McClellan or Estes Kefauver type crime hearings, oversight is perhaps the least publicized and least understood, although it's probably among the most important, aspects of what Congress should be doing. Because in essence, the analogy isn't perfect, but in many ways the Congress is the Board of Directors of this corporation that we call America. Because the Congress collectively exercises the people's power, and the Congress is the ultimate power, after the people. The Congress has the power to tax; Congress has power to spend; the Congress has the power to impeach, whether it's a president or a Supreme Court justice, Congress has the power to remove any executive. It's the Congress that has the power to enact legislation, to establish a program or disestablish it.

Oversight, whether it's looking into the peccadilloes of a Supreme

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Court judge or an executive, or whether it's looking at a program to see if it is operating the way Congress intended, the way the law intended, and if it is operating in that way is it still needed, is it meeting the needs of whatever Congress perceived when it established it, and is it doing it efficiently, these aren't very glamorous things. They don't get headlines. Everyday the hearings that are getting the headlines and a great many that are probably having only an audience of tourists that happen by, and waltz in for five or ten minutes at most, and representatives of interest groups that are vitally concerned about the interest at hand, or the department has their people watching. But it is one of the most important, I think one of the most important aspects of a legislative body if they are going to do their job as policymakers.

When the Congress attempts to run a program, or a war, disaster is the end result, because Congress is not designed to be an executive. They are not designed to administrate. They are policymakers. But how can you make policy unless you know the policy that was made yesterday is operating correctly today and will meet the needs of tomorrow, as well as look at the problems that aren't being dealt with and come up with whatever society needs to effectively deal with them. But it isn't glamorous. It often involves what Magnuson would refer to as "kitchen work." It isn't glamorous; it's drudgery at times. If you're really going to do a job of oversight, you've got to talk and listen to a lot of people, especially listen, and listening isn't glamorous. A member of Congress sitting at a dais listening isn't going to be on the evening news. A member who's up there *pointing a finger* and viewing with great alarm, he runs a pretty good change of maybe getting on the evening

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news. Now what's their priority? Is their priority really doing a good job, and making a mark and helping the country run better and be a better place to live, and probably get very little credit for doing that job? Or do they want headlines and air time on Cronkite?

**RITCHIE:** So is it hard to get some of the members of the committees to play their role in the oversight process?

**REID:** Yes.

**RITCHIE:** But Magnuson has made oversight a much larger part of his interest than others.

**REID:** Well, I think anybody that really looks at the record, and of course the record isn't just the daily *Congressional Record*, the record is the sum total of the hours that members spend in these confines or out in the field. I think when anybody looks at Magnuson's service from '37 to '81, they will find that he spent a lot of hours in the backrooms of the chamber, but he also spent a lot of hours, probably by a factor of four or five, in hearings himself, as well as hearings that he launched and forced others to continue, and in executive sessions. A lot of that was oversight. And you can't really compartmentalize oversight from the fact that you may create something new. Because it was oversight of the marketplace that did some of the things for "consumerism:" the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Flammable Fabrics amendments, switching the side of the strike face on matchbooks, the list is mighty long, and some of those programs that were initiated by Magnuson came about because oversight into the market-

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place was conducted by the Commerce Committee. There was some glamour in some of that. There were some headlines and some good pictures and some good editorials.

Of course, members of Congress are not averse to having good editorials written about them. The people that write editorials are the journalists that don't have to make a daily deadline, or a weekly deadline. They have the freedom to look around and they discover and they see this going on so they write an editorial. Whether it's the *Post*, or the *Star*, or the *Wall Street Journal* or local Podunk press. I think a member who really does that kitchen work, over time, will acquire the praise, the recognition that is politically good for him and his future elections. But it does take time, most often a long time, and the personal investment of time by the member before fruit of those efforts might appear. It boils down to that phrase about work horses and show horses, and each member of Congress often faces decisions about which type he wishes to be. At the same time he's doing that, he sees a character like Joe McCarthy that goes to Wheeling and makes a fancy speech and gets all the headlines in all the papers across the entire nation eventually and you know what all that leads to, including a new word in our vocabulary—at least until another Senator McCarthy came along.

**RITCHIE:** Were there any senators who stood out in your experience as particularly devoting a lot of attention to the oversight process?

