THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP IN AN ERA OF PARTISAN POLARIZATION

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Welcome:

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Introductory Remarks:

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President, The Henry M. Jackson Foundation

Featured Speakers:

DAN GLICKMAN
Senior Fellow, The Bipartisan Policy Center
Former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture
Former Member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-KS)

ROBERT F. BENNETT
Former U.S. Senator (R-UT)

Moderator:

THOMAS MANN
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Panelists:

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JANET HOOK
Congressional Reporter, *The Wall Street Journal*

DAVID WELNA
Congressional Correspondent, National Public Radio

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. MANN: Well, I just got off the phone with Speaker Boehner and an agreement has been reached. But I'd asked them, for the sake of our event, to postpone any announcement of it so it didn't really interfere with the focus on the important issues.

Good morning and welcome to Brookings. I'm Tom Mann, a senior fellow here, an old hand at Brookings. And just delighted to welcome you and to have this event that we have called *Congressional Leadership in an Era of Partisan Polarization.*

Now, I hope you're impressed with the extraordinary planning that went into this event, that determined that on the day of the conference we would have the prime example of Congressional leadership, or the lack thereof. The developments, certainly, on the current fiscal year funding picture have been dramatic. In some ways, appalling, that a great nation finds itself down to the wire close to shutting down with arguments that have more to do with large political symbols than with substantive considerations that have great bearing on deficits and debt, or any number of things. But alas, it has brought to the fore a whole host of important questions about American politics and governance.

And then, of course, we also arranged to have Paul Ryan table his Path to Prosperity, the plan which one could either view as David Brooks did in his previous column, an exercise of extraordinary political courage. Or, as opening move that's more likely to close down any negotiations rather than encourage them.

In any case, certainly the prominence of Speaker Boehner and, frankly, the importance of his own political position within the Republican

conference in the House is probably the determining factor in whether at the last minute an agreement is reached. Which if it is to be reached, it will certainly only be at the last minute. Time enough to get a clean three-, four-, five-day extension with no additional cuts and no language to implement an agreement that's been fully signed off on by the players.

It's fascinating that the players come down to the majority leader, Harry Reid, the Democrat in the Senate, the Speaker of the House, and the President of the United States. Has anyone heard about Nancy Pelosi or Mitch McConnell lately? It is really quite fascinating how these things developed.

The idea for this conference came in a set of discussions between folks from the Henry Jackson Foundation, and several of us here at Brookings. The Jackson Foundation had put together a study entitled, *The Nature of Leadership: Lessons from an Exemplary Statesman*. And make no mistake about it; Scoop Jackson was a whale, not a minnow. An extraordinary legislator and leader in the Congress. We know him most from his years in the Senate, ranging across a whole host of policy arenas.

Now, that coincided with some work underway here at Brookings, including my colleague Sarah Binder and myself, about really the implications of the vastly altered political context on the limits and possibilities of such effective, even transformational, leadership. We had noted, not surprisingly to any of you, the evidence on the growth in partisan polarization. To see it illustrated most starkly, if you look at the last *National Journal* voting scores and ratings, we see there is zero overlap in this last Congress between Democrats and Republicans in the Senate. And only a handful overlapping in the House that is a raid on a measure from, you know, liberal to conservative votes. There simply isn't any

more.

Now, you could say the parties have really been so reconstituted that there is simply no room for conversation any more. It's two Parliamentary-like parties fighting it out. And yet, there still are differences. Some of those Senate Republicans represent states that look pretty blue. And some of those Republican members of the House represent districts that have supported John Kerry and Barack Obama. Yet when we look at their voting, we find that in fact they are voting like other Republicans from conservative districts. So, ideological polarization was the beginning of a process but it has led to a level of party homogeneity agreement, unity of a sort we haven't seen.

Interestingly, there remain some Democrats representing more conservative Republican districts who provide a little more diversity within the Democratic Party. So they are never quite as unified as the Republicans are. But the building blocks of Congress now are no longer individuals, they're parties. That's the basis, the starting point.

And so the question is, where in this new environment of partisan polarization, where is the room for the effective, the skillful, the even transformational leadership of the sort that Scoop Jackson demonstrated during his career? That's what we're going to be grappling with this morning.

We look at Congressional leadership broadly. We're thinking of party leaders, committee leaders, issue leaders, but also presidents who have a responsibility to lead. So that's the question. You know, it's posed between the Jackson Foundation report, you know -- the story of the skills and strategies of one successful leader in an era that has passed, in many ways. And the sort of -- the new world in which we live. What are the possibilities, how does one try to

make this system work effectively?

Our plan for the day -- and you all have the agenda. We are going to begin with some remarks from John Hempelmann, who is the president of the Henry M. Jackson Foundation. And then we will have our featured speaker, Dan Glickman. I will have more to say about Dan in just a minute.

Now, I would like to turn the podium over to John Hempelmann, one of the founding partners of Cairncross and Hempelmann, a distinguished Seattle law firm that really does extraordinary work in issues of national resources, and real estate development. And who leads this foundation.

John, please. (Applause)

MR. HEMPELMANN: Thank you, Tom. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the board of the Henry M. Jackson foundation I, too, welcome you to this discussion.

The Jackson Foundation was founded more than 25 years ago after the untimely death of Senator Scoop Jackson. And was organized to continue the Senator's legacy. Dan and I were chatting earlier this morning, trying to think of other senators, particularly senators who have been gone for 27 years who have an active national foundation. And it's unusual. The Jackson foundation is unusual in that it is very, very active in many, many sectors on the East coast and the West coast and in Europe as well.

At the core of our mission is our enduring interest in the importance of civil dialogue and bipartisanship in the Congress. That's one of our key focuses. I had the great fortune to have experienced one of the epitomes of civil dialogue and bipartisanship in the Congress when I came to work for Scoop here in D.C. in 1960.

So, you know, here I was in school in Seattle having heard about the differences between the Republicans and the Democrats, and I arrive here at the beginning of Camelot. And I experienced the new frontier of John F. Kennedy and the great society of Lyndon Baines Johnson. And I was amazed, because here we had senators, Republicans and Democrats, and two presidents while I was here, working together to truly change America.

You know, I watched those senators who had very, very strong feelings and diverse points of view work together on some really controversial legislation, like the Civil Rights Act of 1964. That was -- I was going to say bruising, but bruising isn't the right word. It was intense. But in the end, the bill was passed and it has remade America.

How times have changed. And that's a question that's all on our minds today. Congress, at least then, was very civil. And can the Congress regain that civility?

Not only is that question on our mind, but fortunately that's the focus of our program today. And it's great that we have some distinguished scholars and politicians and former politicians and journalists here to talk about that issue. And hopefully they can help us understand, is there the possibility in American political life to change back to an era of civility and bipartisanship?

Senator Jackson was in the Congress and in the House and the Senate for more than 43 years. And he was the author of many very controversial pieces of legislation. The National Environmental Policy Act, the Alaska and Hawaii Statehood Admission Act. You cannot believe how divided the Senate was over that issue, for obvious reasons if you know the history.

The Energy Act -- the National Energy Act, the Jackson-Vanik

Amendment, are just a few of the pieces of legislation that were extremely controversial but were, in the end, passed by large majorities in both houses. And why? Because Scoop believed in building coalitions, and he believed in listening to people with different perspectives. And he would do that before he introduced the legislation.

He was famous for being able to cross the aisle and work with Republicans. And that garnered him great respect from members on the left and members on the right, and it was probably one of the keys to his legislative success.

Former Secretary of Energy and former Secretary of Defense Jim Schlesinger expressed it well when he said, I'm going to read this, Scoop reached out across the aisle to uncover different perspectives and then build coalitions. He did this with extraordinary civility, even with irascible colleagues. That's how you become a great legislator.

I remember Scoop's comment to me one time when we were leaving the Capitol and walking back to the Senate office building. Scoop was a health nut, you know, back there in the '60s and the '70s, going to the gym every morning long before most of us were into that. And he didn't take the tram, he walked in that tunnel. And as we were walking back after some intense debate on a piece of legislation I don't remember, I remember what he said to me. He said, you know, the right doesn't like my position on my bill but the left doesn't like my position on this bill either. So, I guess we're right where we should be, in the middle.

And you know, unlike what's happening today, literally today -- I'm not talking just about the era, but today, April 8th -- Scoop did not believe in

brinksmanship. He taught us a very important lesson -- I mean, he taught me this lesson but he taught all of us a lesson that could be useful today up on the Hill. And that is, his idea was never get on the track where we're right and they're wrong. Because then you don't have any room to maneuver. If you are in an ideological extreme, you cannot compromise. And that's, of course, one of the issues that we're facing today.

Scoop would be really unhappy with how ideological lines are drawn today. You know, lines are drawn between the red states and the blue states. Now, between good spending and bad spending, and many other kinds of positions. And, you know, if he was faced with someone who was drawing those ideological lines in the sand he would say, now wait a minute. Wait a minute. We're all Americans, and we were elected, we were sent here to solve problems, not to cause problems.

And of course, that's what's happening now. We have huge problems in the country, but the divide between the parties and the ideological split in the Congress and the homogeneity of the political parties is causing a problem rather than solving a problem.

So, as part of our interest in sharing Scoop's extraordinary leadership and approach to bipartisanship, the Jackson Foundation has produced this book, which I hope you all have or will grab on the table. It's called *The Nature of Leadership: Lessons from an Exemplary Statesman*. And the goal of this book is to capture, through the words and reflections of some of the folks who knew Scoop best, some of the qualities he exemplified. And it's our belief that these qualities, integrity, vision, determination, honesty, and openness are the key components of any effective leader. And therefore we hope you'll take a

look at this publication, that you'll use it in your own organizations, that you'll use it to influence members of Congress and use it to educate young people around you.

Now, we can provide you more copies of this if your organization wants to disseminate it. We'd love to help you do that. It also can be downloaded from our website. And we hope that the book provides an inspiring model for public servants now and in the future.

We believe strongly that it's relevant for political leaders in the Congress today, and maybe -- maybe if a few people get a hold of it, can be a starting point for a new civil dialogue. It's that heritage of the Jackson Foundation and the Brookings Institution that brought us together on this program. We're honored to be joining with Brookings, and pleased that Brookings is equally inspired by Senator Jackson's leadership qualities.

So today, we're going to seek to shed light on whether pragmatic policy is still possible in this era of partisan polarization. You know, we're optimists. You know, we wouldn't be doing this if we weren't optimists. We believe pragmatic policy can still work in the U.S. Congress, and we hope you agree. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. MANN: Thank you, John. I mean, just to show you the quest here -- the unified quest to see if there is any possibility of effective politics and policymaking in this partisan era, we have as bookends our keynote speaker, Dan Glickman, and our concluding speaker are both senior fellows at the Bipartisan Policy Center. So, in between we will have a panel with David Welna and Janet Hook, Sarah Binder. And we will see what progress we can make.

Let me briefly say that Dan Glickman is a national treasure. I've

known him since he first ran for Congress successfully in 1976. He served 18 years in the House, during that time working in fields of agriculture and aviation. He was also chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. He was the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture for a full presidential term. He directed the Institute of Politics at Harvard University. He served as Chairman of the Motion Picture Association of America.

And now, he's taken on yet another responsibility as executive director of the Aspen Institute Congressional Program. For those of you who don't know this, this is a wonderful program in which members from both houses, both parties go off to a location with experts and really wrestle with issues. It's the very antithesis of a junket. It's one of the most productive experiences, and our closing speaker, Bob Bennett, has been an active participant in that program over the years.

Dan, thank you so much for being with us. (Applause)

MR. GLICKMAN: Thank you, Tom. Tom Mann was involved in my first race for Congress in 1976. You did polling for me, remember? And the polls actually looked better than they were, and I went home and told my wife that and she said, the pollsters must not be very good. And so, it worked.

Anyway, I'm appreciative of Tom and as Tom pointed out, my association with the Bipartisan Policy Center as well as my new association with the Aspen Institute, I think, does reflect my belief that it's important to try to get this country going down the right road. And so I'm a great fan of Henry Jackson, and I was telling you a little bit beforehand that in 1980 some of us Democrats from the heartland were -- how can I say this? Because everything is on the record. Were not totally consistent with all the policies of former President Jimmy

Carter. And so we thought, well, Senator Jackson would be a great alternative. So I was part of an incipient conspiracy back then to try to see if we could draft him to run for President. So I hope my credentials are good, is I guess what I'm saying here.

I just thought this is -- for those of you who get National Journal daily, in today's daily magazine they put out, there's this thing by Barbara Mikulski, and she says the following. She says, I am hopeful maybe they'll get a deal. I'm hopeful that the Tooth Fairy will deliver dental care. I am hopeful about a lot of things. I am hopeful one day my prince will come. I am just a hopeful kind of girl. And I thought, what a great quote, you know? And one of the things that is missing from our political debate so much today is a little bit of humor and lightheartedness and just take a deep breath. And not everything is so serious, because we're all mortal. And sometimes I think maybe one of the lessons is a little bit of discussion about legacy and mortality.

And you know, when I first came to the House there was a Daniel Webster quote behind the Speaker. And I don't remember the whole quote, but the end is, always remember to do something worthy to be remembered. And Speaker Foley said, look at that quote every day, because that's why you're here. Doing something worthy to be remembered. And maybe some of the basics are just kind of getting, you know, our own act together internally as people. But, in any event, that's perhaps a little bit of Pollyanna-ish.

I also spent my career in Congress trying to be a moderate. In fact, when the National Journal would do their ratings, or CQ would do their ratings, if I wasn't in the middle I was doing something wrong. Democrat from a state that did not -- had a very significant Republican background. Kansas has not elected

a Democratic senator since 1932, the longest-running state in the country. And yet, we had a tradition of very responsible Republicans in Congress, particular Senators Dole and Kassebaum. We had bipartisan governors in the state, but it was always like, God, if I wasn't in the 40 to 60 percent range of support for the party and support for whoever the President was, this was deep trouble to me.

Today, I wouldn't last 10 minutes in that category, you know. I'd have to be on one extreme or the other. And this is on both sides of the aisle. So that's a particular problem. And then my jobs in the past, with being at the Department of Agriculture -- which is, some would call, the most bipartisan of all the federal agencies because by and large you're dealing with non-ideological issues. And also, issues where -- rural issues, small town issues, farm issues. And they tend to be more -- a constituency tends to be more conservative. So you have to be extremely bipartisan. And then my years outside at a trade association for the American Film Industry also led me to believe that you couldn't succeed in that world without having a strong belief in the two-party system and the ability to work with both. So, I come from that part of the world.

And yet today, we are really seeing a good news/bad news scenario develop. The good news, of course, is that in some respects, participatory democracy has never been greater. People have access to the world of communication, no longer are they told by three networks about what to think, what to believe. The social networking and modern technology has produced an environment where people can actually try to input the process from the ground. Where "little people" can have impact.

The bad news is that we have entered into a system where we have bifurcated public policy decisions and it makes it much more difficult for

leadership to be responsive. I'm reminded of the story I sometimes tell about the good news/bad news. It's a story of -- some of you may remember Wilbur Mills. Wilbur Mills was the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee.

This was back in the early, mid-'70s, and Wilbur had some issues with drinking. And Wilbur also had some issues of being with ladies -- at least allegedly -- that were not related to him. So, Wilbur was found drunk -- the joke goes, Wilbur was found inebriated in the Tidal Basin with Fanny Fox -- here nickname was the Argentine Firecracker. And she was a stripteaser here in Washington D.C. So, Wilbur's staff used to follow him around all the time because they knew he would get in trouble.

And so they -- when he fell into the Tidal Basin or slipped in and Fanny was with him, the staff was right there and the D.C. policy were around and came around and they said to Wilbur, how are you doing? I'm fine. Now, who is this woman? Well, this is Ms. Fox; she's a very close friend of my wife. And they said, Wilbur, where is your wife? And he says, well, see, she's home. She couldn't be with us tonight, she broke her foot. So immediately the Mills staff runs to their apartment to let Mrs. Mills know about this. And so they knock on the door and Mrs. Mills answers and the staff says, Mrs. Mills, we have good news and bad news for you. And she says, oh, my God, what's the good news? The good news is that your husband Wilbur has been found drunk in the Tidal Basin with Fannie Fox, the Argentine Firecracker. And it will be all over the newspapers tomorrow. And she says, oh, my God. What's the bad news? And they said, the bad news, Mrs. Mills, is we've come to break your foot. (Laughter)

And so, you know, I think to myself sometimes, that's government today. You know, we don't know the difference between the good news and the

bad news, and the good news isn't so good.

So, let me give you some of the things as a retiring former -- you're never a former politician, you always remain in this thing. Things that I sense from my years in this business.

The first issue is the nature of the American system of government. The founding fathers wanted a system that didn't work very well. They intentionally created a system that would have one foot on the break and one foot on the accelerator. It's called separation of powers. You'd never do this in the private sector or the corporate world, or anything else where you intentionally make it so nobody can have full accountability. And so leadership is very difficult.

And so this separation of powers was made to make it really difficult for government to intrude on people's lives. They wanted that. Okay. So, that's fine, when things are generally pretty good. Or, that's fine when people of goodwill can work together. It is damned hard when people aren't working together. It is stoking the fires and the flames of confrontation and inability to resolve problems.

But our country was designed in a way so that if things aren't working perfectly, where interpersonal relationships aren't working perfectly, where people aren't -- leaders aren't acting like leaders and followers aren't acting like followers, it becomes difficult. And then, as America has tended to move more towards a de facto parliamentary system which, as Tom mentioned, not in law but in fact, this kind of system is not complimentary to that movement. Because in a Parliamentary system, the legislative and executive are together and there is full accountability. But in our system, where we have inherently this

split -- but if the parties act like Parliamentary parties it really does create an institutional problem to get things done.

I don't have a magic answer for it. It just makes it much more difficult for a country like ours. And particularly in a world where our competitors are, in fact, moving ahead on so many things -- I take the Chinese in particular. I don't like their political system, but they're moving ahead on infrastructure, on research, on education, and all the things that they just decided to go down this road, and they're going down this road and it's much more difficult for us to solve those kinds of problems.

But, you know, also the truth is that a lot of the issues that are being raised today and the vitriol, we've had for years in this country, decades in this country. And you know, I think Mark Twain once said there's only one commonly-known criminal class in America, and that's the Congress. And that was 100 years ago. So, I mean, you've got all those litanies and antidotes of -- he also said that an honest man in politics shines more than he would elsewhere. So it's clear that to some extent, this kind of interesting and critique of our political system has been around forever. People love to complain about politics, complain about government, and complain about Congress.

So notwithstanding that, things are different. It is harder to get things done today. I was elected in '76, and I can tell you at least for my first 10 or 12 years in Congress, leadership talked to each other. They worked with each other, there were differences of opinion, strong differences of opinion, we got appropriation bills passed. The regular order seemed to prevail.

There is no regular order today. That is a profound difference than what, I think, it was before. And on balance I don't think it's helpful to the

system. I don't think it's a partisan issue, per se. There are good people on both sides of the political aisle who want to make this system work. But the regular order -- and I mean regular order like simple things like rules, passing of bills, especially the appropriations process, it just doesn't work as well as it used to.

Now, what are some of the reasons for this? And I've got a few that I think are really part of it, none of which is the sole reason. And I think John Maynard Keynes said, for every complicated problem there is a simple and a wrong solution. And there is no question there is a simple and wrong explanation for all these things. But I think a confluence of factors have affected. And this is in no particular order, but I'm going to mention them.

The first is money. Money saturates our political system. They've announced that the Presidency this year from the President alone will cost about $1 billion. The average Congressional contested race is somewhere between $3- and $5 million. What does this do? This means that these folks have to spend every waking minute raising money. That means, A, they don't have time to spend intellectual resources to look at issues and talk and work with each other. It also means that they're indebted to folks who give them money because people do not give you money because they like the color of your tie or the way you look. They give you money because they want access. And usually, they want more than just access. But that's -- at a reasonable level, that's part of our political system. But when it's saturated like it is today, it's very, very destructive.

And what this does, in many cases, it leads to a risk-averse and sometimes paralytic political process. Because most people give money to not do things. They don't give you money -- there's no debt reduction pack that gives large amounts of money to try to get the deficit down. That's not -- or as Bob

Dole once said, he's never seen a poor-people's pack before. Most people give you money because they want to retain benefits, or they want to increase spending. And in fact, I think you can trace the size of the deficit, in many cases, to the explosion of money in politics in the early 1980s, although I have not analyzed that as an academic.

But I think that's one of the factors. And this is a bipartisan thing. Both sides are afflicted by this problem. The White House is afflicted by this problem. I'm not sure what we can do about it practically. We may want to talk about this, but I think that's part of the issue here. So, when they're not focusing on issues as much, and themes as much, and policy as much, but they're focusing much of their life on leaving their offices, going across the street to raise dollars, particularly with people who have interests in the system you're dealing with, it impedes the process. Trust me. I've seen it on both ends. I've raised money and I have given money. And it's a factor, and a big factor.

The second factor, I think, is the whole issue of the media. And I mentioned this before, and this is not to complain about the media because, in many respects, we have the best media we've ever had in the history of the world now. Much of it is intelligent, it's thoughtful, it's probing. And, you know, I watch Anderson Cooper in Eastern Libya and I'm thinking, oh, my God, we've never had that kind of coverage of what's going on in the world. But we have a bifurcated decentralized media searching desperately for news. And it's also created an opportunity for people who are not classic journalists to enter the system and act like they're journalists.

We have a system of what I call different strokes for different folks today. So, you watch what appeals to you and, in many cases, what appeals to

you is what's ideological comfortable for you. So you're not watching things that you don't necessarily agree with. I listen to a lot of talk radio, just because I want to know what the other side is saying, and I can feel this thing, that we have this magnetic gravitation to that kind of media that people like. Or, reinforces their own beliefs.