**REID:** Well, on the Commerce Committee I think Phil Hart certainly did, and there were a number of areas that John Pastore

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was very interested in. There were certainly others that might come to mind if I had more time to reflect on it. I want to say Mike Monroney when he was with us. He was a good one. But it's sometimes those that are a little more settled in where they are, that have a good grasp of who they are, and love the Senate and aren't off looking at some "higher office."



**RITCHIE:** In terms of day-to-day operations, does it require that a staff member build personal ties to people in the agency that you are conducting oversight over? Are there certain people that you would call regularly to get information, or would call you regularly?

**REID:** Yes, you do. You can't really look at an agency in a clinical way just from the outside. You've got to have people within the agency that you can depend upon to give you honest, straightforward facts and figures on whatever it is. You invariably make acquaintances, maybe even friendships with some of those people. I know I felt we were very fortunate in the HEW Department. A fellow died here just a couple of days ago, Jim Kelly, who was comptroller when we first took over. His number one was a fellow named Bruce Cardwell. We got to know them very well, because they always appeared with the secretaries, and secretaries came and went but the Bruce Cardwells carried on. Bruce's number one was a guy named Charlie Miller. These were highly educated, highly capable people who had risen through the Civil Service System and they were comptrollers.

In a department, the comptroller does know the dollars and cents, but the good ones also know all the ins and outs of the programs. They

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have been trained within the department to brief a new secretary succinctly and quickly, and get them up to steam, so it's relatively easy for them to do the same thing with a member of Congress. They are generalists as well as specialists, so you get to know people like that. I know in the instance of those three, Kelly, Cardwell, and Miller, that myself, and Magnuson and I think everybody else that worked on the committee, and I know Norris Cotton especially with Cardwell and Miller, felt very comfortable and confident that these guys knew what the hell they were talking about. They were personally and professionally honest, because once in a great while you'd throw a question to one of them and they'd say "Senator, I don't know, but I'll get you the answer." Now, very seldom did they ever plead that kind of ignorance, because usually they did have knowledge and some kind of an answer. Often they would give an answer and then they would ask "Now, if you want to know more, I'll get it for you." And even if you didn't want to know more, they often would come back and give you more. Never once did we get thrown a curve, or were given a left-field answer by those type people.

Now there were times that secretaries would give us a left-field answer. Because they really didn't know. I know it happened with Elliot Richardson one time. We were talking about bio-medical research—Magnuson was, I mean—it was a hearing, and Richardson said that one of the reasons that they were proposing to cut back funding was because that particular program was taking too many M.D.'s out of the system, and the M.D.'s should be out there delivering health care. Well, Magnuson was well briefed, and Magnuson came back and said "But, Mr. Secretary, over 70 percent of bio-medical research is conducted by Ph.D's not

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M.D. 's." I was watching Richardson at the time and his eyes popped open. I said to Magnuson later on, "You really hit him on that, and I'll bet you when he gets back to the office he's going to hit somebody!" And it probably happened, because Richardson was not the type of person that would be ill-informed normally.

**RITCHIE:** As you say, secretaries come and go, administrations come and go, but there is a certain level of civil servants who are there no matter what.

**REID:** Right.

**RITCHIE:** Does it create any problems when an administration changes in terms of your contacts with people within an agency? Do they ever try to do an end run around the president and the Office of Management and Budget by using their contacts with the Congress?

**REID:** I would say in my own experience—my own sources of information were more the comptroller-types, not the legislative liaisons. The comptroller-types usually stayed and there was not the turnover within a comptroller's office. There was always turnover within a legislative office, because it is more political. The new secretary has certain things the secretary wants to achieve. The agents for achieving that are usually legislative liaisons. So the personnel within the legislative liaison would change rapidly. And there was a higher turnover even if there was no change. I think the "burn-out" factor is higher among legislative liaison officers. In a

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way, comptrollers have it easier because they only need to be on top of things as they exist, as they are, not how they should be. So I would say the authorizing committees might have more problem of tenure of their own confidants and their own people that they would depend upon at that level. But again, the authorizing committees would probably get to know some of the operational people down below, that would be the GS-13's, 14's, 15's. Those operational people, the Civil Service protects them and keeps them in, and there would be more tenure and continuity there. Although we dealt with program people too, and I know in some instances there was considerable continuity.

**RITCHIE:** Is there any difference between dealing with an agency like HEW and dealing with the independent offices, the regulatory commissions that don't quite fall under the same executive structure?