And I think that in some sense, that's part of the democratization of the media, which with new technology, allows a thousand flowers to bloom. But the other side is it's somewhat disturbing because it allows anything and everything out there with the same level of intensity. And the same level of authenticity. And that's a problem, particularly if you're an elected official where your constituents are hearing this kind of thing all the time. Okay, so that's a second issue.

The third issue is the lack of social contact among elected officials. When I was elected to Congress we worked five days a week. We lived in Washington, brought my kids to Washington, and I got to know and became good friends with most members of Congress, both sides of the aisle. They were my friends. Friendship and familiarity builds trust. There's the old expression familiarity breeds contempt. Maybe. But it builds trust in this sector.

And you take any other institution, whether it's business or the NGO community or the academic world, wherever. You've got to build relationships. Teambuilding is essential to success in any institution. And we do not have teambuilding in our Congressional system anymore. We have a parochial or partisan teambuilding, but we don't have across the board teambuilding, in large part because they don't spend much time there.

So, they're home more than they're in Washington. Part of that is the kind

of reinforced beat that Washington is bad, you need to get out of town, you need to get back to your home where the real people live, and this is a problem in terms of knowing and talking to people and the friendships that come about it. And reinforcing the fact that if you know somebody, the old song to know him is to love him. In many cases, not to love him, but to trust him. And trust is the factor that builds a successful institution. Or, any business, or law firm, or you name it. You have to have mutual trust. And that has diminished. So that is certainly impactful in the system.

The fourth thing I would talk about is the difficulty in building leadership principles into the governance of this process. I'm looking at this book here. I'm looking at a great leader, a person who is willing to stake out tough positions. And do it notwithstanding the fact that they might just dis-elect him. Leadership is a lot of things. Follower-ship and leadership are all part of the same thing, but it is much more difficult to lead today. That's one thing, for sure. But it is also certainly a clear principle that we have created kind of a risk-averse culture where nobody wants to take on their own in this process. And that's become very, very difficult.

And this is, again, not partisan. It afflicts the Congress, it afflicts the White House. I'm going to give you one example. And I think by and large President Obama has done a very good job. But boy, would I have liked -- he spent all this time and effort creating this commission on deficit reduction. And so you had Bowles-Simpson -- in our own Bipartisan Policy Center, we had Domenici-Rivlin. Okay, comparable proposal. They spent months. They brought people of alternative ideological persuasions together.

In the case of Bowles-Simpson, you had senators like Tom

Coburn and Dick Durbin, and others as well. And we had comparable folks in the Bipartisan Policy Center. They took a lot of political heat, they worked their compromises, but by and large they decided that they had to do something for the country. There was something higher purpose, and they did it. And it took a remarkable amount of courage for a lot of those people.

Okay, what did the country do with the commission? Nothing. Really is sad, when you think about it. And to some extent -- I'm not blaming anybody in particular. But to some extent the fact that we may have a shutdown tonight is due to the fact that we didn't take that commission and say, folks, lets go to work on it. And it will be hard, it will be difficult, but let's go to work on it. We didn't do it.

Now, why didn't we do it? Well, I claim it's a failure of leadership. We didn't do it because it wasn't the right time to do it. We didn't do it because our constituencies would not like various pieces of it. Our business constituencies would not like raising taxes in one way or the other. Our seniors wouldn't like Medicare or Social Security reforms, or whatever else it is. So, leadership requires folks to take challenges and bring people along. That's what a statesman and leader has done since the beginning of time, starting with Moses and going through Henry Jackson. And I don't know which one was greater, but I'll let you make the judgment there. (Laughter)

And it's tougher to do that these days, but I'm thinking what a missed opportunity that was on the deficit. And regardless of your political persuasion. Because what we're probably going to end up doing is cutting things that are going to deal with the future infrastructure of America or competitiveness, because we haven't dealt with the whole picture. And so I am

concerned about this, and one of the things I talk about all the time is Congress and the White House and government is no different than almost any other institution. We kind of sometimes think that it's different, but any institution requires principles of organization, governance, and leadership. And for whatever reason, the business world, the academic world, the NGO world are way ahead of the government world in terms of these principles and concepts of leadership, organization, follower-ship. And it's largely because of political system makes it a lot more difficult to deal with it.

I'm just going to give a couple of other things. One is, what's really worrisome is the fact that basic legislation doesn't pass anymore. The rules of the process are now being used in a way to thwart rather than encourage legislation. And the rules are pretty much the same. They haven't changed dramatically in the last 100 years. I mean, the filibuster rules, the Clotcher rules, the way the Senate works on approving confirmations. I mean, something has broken down, but the rules have not profoundly changed. The rules are all based on people wanting to do the right thing and wanting to get things done and moving the processes along.

Now, there's some good stuff happening now. I note that the leadership of both parties in the Senate are now working on ways to maybe accelerate the appointment process so as not to slow it down as much as it did. But the rules in Congress were there really to protect minority interests wherever they are. And now the rules are used to pretty much just stop everything. And that's troubling. I mean, I will have to say as an old House guy I think most of that is on the Senate side in terms of how the rules have been operating. But both parties are a part of this particular problem. And so what we're going to try

to do where we can is look at ways at the BPC, and as well as Aspen, look at ways to help the members with this particular thing as well.

Finally, I want to talk just quickly about lightening up. I mentioned this before, but you know, we have got to figure out a way to just take a deep breath in our society and realize that not everything is of equal importance. Some things are more important than others. Some things are life and death to the country. Some things aren't. And it strikes me that we fight almost every battle in America like it's Armageddon. And so, how do we get off this and calibrate decision making to figure out what's important, what is useful for partisan purposes, and what is not worth fighting battles on?

Now the truth of the matter is most bills in Congress are bipartisan. The overwhelming number of bills are not stuck in the system. They pass all the time. They just passed an FAA authorization bill that will, I think, have a positive impact. Most agriculture policy is bipartisan. But the stuff that's really kind of important doesn't get calibrated very well.

And I know that -- I mean, I was there in the days of Bob Dole, who I had great respect for. And he used to always tell me that every so often a joke or a piece of self-deprecating humor could absolutely open the door to decision making, could absolutely get things done. And these are human qualities. These are human beings that are up there. Most of them want to do the right thing, but they get stuck. They're hoisted on their own petards and they can't get off of them. So, we've got to figure out a way to kind of breakthrough this thing. And this is not a change in the rules. This is -- or, not a change in the money or the media. This is kind of the change in the culture.

Because, let me close with two things. We are in a very

competitive world. I imagine the rest of the world is looking on us right now today and saying, what is going on with America? These guys can't figure out their budget and they've got to shut their government down? You think the people in China aren't going to use that as a way to show the world that they've got it and we don't? And, by the way, there are a lot of competitors besides the Chinese that are out there. And I certainly don't mean to imply that they have a superior system. They don't. But we're superior in most respects because of our freedoms and liberties, but also because of our resiliency, our ability to act.

So these are not unimportant questions. Yes, the media loves the fact that there's a shutdown. But the impact of all of this is it affects the ability of America to lead and solve problems that affect us at home and around the world. And I don't want to see that tarnished. And the more this kind of stuff happens, the more we get tarnished as a country.

I recall in November of 1977 -- Tom, you were still a baby then. But Hubert Humphrey was a senator, and he was dying. And he spoke to a joint meeting of the House. It wasn't a joint meeting of Congress -- the first time a U.S. Senator had been invited to speak to the House. And bipartisan was wonderful. The whole House was there, there were about 400 members in attendance. And he -- I'll never forget what he said. He said, I want to talk to you young members, Republicans and Democrats. He says, I have one piece of advice to you. Fight every battle like it was the most important battle that you're fighting. But after it's over, forget it. Go over, shake the hand, and hug your adversary. Because you're going to need him as your ally tomorrow if you want to be effective. And I've never forgotten that.

And, you know, they came -- Scoop Jackson and Hubert

Humphrey came from the same world, the same era. And it doesn't mean giving up on your beliefs, that's the other thing. Bipartisanship does not mean nonpartisanship. We don't believe in that, that's bad. We need a clash of ideas. But ultimately in our society, the ability for our country to succeed is to reach common ground. And if we can't reach common ground, then we as Americans won't be leaders into the long-term future.

So, I think I've talked long enough. I thank you all for listening to me. Glad to answer any questions that you may have. (Applause)

MR. MANN: We have -- thank you very much, Dan. We have mics around. So we'd like you to pose questions succinctly, introduce yourselves. While you're thinking about your first question, I'm going to pose a question to you, Dan.

At the Bipartisan Policy Center, you know, from your experience in Congress, with the Aspen Institute -- your natural instinct is to say, and you said it three or four times. It's really both parties. The problem exists in both parties. But let me sort of challenge you on that a little bit.

A recent poll sort of asks the question, is it better for the parties to compromise and avoid a government shutdown? Or is it better not to and stand on principle? The overwhelming majority of Democrats and Independents said compromise. The Republicans said don't compromise, stand on principle.

I would sort of submit to you that the emergence of the Tea Party -- which in past generations would have been seen as an outside the mainstream populist movement, but not embraced by any of the two-party establishments -- has taken hold in one of our parties. So we have asymmetrical polarization, which is part of the problem. It's kind of like Democrats seem to be moving

toward Republicans, and then leaders feel they have to back away from that agreement because of the fear that they'll be seen as dealing with the enemy.

What do you think of that?

MR. GLICKMAN: Well, first of all -- God. I mean, I'm going to have to take a position on something. That really troubles me.

You know, there is the famous Groucho Marx line -- well, he had two lines. One is he said these are my principles. And if you don't like them, I've got others. And then there's the other one he said was the most important quality in politics is sincerity. And when you can fake that you've got it made.

So, I think one of the things is that the word compromise is clearly identified with valueless thinking and no ideas, and just going along to get along, and that kind of stuff. And we've got to change that perception, because when you juxtapose this equation the way you did it, I'm much more on the Democratic side which is, you've got to reach common ground. But there have been times on the Democratic side where people have not been willing to compromise.

So then other institutions have to come in to try to right the wrong, to make the ship go the right way. And at times it has been the Executive Branch, the President, who speaks for all the people. Has to basically lay it on the line and say, we've got this -- I mean, I would never want to be President because I wouldn't want to be vetted through that process. But God, I mean, our country is at stake during this time period. The White House has to act like it. He's in charge.

You know, I mean -- I don't have a specific message for him because I think he's a good man and his ideas are right, and I supported him and I'll continue to support him. So if you have this break in the Congress because of,

let's say, a Tea Party influence, then you've got to look for other influences in our society to try to right this wrong. And so rather than spend a lot of time on how bad the Tea Party is, I would much rather look to see if we could find other voices to pull us back to the middle.

So I agree with you, we need to get back to the middle. But we have kind of reached a point in our society where we think compromise is unilateral disarmament and capitulation. And to some extent we have allowed that rhetoric. The left and the Democrats have allowed that rhetoric to continue on, and you know, as Pogo said, we admit the enemy and he is us. I blame us just as much as I blame them for letting this kind of behavior happen. But I think a lot of it has been caused by the factors that I talked about today.

But ultimately, we've got to find other forces in the political system that are willing to say, woah, stop. Time out. This doesn't work very well. Where's our corporate world, where are our CEOs in this great country of ours? Major national multi-nationals who employ all the people. Where are they? I don't see them kind of entering this fray very often. You know, their livelihoods depend on it. Their stockholders depend on it. Where are they? Nowhere to be heard, for the most part. So, that's kind of how I would answer that question.

Yes, sir. Back there, yes.

SPEAKER: Hi. I come from a country where we do have parliamentary politics, and one side is usually in power. And then the other side is asked, and so forth.

My question is is bipartisanship really always splitting the difference? And isn't splitting the difference sometimes a recipe for really bad legislation?

MR. GLICKMAN: It could be, on times. Good question.

On the other hand, most thoughtful public policy is built on consensus and reaching common ground. And you need the strong positions on all sides in order to shape the debate. But ultimately, if it's a question of it's my way or the highway, it usually is you're going to get killed on the road. So I would argue that it's not always in the middle. But it's based on consensus. And otherwise our system can't work. We've got to keep always that in mind.

Yes, sir.

SPEAKER: Is there a microphone? Thank you. You made an interesting comment about participatory democracy and you said that that was the good news, but the bad news was we weren't working together.

I wonder if they're not sort of part of the same problem. In other words -- and building on your most recent remark, the fact that our intermediate institutions -- the institutions that tend to mediate between the state and the people, such as the old traditional media, such as you just mentioned the CEOs, and the interest groups. It seems to me that the system has become so democratic that it opens a way up for demagogues and billionaires and other people to mislead the people, quite frankly, about what policy is. And it reminds me of Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* when he talks about this system where local institutions would have broken down, and they'll be an atomization of the electorate, and there will just be these individuals out there without any strong ties to anything. And that will open the way for someone who can pull the eyes over them.

And I just wonder if that -- I don't have an answer to that, but I wonder if you talk a little more about the voters. Because they're the ones that

actually put us in office, or put you in office. Are they in a position where they can't really make rational choices anymore? Or where they're unwilling to take their duties as citizens seriously? And they let themselves be exposed to the demagogues and the charlatans who have been, you know, on both sides of the fence, but much more prominently in the last 10 or 15 years?

MR. GLICKMAN: That's a very good question. And the only thing I would tell you is, my experience is most of the voters are kind of in the middle. I don't know what the percentage is, but it's overwhelming that voters are goal-oriented, they want solutions, they're focused now on the economy and jobs. But I think the political system has tended to put a lot more power and mouthpiece into people with very, very strong ideological positions.

And I used to think that the states were a better laboratory for a lot of this because they were closer to the people. But now you see the states are going through a lot of the same things the federal government is. And some of this, to be honest with you, is this clash of ideologies in terms of views of government. We've had basically a strong -- for one, a better word, a social welfare state in this country for a long time. And now, that's being challenged by a different view. A strong view of where government ought to be going. And so, in addition to these procedural problems we are in the midst of a real clash of ideas.

And you know the question is is that whether you've got good information out to the people, whether they can see the wheat through the chaff, so to speak, and enter the fray in a responsible way. The social networking and modern technology certainly allows people to enter this system much more easily than they used to be able to do. I think in part, we are bearing the burden of

years of an education system that has not done a very good job of teaching people about the civics and their political system. I think people in America know less about their political system, by and large, than people in other parts of the world.

But there's no easy answer to your question. We're not going to go back to the days of three networks. Social media is going to get more technologically advanced and proficient for average people to use, so we just need to try best to use those systems as the best way that we can.

Yes.

MS. EGGLESTON: Thank you. Laura Eggleston with the Henry Jackson Foundation.

You know, I'm struck by the remark that you made that the courage of political decisions is often lacking. And I guess the first thing that I thought of when you said that was Roosevelt and World War II. And I wonder if you really think it's going to be impossible for a decision like that to really galvanize the country and to move us forward when so many voices were opposed to that kind of a decision. And it really took the strength of political convictions to move us forward. And everyone today would say that was the right decision. So, is that possible?

MR. GLICKMAN: It's a good question. I still believe that when it comes to major crises, we can respond in this country. We can still come together when there's a natural disaster, or a war, or, you know -- I watched the President's decision making on Libya. And while there were issues there, I've seen that, you know, by and large the public went along with that. I think the President calibrated that quite well.

But on big stuff, I think we can do it. It's just on everything else I worry about, and some of the little stuff gets big if you don't deal with it very well.

So, I personally believe that in addition to what we're trying to do in terms of democracy building and overseas, we need to do more democracy building inside this country. That means better civics education, it means building trust among political leaders, it means taking best practices that are out there in the country -- because there are really good best practices at local governments, state governments. It means replicating that, trying to get that word out of the national government. It means, you know, again -- more social exposure between political leaders of both parties to try to build trust, which I still think is a fundamentally important thing.

None of these are what I call cosmic in and of themselves. But they can influence behavior. All to try to, again -- a good institution has good leadership and good teambuilding. And what we now have is we have two teams. We have the Super Bowl being fought almost every day. And we have got to figure out how to make the team the whole group. And that, I think, is the ultimate objective.

I think there is a gentleman right there, green tie. Yes.

MR. TILLMAN: Bill Tillman, private attorney in Washington.

If government is the problem, what is your motivation for doing any compromising to make it work?

MR. GLICKMAN: Well, I didn't mean to imply government is the problem.

MR. TILLMAN: No, I'm not saying you are. That's what a lot of people feel.

MR. GLICKMAN: Yes, but I think most people don't feel that way. They may feel about it in the abstract. And until it comes to farm programs and the direct benefits to corn and soybean farmers. Or, until it comes to veterans' benefits. Or, until it comes to disaster assistance. That is, we do too much talking about government without breaking it down into what it does. When people figure out what it does, they like it, more or less. They may not like everybody else's, but they like their own.

And so, you know, I was watching what the Japanese were doing with this nuclear power plant. I'm thinking, my goodness, if that happened here government would be a critical factor in dealing with that problem. So, I think somehow we have got to figure out how to language this better so it's more than just government. We've got to talk about what it does. So, that would be -- yes, sir. Right here.

SPEAKER: I would like to introduce a little data --

MR. GLICKMAN: That's dangerous. I don't want data, you know?

SPEAKER: You know, I've been waiting for this opportunity, Tom. Several colleagues and I have been studying all roll call votes since 1960 by party and by individual members of Congress.

One of the interesting things that came up first is, in the 1970s after Roe v. Wade, the Republican Senate was pro-choice. The Democratic Senate was split. After 1980, the Republican Senate began to change, and by 1990 it was about 10 percent pro-choice. And now it's below that. The Democratic Senate has changed almost the other way.

Now, there's a package. It's not just abortion, but abortion is almost a requirement. I mean, looking at the data, who gets elected in the

Republican Party? One of the things that struck me most was that the mainline Protestant members of the Senate Republican were all pro-choice before 1980. Now, if you look at them by just religious affiliation now, they're still the main line churches, but they're all pro-life. They're also anti-tax and anti -- what I would call the sex, morality issues, and so clearly defines them on every vote. We begin to also find the emergence of polarization on all other issues.

I just think that people keep ignoring the religious issue, and it affects both parties.

MR. GLICKMAN: Okay, yes. Well, the reverse is also true. That is, if you're a Democrat it's very hard to get elected as a pro-life Democrat. And Bob Casey and others were -- so on -- it's --

SPEAKER: There are exceptions.

MR. GLICKMAN: No, but by and large -- but that's been true. I remember back in the '80s, if you were pro-Contra in the Central American debate and you were a Democrat, you were dead meat. And the reverse was true on the other side. We often have this kind of situation.

The religious thing is an interesting thing because the power of the independent church movement in this country is very significant. And it's a political force, and you know, it has to be dealt with. And I have a feeling Democrats haven't figured out quite how to deal with that, because a lot of those folks are middle income, have a lot of the same economic issues. And yes, they have issues that they're concerned about on the social side of the picture. But they have lots of other issues that they're interested in as well.

But these issues are evolving. You know, some of these social issues -- you take the whole civil rights world. You look at 1960 and you look at

today. And we've had a powerful and profound change in this kind of thing. So, you know -- and this is being driven by grassroots, as you can tell. This is not being driven from top down. So I'm actually not as disturbed about this.

What I am disturbed about is the government -- if the government is being shut down because of that issue that does disturb me because what it means is that that's the tail that's wagging the dog on everything else. And that is troubling.

But I do believe that people have very strong views on the subject area, and we have to figure out how to be tolerant of each other's respective views on it and still not stop the government process.

I think I have time for -- most of -- one more question. So, I'm going to go with Mr. Kemp right there, since I know him.

MR. KEMP: I'm Jimmy Kemp with the Jack Kemp Foundation.

There is certainly a different feel then when you were in Congress. But the history of the country is that we've had Congressmen take guns into the chamber and we've had actual violence break out in the chambers.

I would pose that we have exactly what we deserve. We've got a very representative government with wonderful, incredibly talented representatives in the senators, and those who were not so.

Who would you -- since money will -- media is not going to change, money is not going to change. Who should we be trying to get the media to pay attention to, and who should we be funneling money to, in your opinion, on the Republican side and Democratic side? Not saying you agree with them, but the people who get it get governance. And who are willing to engage in the issues?

MR. GLICKMAN: Well, this wasn't a set-up question. But your dad was an amazing man. And he had such incredible love and people were fond of him from the extreme left to the extreme right. Because he fought every battle like Hubert Humphrey just talked about, with dignity and civility and respect. And yet he was a man with very strong opinions and he almost single-handedly was the intellectual author of the Regan Revolution.

So, I mean, which I and others fought. But I still like the guy, you know. And so, I mean, I think that so much of this is personality and attitude and personal qualities and, you know, smiling and friendship and happiness. And I'm not being Pollyanna-ish about it, but those personal qualities in life make a big difference. And whatever reason we've lost a lot of them in the political system. And it used to be that those kind of people were the ones that were great leaders and could get things done, and they no longer exist.

So, quick answer to your question. There are plenty of people on both sides of the aisle that meet those characteristics. But without talking about them, I think we have to look outside the government for people to -- that can deal with this. Religious leaders and corporate leaders particularly have great influences. 100 million people go to church regularly every week. Okay. Where are the religious leaders? They are in great position to basically teach principles that all great religions talked about in terms of the golden rule and related things.

Where are the business leaders that have a great stake in the economic strength of America? And how they can impact the system. Rather than just looking at which tax benefit will take care of them.

So, I would -- in addition to what we're trying to do in the institutions I work with in terms of building trust and getting people to know each

other -- and those are key because we still have a great government. With everything I said today, we still have a great government and we still have the potential to even make it better.

We've got to look at folks outside the government to know that this is their issue as well. Because what's happening, the ideologues understand that, and they've entered the fray, and they're influencing the system. But, to a large extent, the sensible people aren't. And I'm not categorizing everybody on the ideological side as non-sensible. But I think you get my point.

So if we could have hundreds of Jack Kemps out there with strong beliefs that are working to try to get stuff done, then I think the country would move -- we would move a step forward rather than a step back.