**REID:** Well, of course, HEW is an amorphous combination. You have some parts of HEW that are certainly independent. The independent agencies, I think, do tend to be "a little more independent." They have a separate authorization; they have separate and distinct constituencies—like the trucking industry or the broadcasters; and their concerns could perhaps be termed more parochial or insular. Some of them have a long history. The Veterans' Administration certainly has a long history, the FTC, the ICC. But yet in HEW, you've got the Public Health Service that is celebrating today its 192nd or 193rd birthday. The NIH stems from the 1930's. So you have a long history of independence in some ways from presidents and secretaries, a momentum within the

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program or the agency for whatever its mission is that survives no matter what administration is in the White House. So there is *that* difference. I was never intimately associated with the Independent Offices except for the NSF and the Veterans' Administration. I didn't really get in to the ICC, FTC.

**RITCHIE:** I could see why Magnuson would be particularly interested in those independent offices since so many of them had, in effect, their own oversight over Commerce Committee areas of activity.

**REID:** Well, Magnuson had a number of interests, and one of them was his own perception of what helps make this country great. Whatever importance that some of those agencies might have—as he says, "You can't kill the golden goose." The golden goose is the economic system out there that is producing the jobs, that is producing the taxes, that is producing the things that make it possible for us to have the society and economy that we have and produce the excess that can be utilized to do some of the things that should be done. Early in his career, Magnuson felt that our system ought to be investing more money in bio-medical research. Well, you've got to have an economic system out there that can first afford to pay taxes, and then have enough left after everything else is done, that has to be done with the taxes, so that you can take some of the taxes and do some bio-medical research. So his interest in the marketplace and keeping it competitive and responsive, and working, was an intellectual one, and an enjoyable one from the Commerce side. He had most of those regulatory commissions before the Commerce Committee, because the Commerce Clause of the Constitu-

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tion is one of the most powerful weapons that the Congress has for dealing with anything within our economy.

**RITCHIE:** Would you say that the Senate and the Congress are particularly protective of the regulatory commissions over presidential policy? I know, for instance, Nixon tried to abolish the Public Health Service at one point, or talked about it at least. There have been all sorts of plans to put regulatory commissions under presidentially appointed administrators rather than panels of commissioners. Do you think that the Senate sees the regulatory commissions as being responsive to it as they are to the president?

**REID:** That's difficult. You're getting into a real difficult question, because what we're faced with is the fact that some of these regulatory commissions were the product of another time and a different set of circumstances. Again, they all deal with the very particular concerns of particular constituencies who, by and large, play vital roles in our society and our economy. At least they all did when the agency was established. Perhaps the time has passed that a particular regulatory commission is meeting the need that the public, or the society had, and maybe their time is gone. But I don't see how you can say that about, let's take one, the FCC and the current efforts of various interest groups within the communications field, starting with AT&T and ending with the fellow that makes the smallest widget that goes into the smallest device that is used in communications. The predictions of very bright people are that the next decade or two are going to see an explosion, the likes of which you and I can't even conceive in communi-

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cations. You know, the Dick Tracy watch is not way out there in left field. It's technologically possible for the Dick Tracy watch to be on our wrists within a very few years. Via satellite, there is no way you can get away from your office or your wife or your mistress. Well, that's just one of the little things that could happen.

It seems to me that that type of explosion also involves megabucks the likes of which we may not have seen even in oil, even in energy. My own experience in this business is that when megabucks are involved, the interest groups are very active. And they are not always interested in protecting the public. Well, how is the public going to be protected? How is the public even going to understand what is going on? Maybe these regulatory commissions are one of the ways in which we are protected. Certainly a regulatory commission with a fairly narrow mission can do a better job in that narrow mission than the Congress, which has the whole ball of wax they have to look at. But the Congress has to continually look at society, at industry, at commerce, at

free enterprise, or the productive system, and see what it is that needs to be there to help make it work better.

**RITCHIE:** You've been talking about interest groups and lobbyists. Before we talked about the role of the people in the agencies themselves dealing with committee staff people, how much dealings did you as a staff member usually have with representatives of different interest groups who were lobbying for their particular interests?