Thank you all very much. (Applause)

MR. MANN: Thank you so much. That last question, I thought, was a perfect opportunity for Dan to close out. I take away many things from your presentation. It was wonderful, but a reminder of something I've known for a long time. That this is a funny man, and he loves humor. And once set up a center on political humor, I should tell you. But just the perspective to -- come on, guys, lighten up a little bit and let's not make everything the Super Bowl or the Armageddon.

MR. GLICKMAN: By the way, I learned that in my first marriage. (Laughter) And it's a good example for government as well, so.

MR. MANN: Please join me in thanking Dan Glickman. That was just terrific. Thanks very much. (Applause)

We're going to take a little break. Get yourself some coffee, and then we're going to set our panel up. And we'll proceed in a few minutes. Thank

you.

(Recess)

MR. MANN: Well, I'm delighted to reconvene our session following up on our discussions of this morning, the framing of the issue of the, if you will, the sort of tensions between individual, effective, transformational leadership on the one hand and the constraints of the air of politics in which we live and sort of what the possibilities. Is Speaker Boehner a waif amid forces within his Republican conference, and is that why we're coming to the brink? Is there, even in this environment, opportunities for individuals, be they party leaders or committee chairs or presidents, to take actions that could create new opportunities that we do not see naturally?

That's what we're going to talk about and we have a congressional scholar and two superb reporters on Congress and American politics, more broadly, who have been covering this story, such as it is, and Sarah Binder, my colleague on my right here, is a senior fellow at Brookings as well as a professor at George Washington University. She has -- her most recent book is called *Advice and Descent: The Struggle to Shape the Federal Judiciary*. Even more relevant, the book before that was, *Stalemate: Causes and Consequences of Legislative Gridlock*. Sarah and I are together going to draw on all of your wisdom to write a paper on this very question, sort of, what's the room for leadership in this environment. She's going to go first. Then we're going to turn to David Welna, who's become the NPR reporter that I always look for and listen to to tell me what the latest dysfunction of the United States Senate is, whether and if we can do anything about it. As soon as he speaks you will feel you're in the presence of a friend, a familiar voice that he and his colleagues

have brought to us over the years. One of the great pleasures I had was chairing a committee, the Carey McWilliams Award Committee of the American Political Science Association, which gives awards to individual journalists and when I was chair the award was given to NPR as an organization. I guess I'm showing my hand on the issue of funding of NPR, but there you go. Transparency is in these days.

And to my left is a dear friend and marvelous reporter, Janet Hook, who I remember from her days at *CQ*, then on to the *L.A. Times* and now, most recently, reporting and writing for the *Wall Street Journal*. A wonderful team I bring to you, and Sarah's going to kick us off.

MS. BINDER: Excellent. Well, thanks very much, Thom. Thanks for including me. I thought I would start us off by talking a bit about the challenges of legislating and leading in a Congress in a period of pretty intense partisan polarization. In other words, how the Dickens did we get into this mess? And will strong leaders get us out of it? And in the absence of that question for several more hours, I thought instead I would just offer two ways of thinking about that particular question.

First, I want to talk a little bit about the barriers to legislative compromise that extend beyond partisanship, and second, just think very explicitly about the constraints that Congressional leaders face, or the constraints on strong leadership in Congress.

So, first, just in terms of barriers to Congressional problem solving, I want us to think just a little bit about electoral constraints, second about partisan constraints, and then third about institutional constraints. First, in terms of electoral forces, we say it over and over but it rings true, I think, every time we

say it, which is that members of Congress are single-minded seekers of reelection, that is, no matter what policy goals, political goals, or other power goals they may have, or they may want to achieve, reelection is the proximate goal, it's the thing you have to do first in order to pursue any of these other goals. You can't achieve those other goals without first getting reelected and that reelection motive, we think, shapes, right, all of their behavior.

What do we mean really by that? It means that legislators see major policy choices through the eyes of their constituents, right, whether it's the question of how or whether to bail out the financial sector, whether it's the question of regulating greenhouse emissions, or, of course, whether or not to fund, and on what terms to fund, the Federal government for even six months. Why is that important? No matter the levelheadedness and the hard work of party leaders, they have to convince rank and file members that what's in the party's collective interest, or, God forbid, what's in the nations' general welfare, is simultaneously in that member's individual electoral interest. Leaders can't just command loyalty from their rank and file.

Think about the implications here for Speaker Boehner, right, early on in the battle over the budget, Speaker Boehner and the leadership of the House Appropriations Committee proposed a very moderate set of spending cuts relative to where they've come now. A group of freshmen, a group of conservatives said, no, that's insufficient for -- given our campaign promises. Conservatives were far more interested in living up to those campaign promises even if it risked allowing Democrats potentially to brand those Republicans as ideologues and then blame them for a shutdown.

There's no getting past these electoral barriers unless your own

rank and file see the party's interest as synonymous with their own. And I think that -- I'm sure we'll come back to that. That's part of the dilemma here, I think, for the Speaker, right, how to both please the base of his party and own electoral interests as well as to think about the party's reputation or brand name in Washington given the events of the last week.

So, first, I think we need to keep in mind these electoral barriers. Second, in terms of other barriers, this partisanship or indelible partisan polarization. By every measure we have, whether it's role call or other based measures, partisan polarization has climbed steadily and shows very little sign of abating. What is debilitating about partisan polarization is that it reflects more than just policy disagreement, more than ideological disagreement, right? Certainly it represents policy differences between the two political parties, right, but it also represents political differences, right, that increased incentive to disagree with the other team just because it's the other team or the other party, right, that partisan team play amplifies ideological disagreements, right, so we have both policy disagreement, and if you think about it, sort of, strategic disagreement, an incentive simply to disagree.

And clearly some of this comes up in what's going on with this game of chicken over the spending bill to avoid the shutdown, right. Certainly we think the sheer numbers can be compromised, right, and, yes, these are difficult compromises to reach, but in the end it's dollars and cents. But if there's a wing of the conservatives in the House and if the Speaker wants to remain Speaker, right, they may have a political incentive not to compromise. Again, why do we care about these partisan dynamics? Right? Clearly, we think it raises the barriers to legislating and raises the barriers for leaders trying to reach

compromises. Right. The narrower question about the rest of the Federal funding for six months let alone these broader questions about the debt limit, about debt, about deficits, and so forth, and we should think, if we look carefully, that this partisan disagreement, it tends to spill over into issues that aren't strictly red and blue policy issues on themselves. So, the foreclosure crisis, for instance, right, if you look at the extent of foreclosures across the country, it hits red districts, Republican districts, it hits blue Democratic districts, and yet there's a fair amount of polarization between the parties, spills over, and makes the foreclosure crisis almost impossible to solve.

So, first, electoral barriers, second, partisan barriers, and third, final barrier here, is simply sort of institutional dysfunction. That is, we think we have pretty good evidence that this balance of majority rule and minority rights is off kilter and it's off kilter in the two chambers in different ways. Typically in the House, with the big caveat of how the spending bill HR1 was debated with wide-open amendment process. Typically in the House the balance is tilted far to the right, meaning, far to the rights of the majority to control the agenda with the minority party given very little stake and opportunity to participate.

Typically in the Senate we think that the balance is tilted too far in the other direction, right, tilted toward the interests of the minority to block the majority. Granted, in the Senate, at the beginning of the year, we had a bit of a procedural détente, we had what we've called the Reid-McConnell handshake between the majority and minority leader, but even that agreement to allow a more open, more freedom of Senators to offer amendments on the floor, right, without being closed down by the majority leader, even that agreement, it hasn't produced a more collegial body, right, it seems to have created opportunities for

more position taking, but not really problem-solving, right. Think about the votes that were taken on the -- right, there was a Senate bill on HR1 on the spending bill, but there was no deliberation over the bill, there was no debate over the bill. There were votes this week on greenhouse emissions, right, and whether EPA should be able to regulate it, and I think taking those votes were important for the Democrats to stake out their positions, right, to show the extent of agreement on these policy riders, but, right, simply because we had more opportunities to offer amendments doesn't seem to have solved the problem of creating an institution where they actually meet and try to have a meeting of the minds.

It strikes me these three factors, of course, are coming home to roost, right, the moment of reckoning over the budget due to the action-forcing deadlines, right, and clearly there will be more action-forcing deadlines coming this year.

Again, why should we care about these barriers? Collectively they really complicate the exercise of leadership, right? It's not just a matter of sitting down at the White House time after time after time, this week, or the last two days, and it's not just a matter of meeting and splitting the difference, right. Leaders have an electoral interest of their own members in mind, right, they often have a strategic reason to disagree with the other party even in the face of common gains, right, and common ground that may be visible.

So, if that's not depressing enough, just a few words to think more explicitly about the constraints that these leaders find themselves in. Political scientists, students at of Congress, in particular, have thought and written quite a bit over the decades -- over the decades about leadership power and about leadership style. We have seen a fair amount of variation over time both in how

leaders -- the degree of control leaders have and the style with which they run their chambers, right, from the czars of the early 20th Century to the sort of bargainer/listener of Sam Rayburn, to the more, sort of, crash and burn style of Newt Gingrich, but despite the diversity of leaders and leadership style, political scientists typically have argued that power and style don't stem from the personal characteristics or the personal traits of the leaders themselves, right. Thus, if we're frustrated with leadership in the Senate, for instance, we can't just say that we need a more forceful majority leader, right, instead we tend to argue that leadership is contextual, by which we mean that leaders are constrained by the institutional context, right, the rules and tools available, and the electoral context, right, the diversity or unity of views within their Congressional parties.

So, when we see parties internally cohesive and ideologically opposed to one another, right, we're likely to see under those conditions, right, more strong, effective leadership, rank and file members willing to empower leaders to work on their behalf. And we can all come up with examples of where we've seen that. But when the majority is split internally, say Democrats mid-20th Century, majority will have very little appetite for empowering their leaders, right, you can't trust that the leader's interests are going to be in your own individual interests if there's a diversity of policy views within your conference.

Of course, the irony is, if you have strong, cohesive powers, you don't need very proactive leaders quite as much. Everybody is largely in agreement on policy grounds, you need strong stewards, right, you need someone to manage the name brand of the party and build coalitions on behalf of those positions, right. It's in the face of internal disagreements that you need leadership to encourage compromise on acceptable solutions. But if leaders are

only as strong as their parties want them to be, you're in a bit, I think, of a conundrum. The Boehner example, again, to wrap up, I think is instructive. There seem to be elements of strong divisions in that conference, at least is what emerged if you're looking at the votes that occurred on HR1 where divisions weren't just between Democrats and Republicans on spending, they were across -- and not just freshmen versus more senior members, right, it was really sort of ideological divisions between the far right and the more moderate elements of the Republican conference.

But Boehner, well, the criticism of him this week is that he's been moving the goal post, right, so that it's hard to reach an agreement. But I think the moving of the goal posts, in part, reflects the ambiguity, right, of what's acceptable to a majority of his conference, again, not just the tea party and not just the freshmen, but more what's acceptable to more conservative elements of his party. Boehner doesn't want to get out ahead of his conference, probably not least because the Speaker in waiting is waiting in the wings.

Okay, where does that leave us? I think there's this implicit if not explicit criticism of congressional leaders for failing to get us out of the mess, right? Why can't they just bring along their parties to take tough votes to solve these long and short-term problems? I think we need to keep in mind the front and center, right, the context in which these leaders operate, right, and these very real constraints under which they labor, and labor they do. Especially this week.

Okay, I'll stop there.

MR. MANN: Thank you, Sarah. That's a wonderful start to our discussion. David?

MR. WELNA: Good morning. I guess I should preface this saying that I came to Washington about 10 years ago to cover Congress, but I had a background, actually, as a foreign correspondent. I spent many years in Latin America covering many different governments there and I had the experience of covering situations where impasses in their legislatures led not to compromise, but it led to military interventions, and a whole new government. So, I'm watching the drama unfolding today and thinking, it could be worse.

Now, this week I've been -- I should say, I cover mainly the Senate, so I watch Harry Reid and Mitch McConnell get up every morning and give their speech of the day, and Harry Reid this week has been repeatedly mentioning Henry Clay, who was known as "The Great Compromiser", and something that Clay said was, "All legislation is founded on the principle of mutual concession", and so Reid has been saying, of course, this is what we need. It's not even concession, so much, it has to be mutual.

You know, clearly this is a situation where the Democrats want the government to stay open, it would be a huge embarrassment for Obama to have this happen on his watch, and yet there's also a feeling that Republicans have a real stake in keeping it open too since it turned out so badly for them last time.

You know, I look at this and I think that in some ways this encapsulates the paradox of what this Congress is. The nature of this two-party system and the structure we have in Congress is adversarial. You know, that's our idea of getting good policy, good law, is to fight it out first and then reach some kind of a conclusion. But to get to that kind of a conclusion you have to have either a super majority and override the minority, or you have to have some degree of bipartisanship, people willing to cross the aisle and work with people

on the other side to get the majority needed to pass things.

Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa is fond of saying that he's never gotten anything done of significance in the Senate without a Democratic co-sponsor. It just doesn't happen.

Now, at the same time, making deals or making concessions is a tricky business as well because it raises questions about your political loyalty. I mean, you're called "Republican in name only" if you side with the Democrats on something or a "Democrat in name only" vice versa. Your personal integrity is questioned; you're seen as a sellout or wishy-washy. These are not the kinds of labels that politicians like to have. You know, the idea that the number one job of a lawmaker is to hang on to his or her job is one that we've had for many years. I think we're in a little bit different territory with this new Congress, especially with 87 new Republicans in the House. Many of them come sort of with a political kamikaze attitude of, hey, if I don't get reelected in two years, big deal. I came here to change Washington. And there isn't the kind of self-preservation instinct, necessarily, that you would expect from other Congresses. At the same time, that may be their strategy for self-preservation because their constituency wants them to stick to their principles, stick to the $61 billion that they voted for in February, after all, and why can't the Senate understand that that's the number that it has to be? I mean, that's the kind of mentality that I think Boehner is dealing with right now.

I think also the Congress is a kind of a mirror of this polarized nation, but there's also -- I mean, it's not just that political passions are so far apart on many issues. I think we've also had a kind of demographic segregation, politically, in this country, people move to areas where they find fellow-minded

inhabitants, the schools that they send their kids to, the churches they go to, the politicians who represent them, there's been much more of a kind of separation of political inclinations that's gone on and that people who end up representing these people feel a lot more like they have to stick to purity than to maybe making deals with the opposition. I mean, there's gerrymandering that's protected many members of Congress, but there's also just this phenomenon of people not feeling like their constituents are looking for them to compromise that much. You don't have people out on the ramparts agitating for moderation. I mean, it's the people who are passionate about things who often drive the political process, especially in the primaries, and I think right now the drama that we're seeing playing out today seems to be a consequence of that also, of that many politicians feel that they're in Washington because of those passionate people who sent them who don't want them to compromise and that's a really tricky position for Boehner because his party, in many ways, set out a kind of a maximalist position with the number they came up with for this half-year budget, and to come down from that number, even though Democrats started out saying that they didn't think that there should be anything cut, they said, let's just stick with last year's budget and we'll figure out a new one when we have the FY12 debate. Even though Democrats have come up, they say, more than half way to that $61 billion number, they're not dealing with a group of people, at least many Republicans, who feel like anything much less than $61 billion is acceptable. And in some ways, I think, this is the first big political test in Washington of the clout of the tea party backed members of Congress. They haven't had this kind of a contest before, so their credibility, in many ways, is on the line.

For them, of course, that credibility may matter more than the

Federal government staying open for a few days, or who knows how long this may go on if it does shut down, and that's a problem for Boehner to try to get a deal. Boehner, of course, was in Congress during the last shut down and has, I'm sure, some regret about how things turned out for Republicans back then. It's a problem for Harry Reid and President Obama in dealing with somebody who they know has to be able to show those members who are so passionate about this that Republicans came out on top in this deal. I mean, if -- I don't know quite what they can come up with that will make both sides feel like they won something. I mean, Democrats already feel like they've given away much more than they ever thought they would, but this is a problem, I think, of salesmanship right now. I mean, we were just seeing that they're reporting that there is a deal now. I'm curious to find out what the contours of that are going to be.

Both Janet and I have had a chance to watch other big fights go on in Congress over other issues, the whole debate over the healthcare legislation was a good example, I thought, of what happens when you have a very big majority in Congress in both chambers, as the Democrats did. They have an issue that they've long wanted to push forward, since the early 90s, at least, overhauling the healthcare system, and it's not an issue that Republicans were necessarily clamoring to take up themselves and they -- especially in the Senate there was an effort made at a committee level, and I think that at the committee level, that's where compromises often get done because people know each other from both parties, they spend a lot of time together, there's much more trust in those committee rooms than there is out in the Senate chamber, and there was an effort in the Help Committee to have amendments and many

amendments were offered, most of the Republican ones were rejected, and then they went ahead an they marked up their bill and they said, okay, let's bring it out to the floor.

The Finance Committee, on the other hand, which Max Baucus chaired at the time and Grassley was the top Republican on, decided that they were going to go the consensus route. They were not going to push for a final version in the committee of this bill until they had some kind of an agreement, at least with some Republicans on the committee, for moving a bill forward, and, I mean, the months started to drag on, there were all the protests in August against the healthcare bill, and many Democrats began to think that instead of seeking consensus, these committee Republicans were seeking to stall and by late September Baucus basically pulled the plug and he said, okay, enough already, we're going to take this to a vote.

I think they got one Republican, Olympia Snowe, to vote for it, but what they got in the end was a bill that really had only the imprimatur of Democrats on it and it ended up being this fight of getting all the Democrats to agree, getting a consensus among them, because there were 60 in Senate chamber at that time or 60 in their caucus, and they got it through, but what they ended up with was legislation that no Republican felt any loyalty to. They had no skin in that game, and it's become sort of a whipping boy for them ever since.

In some ways this is similar to what happened with the Bush tax cuts in the early years of this century where you had a very evenly split Senate, it was 50-50, and, again, there was the need to pick up some Democratic support. There were some Democrats who came over but it was never much of a consensus between the two parties that they should go forward with these tax

cuts and for years that was the bête noire for many Democrats and the war in Iraq, I think there was more consensus on. It divided Democrats, but that too was something that they came back at again and again and said this was poor judgment.

I mean, I think that it all suggests that getting consensus behind major social policy is good to do if you want that policy to prosper. I think that the nature of Congress is that it's -- the rules of Congress are basically conservative in the sense that they accommodate the status quo more than they accommodate change, especially in the Senate chamber, and I think it's partly because the rules force opposite sides to work with each other if something's going to get dome. Some things are getting done even now that this group of six in the Senate, they're three Republicans and three Democrats who worked on the Deficit Reduction Commission. I think that commission's work is actually fruitful in the sense that it's led to the further work of this group who are trying to get some kind of a grand bargain in Congress. It's become a kind of a reference point for a lot of other efforts to work out the debt crisis, and so you see that there is -- I don't know if you would call it compromise, you could call it maybe more bipartisanship that's going on, but there's a recognition that unless the two sides work together on something like this, it's not going to get done.

I don't know how today is going to end. I mean, I think this is sort of the test of whether it's really possible to find common ground, especially with House Republicans, but I think this is what Congress is about. It is about conflict, about disagreement, but it's also about that unless you get some degree of agreement, in the end nothing moves forward.

MR. MANN: Thank you, David. I think it's way to premature to

have an agreement. I mean, it's only five after 11. Janet, we didn't expect this to happen until the very last moment, right?

MS. HOOK: Yeah. Well, David is allowed to pull out his Blackberry. He can probably check those and find out right away. I got an early bulletin that somebody had reported that there was a deal. And, yeah, the thing that's been funny about this whole negotiation is there really -- having gotten this far, there really isn't much incentive for either side to kind of close the deal a minute before they have to. And when they have to, I don't know, it probably has something to do with writing bills and getting another quick fix CR through. Because in the end, this negotiation, like many negotiations, the end game -- it's very important for both sides to shape the perception of what the product is, how much each side has given, and David's right, the Democrats do feel that they have already given a lot more than the Republicans, and they are right. They have given -- I think they've moved much farther and I think that's a tribute, in part, to how strong a hand Boehner has, and that, in turn, is a tribute to how forceful his freshman class and Conservative wing has been.

But before I get to today, I just wanted to say that, you know, this general discussion about leadership -- whenever I hear people talking about, you know, leadership in Congress, you know, are there any strong leaders? Whatever happened to all the strong leaders? I'm reminded of something that I think I first heard from Tom Foley when he was speaker, not to date myself, but I've heard it from other people too. But the point is it goes back as far as when Tom Foley was speaker. He said, "You know, we don't have a problem with leadership, we have a problem with followership."

MR. MANN: Right.

MS. HOOK: You know, that it's all very well and good to have a strong leader who says, you know, we really must address the Social Security crisis, but if he turns around and there's nobody following him, he can't -- and so, the job of a leader in Congress, for as long as I've been covering it, hasn't been, you know, kind of leading the charge so much as marshalling the troops and bringing people along, finding coalitions, building coalitions, but the thing that's really different and takes that challenge to a different order of magnitude, I think, in this Congress for Boehner among the Republicans, is the difference in who the followers are. And it's not just -- it's not just that they're conservative and anti-Washington and anti-establishment, it's that they've been elected feeling like they owe nothing to the leadership. I mean, they don't owe anything to anybody. They are here as citizen legislators -- they don't -- and at that point it's a very different freshman class of conservative anti-Washington, anti-establishment Republicans than were elected in 1994. A lot of those felt like they owed their election to Newt Gingrich. Newt Gingrich was very involved in recruiting those candidates. He distributed campaign tapes from his PAC called GOPAC. You know, he was very involved in the election of the freshman class that became the majority that elected him speaker.

So, he had a stronger hand with his rank and file than Boehner does now because they felt they owed something to him, and there's a little bit of that also -- now I'm really stretching -- to say -- in the class of Republicans elected in 1980 on Reagan's coattails, we called them "Reagan Robots" because they felt like they owed their election to Ronald Reagan.

So, I don't know, Reagan and Gingrich are probably also stronger leaders than John Boehner is in their leadership style, but their followers are just

-- his followers are just really different.