**REID:** I would say considerable, because at least a goodly percentage of my time involved either talking with interest

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groups on the phone, in person, arranging for a time that they might be able to spend a few moments with Magnuson, and put their word across. All of the staff were the interface between various interest groups, associations, individuals, organizations, enterprises. Most of these interest groups are seeking a friend at court. When they see legislation going through the Congress, they are obviously going to be coming to the Congress and trying to approach a member. Their initial approach is either on the telephone or in a piece of paper, a letter. Some staff member works on that, responds, helps respond, and some kind of an interface is developed. When they personally arrive, or you meet them in the state, it's not uncommon for a member to have a staff person with him. Most members don't like to make notes, and so it's a staff member that has to make notes and follow up on the meeting. So we did interface a great deal with interest groups or lobbyists of whatever you want to call them.

**RITCHIE:** Did they provide much information for you?

**REID:** Yes, they do. You have to realize, you are always getting their own perspective, and again, the quicker they can do that, the more succinctly, the more usable their information (and a short memo, a short treatise, as opposed to a tome that's fifty pages long) the better. They've got to be honest, because if a lobbyist, if an interest group representative (and to me, a lobbyist is not a pejorative term, it never has been, although maybe when I was a kid going to high school and reading about politics, lobbyists was a bad word, but when I got into the business I discovered it was a very able, honest

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profession that was necessary to the members). They have to give their perspective and their position and their view. Normally, in any situation, you will have conflicting lobbyists, because you will have a lobbyist for one group that has one perspective, another group that has another.

Then you may have some citizen group that's coming forward with their perspective. Of course, the member's got to have common sense and some perspective of their own. They may have some intimate knowledge of their own that they bring to bear on the situation to counteract the special interest that comes from only one direction. But we were fortunate in most of the things that I was involved in that we did have a good cross-section of interests in our own state that they were always welcome and usually did come forward. Sometimes they had a different perspective than the national groups. In the health field our state was a little more progressive than some. And we normally listened to the representatives from our own state rather than the national associations, whether it was the hospital group or the AMA or individual professional disciplines.

**RITCHIE:** Home state groups would take precedence?

**REID:** Oh, yes.

**RITCHIE:** In terms of dealing with lobbyists, did you tend to deal with the same faces most of the time, or were there new people that came along depending on new issues? Was there a group of people that you were most likely to deal with?

**REID:** Most of the associations that I dealt with, like the hospital association out home, often referred to the

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lobbyists as the "hired gun." And most of the hired guns that I dealt with were quite able and they had an association, like hospitals, the hired gun was John Bigalow, excellent man who had been with the Washington State Hospital Association for about thirty years. Well, his organization, the way it was operated, he would have elected officers of the association that were either administrators of a hospital or on the board of directors. He'd usually show up with some of those administrators and some of those board members. There might be seven or eight of them, and they'd represent the geographical areas of the state of Washington. They would represent the publicly-owned hospitals as well as privately-owned hospitals. We're fortunate in the state of Washington to have quite a mix, and a good mix, a healthy mix. So you would have one face that was very familiar. You might have new faces that had only been there once or twice. And then a face or two that was there for the first time. Because Bigalow probably had one of the best operations for that kind of lobbying because he would bring seven or eight of his group with him, but there would always be a few that were more or less old-timers and had been here before. They came every year, they came in February, and we had a luncheon. All the delegation would show up and they would make their pitch about their concern of the moment, and then they'd usually spend a time or two going around seeing the various offices individually.

It was an excellent way to operate, because you got to know John and you realized that he did speak for his group, and that he represented their position, and some of the group were with him to reinforce him, and they were all from home. So you had to give them an audience. You didn't have to follow their requests, but at least you had to give them

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an audience, and you heard their pitch. Here on this scene in the national group it was usually an old face that you would see many times that would be carrying the current water or the group. From the education group we always referred to "Dupont Circle" because there just seemed to be a whole bunch of them down there. Then we would see representatives of the American Hospital Association, and various academies that are involved with the disciplines in health affairs.

**RITCHIE:** I always think of the American Medical Association as being one of the big lobbyists around here. Were they an effective group?

**REID:** Never with us, because Magnuson had a reputation that preceded me. Magnuson made them mad

from the earliest days because Magnuson felt that any "specialty" that could help a person in pain feel better was a health professional. Magnuson thought, and thinks, that chiropractors are a health profession, that osteopaths are a health profession. Well, there was a time, early in Magnuson's career, that the M.D.'s and the osteopaths were at war. The attitude that Magnuson carried with him into legislative bodies that both these professions are health professions and an anathema to the AMA. There were few times that the AMA ever showed up in our office outside of perhaps sending memos and being on the mailing list. Even when Harley Dirks left us and went to work for them, the door wasn't open.