That said, you know, another point of contrast that I'm thinking about in the past is, we had this kind of conventional idea about leadership, and, you know, how deals are done in Washington and you could think that the situation right now is classic, you know, the Democrats wanted to freeze spending at 2010 levels and the Republicans wanted to cut it to 2008 levels. Well, duh, you come to a compromise in the middle. The leaders kind of work out the deal in a closed room and they go back to their followers and then they vote for it. And that isn't the way it's working out now for writers, but it also didn't work out when they did it that way in the early 1990s. There was a big budget deal that was cut at -- whatchamacallit -- Camp David, and they went back to the House and it was rejected because of a coalition of liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans.

MR. MANN: Andrews Air Force Base, wasn't it?

MS. HOOK: Is that what I said? No.

MR. MANN: No, you said Camp David.

MS. HOOK: Okay, Andrews Air Force Base. You know, one of those secret places. Anyway -- so the point is that, you know, followers and leaders and, you know, it's -- it was a challenge on a lot of -- these budget issues are very hard and they kind of splinter parties in different ways.

But -- so, and I also think that looking at the current leadership right now, I think the challenges facing Boehner and Harry Reid, now, in the current CR, compared to the issues ahead of them, I hate to say it, but this is the easy part. I mean, this is really -- to be honest with you, you know, this conventional compromise that I just described to you, well, that is actually what's

happening, you know, left -- you know, left, right, center, deal in the room, go out and sell it. I mean, that's kind of what's happening. It's just -- it looks so much harder but the place where you need strong leadership in the form of leaders getting their followers to do something they don't want to do, that's what comes up when they turn to the broader deficit reduction issues. It's like here we're talking -- I think it was Dick Durbin who said that the CR -- working out a compromise on just straight spending is like algebra. Working out a deal on entitlements and the bigger issues is like advanced calculus, and I think that that's where you need, not just strong leadership, but creative leadership, and, you know, I don't know whether you could say right now that these leaders are less up to it than leaders in the past. I think those kind of comparisons are kind of hard to make, but one of the biggest differences I've noticed in the functions and demands of Congressional leaders over the years I've been covering Congress, is how much more emphasis there is now on the leaders as the carriers of a message, that they're -- rather than as, you know, the leaders of a party that's, you know, kind of a functioning unit within a legislative body, I mean, they are speaking -- these Congressional leaders, more so in the past, speak to the public, to their adversaries, and less, sort of, internally. I mean, there used to be this sense of there being an inside game and an outside game on any given issue that, you know, leaders who want to accomplish something on, say, healthcare -- you know, Ted Kennedy is a good example. You know, he really knows how to cut deals and write legislation and others -- though Kennedy was also good at the outside game. There were just two faces of every legislative battle, but this CR debate has been a classic of, you know, the inside game was almost invisible in part because the negotiations have been so closely held, but

the outside game -- you know, what we heard from the leaders every day, I mean, you couldn't tell what it's relationship was to the reality of what was being negotiated, and part of it was the people who knew weren't talking and the people who were talking didn't know.

So, I mean, you just -- or they knew -- any way, it was just -- it's been a very, very hard thing to cover as a reporter. You know, you feel like every day, you know, what's happened? I don't know, Chuck Schumer said this, Eric Cantor said that. Therefore, what? What do my readers need to know?

So, you know, I don't know whether -- and in the Senate in particular -- David Welna will probably know this as well as anybody -- there's this sort of tension and contrast between the leadership of Harry Reid and Chuck Schumer. Whereas Chuck Schumer's main mission is presenting a democratic message every day, and one thing -- and Harry Reid has a lot more power over what actually is getting done in those negotiations, but carrier of a message he's not. He's just sort of -- he's kind of more of an old school leader and people sometimes ask me, how did Harry Reid ever get to be Senate Democratic leader? And my answer is, the old fashioned way. He did, you know, a lot of favors for members; he was on the Appropriations Committee, he kind of -- his Democrats love the guy. You know, he just doesn't, you know, kind of project as loudly as Chuck Schumer, let's put it that way.

And if I could just comment on one thing that David was mentioning that I thought was really interesting about this spending debate being the first big test of the tea party and their influence in Congress. I think their influence isn't going to be measured by how many of them vote for the bill, I think their influence has already been very strongly felt and I think that Boehner's skill

in the compromise may be measured in his ability to, you know, allow the tea party people to vote against the bill because it's not $61 billion and it's not $100 billion and yet still pass it with a lot of Republicans.

So, we'll find that out, not today, they won't vote on anything today, but there will probably be a deal by the end of the day.

MR. WELNA: They could vote on a stopgap measure just to keep things going until early next week.

MR. MANN: Presumably, would this time a straight, clean four days, five days, no riders, no more deficit reduction?

MR. WELNA: That is what the Senate Democrats are going to try to substitute for the stopgap measure that the House passed yesterday that cuts $12 billion in a week and extends defense funding through September and has this rider on it barring local funds being used for abortion in Washington, DC. That would be replaced by something saying we'll just keep spending as we have been until we get this deal signed up. But I think that if there is a deal, and there's the realization that the negotiations are over, there would probably be more willingness by Republicans to go along with that because it would be saying, yes, we may not cut whatever the number is, the $35 billion in the next week, but it will be cut over the next -- over the remainder of the fiscal year.

So -- but I guess if that happens, it's going to happen late today. The House is standing by, I think they've got some work to do that they would have done next week otherwise, but Congress is a kind of place -- I see Senator Bennett just came in. He knows well -- where things don't happen until they have to, and I guess midnight is the witching hour today.

MR. MANN: Janet, thank you. Thank you very much. Let's

engage in just a little sort of counterfactual speculation. This morning, earlier, Dan Glickman wondered out loud whether things would have been different, there would have been less of a vacuum, more of an opportunity for the more orderly management of cleaning up this fiscal year and moving to the next if -- if President Obama had taken hold of Smith -- the Simpson-Bowles -- Bowles-Simpson Agreement, and not endorsed it, but said, I want it put into legislative language and I want you all to go to work on it. I see some strong points, some weak points, but this is a basis.

So, my question to you is, can you imagine any action taken by any leader that could have -- or would -- say I'm debt ceiling -- and moving ahead produce a better outcome? Think Obama. Think Reid during the lame duck. Could he have made a compromise to avoid the filibuster on the continuing resolution that would have carried through the year? Or were the Republicans absolutely committed to having this in play? Is there anything Boehner could have done differently or has he done about all he could do as you've described the position and perceptions and sentiment of the tea partiers? Who'd like to take a crack at that? Sarah?

MS. BINDER: I'll just take a small piece, the last part, and then I'll go back to the first Simpson-Bowles part.

I think the predicament back -- I guess it was the beginning of December where the CR finally fell apart, they really weren't -- they weren't at 60 votes --

MR. MANN: Yeah. It was 59.

MS. BINDER: -- and I think they'd lost --

MR. MANN: Oh, they lost. Right.

MS. BINDER: I don't think they were going to get to 60 votes and I'll defer to Senator Bennett on whether 60 would have been in reach and what Democrats would have had to have compromised, but I don't think there was this incentive for the Democrats -- in retrospect, yes. Right? But I think if they thought they could get it, they would have made the compromises necessary to get to $60. But clearly, I think, Republicans understood their increased leverage come January and I think that induced their resistance to giving the votes to get to 60.

On the question of the counter factual, had Obama gone out and really wholeheartedly embraced the Simpson-Bowles recommendations, this is sort of an empirical copout to the answer, but there were still faced with the problem of having to do the spending bill for the rest of 2011 and to some extent, sure, it might have provided a counterpoint to the Paul Ryan budget that came out this week, but I don't think anything necessarily would have played out differently for the current mess that they're in.

MR. MANN: Okay.

MR. WELNA: I think what the Simpson-Bowles recommendations were for were for a much bigger budget -- a 10-year budget, not for a, at that point, seven or eight month stopgap or filling up less than the fiscal year budget, and so it's really the FY12 budget that we saw Paul Ryan introduce this week. Now, that's the place where you could take those recommendations and have them as a counterpoint, possibly, to what he's recommended, and I think that's actually what's happening. And this group of six that is trying to come up with a grand bargain that would not be only for dealing with FY12 budget, but also looking at the fact that the debt ceiling will have to be raised by July or so or

there's going to be, you know, some kind of a default.

They're looking at those deadlines and those exigencies as the way to push other people in Congress to come together on this. We have 64 Senators, 32 from each party, who have essentially endorsed that effort in a letter that came out last week or the week before. So, it looks like there's a possibility for traction with that. You know, my feeling about a budget has always been that in some ways it's a bit of smoke and mirrors because they come out with a budget, it's supposedly a 10-year budget; it's really only for the next year. It's for the appropriations bills for the coming year and the rest of it is all kind of wishful thinking, possibly, because they come out the following year with another 10-year budget.

It's important when you have budget reconciliation and you want to have tax cuts or raises, things like that, but I think that, you know, the fact that the Democrats didn't pass a budget last year, that's hardly unprecedented. That's happened lots of times that Congress has not passed a budget and they end up doing these big omnibus spending bills towards the end of the year to sort of muddle through. But I think that what the budget does do is it forces a debate about priorities and really, I think, the central debate in Congress right now is what is the proper role of the federal government, and that's at the bottom of what we're probably going to see debated in the coming months.

MR. MANN: Janet, I think Glickman's point was that if Obama would have sort of put that on the table, even though it didn't deal directly with this fiscal year's battle, it would have helped to sort of trivialize the objective and the stakes involved and might have made it easier to resolve. I don't know whether that's true or not, but I'm fishing for examples of where, in this context,

under these circumstances, with all the dynamics that our panelists have outlined that constrain a leadership, I'm looking for opportunities that we could have imagined had someone done this or that. Had Paul Ryan put on the table a proposal that wasn't as extreme and radical a vision of the world but something different, might that have made a difference in enticing Democrats into a serious discussion on the longer-term budget? But you may have other examples. And maybe the answer is no.

MS. HOOK: Well, first of all, I've got to tell you, Tom, I hate that kind of question. You know, what if -- you know, we just don't know. And I'll tell you one thing, there was a lot of talk around the time that Obama's budget came out, you know, criticizing him for not embracing Simpson-Bowles or coming up with his own plan for reducing the deficit, and, you know, I'm not taking a position here or there, but I will tell you that the rationale that people on his team would give or people on the Hill that supported him said that it would have been destructive to the debate if he had put his imprimatur on it because the Republicans would have attacked it. So, so long as an idea is out there and hasn't been completely shot down, it's still a live possibility. And, you know, that may be true. I don't know, but that's sort of the way people think about it and why it's so hard to say, you know, what if.

I will tell you, there was one point along the way in the debate on the CR that I thought was absolutely pivotal that made it more long and protracted and contentious than it might have been. As you say, it seems like a trivial amount of money, but it turned into a bigger more difficult thing to resolve, was the point at which -- when they had to do the first short-term CR to just keep things running while they worked out the deal -- I mean, it was hard enough to

work out the deal, but then they had to start fighting over the short-term CRs when the very first one -- John Boehner said, well, I'll do another -- I'll do a stopgap but we've got to have cuts on that too. I mean, that was a big departure from standard operating procedure on the Hill which is, while you're negotiating you just have level funding, you don't make changes, and Boehner said, no, every step of the way we're going to be cutting. And that was a big deal, but it did make the whole thing longer, more protracted, and it made every step of the way a big debate.