**RITCHIE:** Are there more citizens' groups now than when you first started?

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**REID:** I think so. I think people with a particular interest have realized that they can get that interest before a legislative body and get the body to focus on it and maybe pay some attention to it if they organize, and if they work. They've seen the success of the League of Women Voters or the Abortion Rights groups, so you have more groups that do try to bring their cause before the board of directors.

**RITCHIE:** Do you think the citizens groups have been as effective as the groups that represent the large associations, say the Hospital Association.

**REID:** You'd have to take a particular issue and follow it and analyze it and see where the votes fell to really come out on that. The more effective interest groups have certainly been able to translate their position into support at the polls, either with votes or with money.

**RITCHIE:** Does the proliferation of interest groups make your work on the staff harder or easier?

**REID:** I don't think it affects our work as much as it might affect the members' vote, the member's coming to a decision. Either proliferation or vociferousness can pose real problems for a member. Some of the issues that have come to the fore in the Congress, like abortion, where it's not only proliferation but vociferousness, have caused members far more problems than they would like, or than they deserve.

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**RITCHIE:** In a sense, each administration is a lobbying group of its own legislative programs. What kind of contacts and ties do you have with the people who represent the administration in power, rather than the civil servants? I guess we could start with Lyndon Johnson and all the consumer legislation that Magnuson was involved with.

**REID:** Well, of course, Lyndon had a good operation, starting with himself. He was a great one for picking up the phone and being on the phone when he wanted something, as well as having phone calls stacked up and fed into him. He had very able people within his operation that you knew when they came to you and they said, "Look, this is what we want," that they were speaking directly for Lyndon Johnson. In our own operation, we often heard from White House people that were good and were able and that we knew spoke for him. I know that a Tom Korologos was equally capable on the Republican side. We also heard from the OMB types, because OMB is one of the more effective arms of any administration. Again, it's a comptroller operation where they should know. They know the dollars and cents and they should know the programmatic aspects. So

it's important that OMB be involved in any legislative initiatives that the administration is taking. We had good relations there, whether with [James] McIntyre or Herkie Harris, hardly a week went by that we didn't have personal contact from either Jim McIntyre or Herkie Harris during the Carter administration. They were capable of enunciating whatever it was that the Carter administration might want, and they were receptive to hearing from us what we felt they

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might do better. They were perhaps more receptive than they were in acting on that, but at least they were receptive and, in turn, always welcome.

**RITCHIE:** You've been here under several administrations, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, and the beginning of the Reagan administration. Which one was the most effective in administration lobbying efforts?

**REID:** Well, I would have to say Lyndon Johnson, although the Reagan administration may rival the success of putting their stamp on corporate America. We're just six months into it, and they've certainly had some successes thus far. But it's the long term and we're looking back at a Johnson administration, so it's much easier to say that they were successful. I think we'll have to wait another ten or twelve years and then look back at the Reagan administration. I don't want to make it sound pejorative, but I'm suspicious that the Reagan administration may well be as successful in their efforts. They certainly appear to have put together the basic operation. I mentioned OMB, they've got a strong, active [David] Stockman that certainly rivals anyone else that's held that position. He's in that top echelon of OMB directors that I might list. They have a very good Congressional relations office in the White House. They have some very able top staff, Jim Baker, that know what's required. So if they don't pull it off it won't be because they haven't organized their forces to effectively use all the powers that they have at their disposal. They certainly have in Ronald Reagan personally a very potent force to mobilize public opinion,

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capture the attention of the press, get on the tube, to advance whatever it is that they are trying to do. So I am suspicious that when somebody sits here twelve years from now their answer might be "Well, the Reagan administration by all means. Johnson was pretty good, but Reagan really put it together."

**RITCHIE:** By comparison, what about the Nixon administration?

**REID:** One of the problems with the Nixon administration is that Watergate overshadows so many other things that they were up to. I was suspicious, again using that word, after the '72 election that they were really going to do us in, and by that I mean turn the Great Society programs upside down. On Superbowl Sunday of 1973, Magnuson and I went down to John Hogness's house on S Street where John and his wife and a couple of other doctors and their wives all watched the Superbowl. During the half-time, we got to talking about Watergate. They asked Magnuson what he thought would happen. He said "Well, you know, what should happen and what will happen: what should happen is that we really get into it. But you know, we're reading the *Post* every day, but people out in Spokane aren't reading the *Post*. Outside of this town, who really cares? Unless people care, things just don't happen. So I'm afraid nothing's going to happen." Well, I agreed with him. I was afraid at the same time that the initiatives that the Nixon administration had taken, starting right after the election with the resignation of all top administrators and the restructuring they were going to advocate, even

though they didn't have the Congress, that they might see some headway. And of course they tried a number of things in the '69-'72

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period, but they weren't as successful, they didn't change the course of some of the programs, and they didn't achieve the results they sought. So I don't think I would give the Nixon administration very high marks for really changing any courses outside of foreign policy. The thing they did in foreign policy, which stands out to me, is opening up a third of the world to us. And a damn good thing that he did, because he certainly, during the late '40s and the '50s, helped close off that third of the world to us.

**RITCHIE:** China was always an issue that interested Magnuson, wasn't it?

**REID:** Yes.

**RITCHIE:** Part of it was intellectual, part of it was personal. He spent six months in China as a relative youth. He worked his way across on a boat for American Mail Lines and then worked in their Shanghai office for six months in between college and law school. He had a love affair with the Far East. He loved the people, found them good individuals and interesting, and a work ethic that he admired. Just because they had decided to have a different political regime, this didn't bother him, because his view of a people is that that's their right. So if one group of leaders gets thrown out and another group is in, you don't ignore the basic mass. And he had the personal interest of anybody from the Northwest, because Seattle and Puget Sound are still the nearest point by water or air to the Far East, and it's a major part of the world. We are a producing area where we produce things that can be sold, either agricultural or timber products, and the things that

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those people make can come through our ports and help our people. In foreign policy, Magnuson has always felt that if two peoples had commerce beneficial to each going on they were less likely to find a reason, ideologically or otherwise to have problems that might escalate into war. So he has a feeling that trade is one way to achieve peace. He was advocating trade with Red China when things changed over there. We'd had trade before the war, we had some very little trade during the war, and it started to pick up after, but then it went to pot. This didn't help the economy of the Northwest, and it didn't help relationships with that third of the world's population. He was an advocate of opening the door and opening trade again regardless of the regime, even though he had a personal relationship with Chiang-Kai-shek and the Taiwanese.

**RITCHIE:** In what way?

**REID:** They knew each other personally and had met on several occasions.

**RITCHIE:** Going back a bit to the question of oversight again and the Nixon administration. I wanted to follow up on whether or not the Democratic Congress was a little bit more careful about oversight with a Republican administration, between the Johnson administration to the Nixon administration. Did it become more of an issue of concern to see what the bureaucracy was doing with the legislation they had passed, under a Republican administration?



**REID:** I would say it's a natural tendency for opposite parties to be a little more critical of their view of each other.

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Your criticisms will take a more public avenue. So during Nixon the Democratic Congress would be more publicly critical. During a Johnson administration, if you discovered something, you'd try to take care of it privately. But there were instances of taking care of it privately during Nixon as well. There were a number of times in sessions between secretaries and Magnuson that something would be resolved in the quietude of an office without press and without any public disclosure. I think it was an effectiveness that Magnuson cultivated. He had a reputation that he could be talked to and could be dealt with and that he wouldn't speak out of school. So we were able to do many things with secretaries that were of a caliber of Weinberger and Richardson that could be done that way.

It's easier for a Congress of one party to take to task an administration of another party. We do get partisanship rearing its ugly head, so to speak. But I think the overall effort to have a "bureaucracy that is responsive" is something that the Congress, as well as presidents and secretaries, all the transitories, want. Because the people that have to keep the ship running, or the trains on time, the bureaucracy who are going to be here after we leave, many presidents, secretaries, congressmen, realize that they have a mutuality of interest regardless of party. So long as the program is needed, then let's all cooperate and see how we can get these bureaucrats to do it better.

**RITCHIE:** Particularly as you say with HEW, which has always been so amorphous, and almost destroyed Nixon's first secretary, Robert Finch, who couldn't control what was going on, and made life unpleasant for a number of other secretaries over the years.

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**REID:** Magnuson long had the feeling that it was too big for any one person to administer. Now, Joe Califano certainly had enough ego to believe that he could, and probably came closest to putting more of a personal stamp on it. But Magnuson many times felt that it was too big and should be somewhat separated. Now, how you can separate it logically, the interdependence of some things are so obvious, but yet the effort to establish a separate Department of Education was something that Magnuson supported and advocated and finally helped bring about. It is very amorphous and there are certain missions down there that almost everybody agrees we are never going to abolish, but yet, they are an awfully big operation. Social Security is an awfully big operation. But it's more just one of managerial technique, because they have to keep track of the people and get the checks out on time. They don't even manage the funds, there's somebody else that manages the money. But they've got to devise an operation that works, and that will get the checks there on time.

**RITCHIE:** Of course, that's one of the biggest operations around here for most of the personal staffs: writing letters to Social Security from irate constituents.

**REID:** But yet, the individual can get things fouled up with his account by either changing his name or making a mistake with his number or moving and not notifying. So there's justification on both sides.

**RITCHIE:** One other part of the process, we've talked about the bureaucrats, the lobbyists, the

haven't talked at all about the House of Representatives. I was wondering what the relationship between, say, the Commerce Committee in the Senate and the Commerce Committee in the House, and the staffs of both of those committees. Could you tell me a little about that?

**REID:** When I was on Commerce, I seldom dealt with the staff on the other side, and I'm not so sure that my colleagues did very much. Often they were so busy with their own problems on our side that they didn't have much time to deal with people on the other side. I do know that in the instance of Nick Zapple, who was our communications man, that he had a working relationship with his counterpart on the House side. I believe in Nick's instance there was a great stability, in other words, there was somebody over there that had been there a long time also. On Appropriations I can tell you that there is a very close and constant relationship that goes on. Again, the respective staffs have been fairly stable, perhaps even more so on the House side than in the Senate. In our own case, Henry Neil, he was there as the staff person on HEW when we first moved in there in '69 and he's still there. Some of the people that work with him have been there almost as long. Keith Mainland who is the top staff person for Jamie Whitten and was for George Mahon, we worked very closely with Keith and had almost daily conversations if not physically at least over the phone.

One advantage of Appropriations, and disadvantage too, is that you are dealing with thirteen bills plus maybe a supplemental or two that *have* to be passed, or a continuing resolution that has to be passed. On the legislative committees, a House chairman, a Harley Staggers, he can

have a legislative agenda that is 180 degrees opposed to Warren Magnuson's Senate agenda, and he can pass his bills, and we forget about them over on the Senate side. The Senate can pass its bills, and he can forget about them over there, and the country won't come to a screeching halt if it doesn't pass a Consumers Products Safety Commission bill, or what-have-you. So that is certainly a difference on a legislative side, that the committees often are dealing with subjects that don't have to be passed, and if the other side doesn't want to bring them up everything isn't going to fall to pieces. Now that may not be true when you get into the tax field, and finance. But on Appropriations, the members and staff, both Senate and House, all know that they must get to that point somewhere along the line when they will act in concert. They know they do not have the luxury of "inaction," which for the legislative committees can often be the best result, in the long run, for the country.

**RITCHIE:** On the other hand, you have had times when the chairmen of the Appropriations committees of the House and Senate have had deep animosities towards each other. Carl Hayden, and I've forgotten what the chairman on the House side . . .

**REID:** I believe it was [Clarence] Cannon.

**RITCHIE:** Hayden and Cannon wouldn't cross over the line.

**REID:** Yes. They couldn't agree on a place to meet. Well, that was one thing where I was fortunate. I worked with a man who would never carry personal feelings to that point. Magnuson respected an individual,

whoever it was, and he certainly respected his colleagues

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on the other side. He might not have liked to play poker with them, he might not sit down and have a drink with them—and some he did play poker with—but many of them he genuinely liked. He had no trouble finding a way to work with them, even at times especially when the conferences became more open. We had pre-conference conferences, or post-conference conferences in his back room. Because that was one of the things that Magnuson did when he became chairman of Appropriations. He took a room that had been used otherwise and made it for himself. He and Jamie Whitten would often get together back there, or other members from the House side or the Senate. Bob Michel was back there several times. They would agree back there that they had to posture a little, but by gosh look, when are we going to get down and cut the bait? So there was an easy relationship that was fostered even in those momentary at times, four or five minutes, that they would get together off camera, so to speak and agree that they just had to get moving.

**RITCHIE:** But on the staff level you were concerned that certain things be mutually understood to make things easier when it got to the committee level?

**REID:** Oh, yes. And we never had any problem in voicing those interests with the House staff and making sure that they understood, and we with them. Again, we were fortunate to have some continuity. We had a number of old-timers on our own side, and they had old-timers on their side that worked together quite well. The physical preparation of the piece of paper that becomes the public law in an appropriations bill is laborious and often takes quite a few hours.

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It's impossible for one set of hands to do the typing. You have to farm things out and there's always the danger, when you do that, of mistakes. I didn't help create the system, I just carried on. I think Keith Mainland was the same way. We inherited a system that is hopefully foolproof. At least we never made any major boobos. It takes a lot of time and it takes people. For our self-protection we had to involve a number of Senate side and a number of the House side, and spread the work between the House and Senate and then get together and check the finished product. It's a laborious process. Several times it ran us through the clock and into the following day, because historically in the last few Congresses, money bills have not been passed, something had to be done at the last minute. Abortion and other legislative issues weren't answered by legislative committees and they wound up in appropriations bills, and so the conferences got hung up. Then, when they finally got down to the deadline and everybody realized you had to do something or the government comes to a screeching halt, we were faced with a scribes' task that was horrendous, and a massive printing task. We would work through the night. One time, I know it was over thirty-six hours straight through that we worked before the final pieces of paper were available for signature by the Speaker and the president pro tem and the president.

**RITCHIE:** Appropriations bills always seem to be the last on the agenda, the things you come to watch the senators arguing over at three o'clock on the morning before the Congress is ready to adjourn. In fact, they used to push the clock back so that Congress wouldn't actually end at noon, but would be given another hour to finish off the appropriations legislation.

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**REID:** I've seen that happen in Olympia in the state legislature, where they've stopped the clock.

**RITCHIE:** To move on to one other thing that I wanted to ask you about. We talked about the '62 election, how close it was, and how important it was to Magnuson. Then in '68, Magnuson came back and won a tremendous reelection victory with almost no opposition. How do you account for the change in tone from '62 to '68?

**REID:** Well, I think the Republican establishment of the state of Washington realized that '62 was not that close, that the fact that Magnuson ran ahead of his party and the congressional candidates total. They read the election returns differently than perhaps some of the scribes of the press, and some of the less initiated. Magnuson's legislative activities back here perhaps got a little more play. Remember, consumerism and the Johnson period, the activist period, the Great Society, that must have had an impact. Of course, Vietnam had another impact. Magnuson's apparent support of the president and the government, some of the anti-Vietnam activists questioned it. But '68 was a breeze and '74 was an equal breeze. He did very well in both elections, even though he had creditable opposition. The opposition in both '68 and '74 was politically a little more pronounced to the right, perhaps, and Magnuson, of course, had been perceived as an activist as perhaps to the left. The opposition in '80 on the Republican side, I would say that Mr. [Slade] Gorton's position, if understood, is certainly more moderate and centrist. The state of Washington has always had within the Republican camp a Goldwater-Reagan wing, let's say, and a

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Rockefeller wing. Slade Gorton has always been a well-known member of the Rockefeller wing of the Republican Party. The Republican Party structure in the state of Washington has been dominated more by the Reagan-Goldwater right wing than by the moderate Rockefeller types. But the successful statewide Republican candidates have come from that Rockefeller camp and Joel Pritchard is certainly from that wing of the party. Sid Morrison, who was also a successful challenger for a congressional seat last fall, is another moderate or Rockefeller type.

**RITCHIE:** In '68 the Republicans had to look pretty hard to find someone to run against Magnuson. I guess he'd gotten a real reputation by that time of being a tough man to beat.

**REID:** Yes. Well, he'd beaten the best, I wouldn't say that Christiansen was the brightest, but Christiansen was certainly a very bright star at the time. But again he was not the choice of the Republican establishment and he didn't last. He tried for elective office again in '64 and had a miserable experience. But the Republicans in our state had had another experience with that. They had an attorney general at one time. His name was Don Eastvold. He starred in the Republican convention of '52, taking one of the lead spots on the platform in an effort that contrasted the Eisenhower delegates to the Taft slate of delegates and made quite a speech. It got quite a bit of play and he shot up to stardom. But it didn't take long for the Republican establishment in the state of Washington to discover that he was a phony and help get rid of him. Christiansen was also a bit like that on the Republican side.

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**RITCHIE:** I think on that note this would be a good time for us to wrap up this session. We've put in another

two hour stretch here.

[End of Interview # 3]

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