MR. MANN: Yeah. I mean, I come back to the sort of strategic thinking by the parties in all of this that seems to constrain many of the opportunities for leadership, and I know that's something our next speaker, Senator Bennett, will have something to say because he was I the -- very much in the middle of that during the first two years of this Administration.

We have time for one question before we move on. Who would like to pose it? John?

SPEAKER: Thank you. Looking for optimism, as I said early this morning, you know, where is there the possibility for some solutions? I heard something from Dan Glickman and also from David Welna that it's the need to build trust among the members and that good work gets done in the Senate and in the committees because they know each other and they trust each other and they're willing to take more risk to compromise because of that. And of course also they're elected for six years instead of for two years.

That certainly was Scoop's approach. He got a lot done before he introduced legislation and then a lot done in the committees. Tom Foley, Speaker Foley, who's been mentioned several times this morning, was a protégé

of Scoop's. They lived here. True, they were from Washington State and therefore it was harder to get home than if they were from New Jersey or from Virginia, but is there a way to create more trust among the members that can overcome ideology? And is there any possibility -- is there any possibility that with the tea party members who are so ideologically focused and who are -- one of you said, like kamikazes -- is there any possibility that building trust with the tea party ideology can lead to a solution?

MR. MANN: Okay, Sarah?

MS. BINDER: Well, it's a very good question and I don't want to down -- put a damper on the optimism. I guess I think of this in two ways. First, much of what Scoop Jackson was able to achieve in part was due to who he was and part is due to the times in which he was a Senator, and sometimes it's hard for us to disentangle how much contributed to that, but in a period where there is ideological overlap across the parties, it is relatively easier to come to some meeting of the minds and put aside the question, at least for as much of that period with long, long duration of Democratic control, less expectation, that what we do in Congress could help us win back control. And in that period we could see where there might be more meeting of the minds more often across a broader set of issues.

I think the leaders still today have this dilemma of the difficulty knowing that playing to the base may help you and that the base has an incentive or the party has an incentive because they can win back control, given that we've seen flopping of control of the two chambers.

MR. MANN: Let's just take the example David brought up about healthcare. The President sort of resisted his Democratic members in the

Senate and said we've got to make an effort to try to get some Republican support. He went along with Max Baucus. They extended negotiations, lots of amendments passed, and so on, but in the end, the signal from the leadership, and Senator Bennett can confirm or reject this, is that it said if we don't have the vast majority of the Republican Senators and the whole body supportive than don't agree to it. So, in effect, there was a withdrawal from it. It was impossible to do even though the leaders did what you were asking for and it was because of the broader strategic position of the party, which was to oppose and defeat health reform in this time.

MS. BINDER: Yeah. Well, you know, sorry to fuel pessimism here, but I actually think that the problem of getting people in Congress to work together isn't one of personal trust. I mean, I think there is a lot of mistrust here and there, so I don't think it's, you know, kind of the idea that if everybody lived together and dined together and saw each other socially more they'd, you know, be more inclined. There are just all these incentives and differences of interest and ideology going on.

And sadly, I mean, I think the most likely inspiration to a big budget deal or something like that right now is unfortunately a really big, ugly, external shock to the system, you know, kind of some problem in the market or something because, you know, over the last ten years one of the two times we've seen really big, bipartisan action, it's been in the wake of 9/11 and, you know, when we were having a financial meltdown. I mean, that's a little bit more pessimistic than I really feel, but I do think that something beyond building trust is what Congress is going to need to address these big problems.

MR. WELNA: I have one more fairly negative assessment of

things.

(Laughter)

MR. MANN: See what you brought on, John?

MR. WELNA: I think the moratorium on earmarks is something that many members of Congress may come to rue when they come to the appropriations process because when members felt like they had a personal stake in getting an appropriations bill through because they had these earmarks for their home state, there was bipartisan support for a lot of the spending bills, and we're not going to have that this year and so on the appropriations committees you're not going to have people working together maybe the way they did in the past. In fact, who wants to sit on an appropriations committee that's cutting spending now? I mean, it's not -- you see people getting on who have almost no seniority at all, and I think that was -- you know, for better or worse, it was a kind of a lubricant for keeping things moving in Congress. It wasn't that much money in the bigger picture, but it was something that gave a lot of people skin in the game that's not going to be there this year and I think it's going to make it that much more difficult to get consensus.

MR. MANN: I would like to ask you to join me in thanking Sarah, David, and Janet. That was terrific.

(Applause)

Senator Bennett, as you may have gathered from the end of this panel, we haven't quite reconciled the issue of the -- sort of the relative importance, strength, possibilities, of individual qualities, the skills of political leadership, and the constraints under which leaders operate now, particularly given the nature of the parties and the extent to which there are such strong

views among core party constituencies, oftentimes, against doing the very things that we believe are necessary to grapple with problems, that is talk practically about the problems and see if you can't work something else. Instead it's a matter of strategic interests and the fervor back home.

You have some experience to share with us and bring to bear on this. Senator Bennett was a superb member of the United States Senate, a member of the Appropriations Committee, the Banking Committee, the Joint Economic Committee. He has been known throughout his career as a man of extraordinary intelligence, wisdom, wit, and good will, and actually has had a good deal of experience over the years in working across the aisle.

He's been kind enough to be here to offer some reflections on the subject of our conference and join me in welcoming him. Bob Bennett.

(Applause)

MR. BENNETT: Well, I came with certain things that I wanted to say and as I sat here listening, I threw them all out and made a bunch of notes and will do my best to respond for some of the things that I heard while I was here.

First, when you talk about strategic thinking by the parties, you are speaking of something that does not exist, and to even bring it up as a possibility shows that you are political scientists rather than a political realist, and we do not engage or indulge in strategic thinking. We just do our best to try to hold things together with some degree of coherence.

You talk about Scoop Jackson, I knew Scoop Jackson. I had my first experience in the Senate when I was 19 years old and was serving as an intern in my father's office. To show what a junkie I was, I used to sit in the

Senate gallery and listen to the debate, and when I was not doing that, I would read the Congressional record to catch up on the debate. Now, if there's anything more dedicated than that, I don't know what it is. And in those days there were debates on the floor of the Senate.

I think television has ruined the debating process on the floor of the Senate because everyone is talking to the camera. Dick Durbin, I offer you as Exhibit A. Dick pays little or no attention to anything that his colleagues may say or do, but you notice the angle of his head while he's talking and he's speaking to the television camera, and he does that very well, and when Time Magazine picked its ten best Senators, predictably all of a kind that Time Magazine would ideologically approve of -- Time obviously went through a great metamorphoses when it came out from under the shadow of Henry Luce and came under the shadow of Hollywood -- they picked Dick Durbin as one of the best Senators and named him "The Debater" but to be a debater you need somebody to debate against and we don't do that in the Senate. You talk to the television camera.

But in Scoop Jackson's day there was debate and the time as a young man getting my first taste of the Senate, I would listen to the debates and it made a difference who was on the floor and what he was saying. I say "he" because there was only one she in the entire Senate and that was Margaret Chase Smith and she hardly ever showed up to engage in the debate.

It was a very different Senate because the Democrats were split between the Southern Democrats who were tremendously conservative, and the Northern Democrats, led by Hubert Humphrey, who were very liberal and continually frustrated, and the Senator who controlled the balance of power in the

period of time when I paid attention in the Senate was Everett Dirksen. Everett Dirksen wrote the Civil Rights Act. You give Lyndon Johnson credit for passing the Civil Rights Act, and that's legitimate, but I was there when it was done, I was a staffer in my father's office. That was okay in those days. It was not illegal to hire your son. Ill advised, unless he had a background, an understanding. I was my father's campaign manager and we won the campaign so it's appropriate that he took me into his staff. I was there, watched it happen. Bobby Kennedy was the attorney general and his staffers would all come to the hill and they would talk to Dirksen's staffers. They wouldn't talk to Mike Mansfield's staffers because Dirksen held the balance of power.

Goldwater was set to be the Republican standard bearer in the election and Goldwater was against the Civil Rights Act, and Dirksen could have gone with Goldwater and killed it. The Democrats did not have enough votes to overcome the southern filibuster without Dirksen, and all of the kinds of things, strategic thinking and cooperation, get along, stemmed from the fact that the Democrats were split, the Republicans, even though they had only 36 votes, controlled what would happen, what would pass, and what would not, and you had to get together across party lines.

My father ultimately sided with Dirksen and against Goldwater on the Civil Rights Act. I helped him as his chief of staff with some of the ideas that I had. He paid for it with a very tough primary the next time he came around, from the Utah coordinator of the John Birch Society. I ran that campaign too and we won. Looking back on it, as I said in my farewell address to the Senate, which drew an unprecedented 30 Senators, by the way, I was delighted so many showed up, same thing, I voted for TARP and drew an opponent and I was not

as successful as my father at fighting it off, and so I have forced retirement which I now am very grateful for. If I were up on the Hill I would just be mad all the time, and I can sit down with the political scientists rather than the political realists and tell you what you should be thinking, and that's a great opportunity.

All right, enough. Let me go to some of the things I heard here and respond to them.

The greatest scandal in American politics is not campaign finance reform. I believe that politics is divided between the great issues and the great diversions, and we spend most of our time arguing over the great diversions and campaign finance reform is one of the great diversions. If money could control the election, Senator Perot would be fighting against -- President Perot would be fighting for his seat against soon to be President Forbes and nobody else would much matter.

The great issue is gerrymandering. For the House of Representatives, the vast majority of them are not threatened for their seat except in their primaries. And the district lines are drawn so that every Republican seat is safe and every Democratic seat is safe, with some exceptions, of course, but the vast majority of them survive only if they survive their primary, and as a consequence, if you're going to get elected a Democrat, you have to run to the left to win your primary because only the activists vote in the primary. If you're a Republican you run to the right and so California sends us Bob Dornan and Nancy Pelosi. And her seat is safe, and his was until he got so wild that he finally lost it, but how many seats are in play in the House of Representatives out of 435? Twenty? Twenty-five?

The House of Representatives is not what the Founding Fathers

had in mind. They made it a two-year term so that it could be responsive to the people. It is the least responsive body that we have.

When Ronald Reagan won his landslide victory over Jimmy Carter in 1980, he brought the Senate with him, but he didn't bring the House. Why? Because Senate lines cannot be redrawn and you get genuine elections in the Senate, but you don't in the House, and if I can give you one nugget to demonstrate this after the 2000 redistricting, I said to someone who was involved in it on the Democratic side, I'm a little surprised that California didn't pick up more Democratic seats than they did as a result of the redistricting, that you didn't use that opportunity to cut out a few more Republican seats. He said, we could have, but if we were going to do that, we would have lost some of our incumbents.

The seat would have stayed Democratic, but the incumbent would have lost in the primary, particularly Henry Waxman and Maxine Waters would have been replaced by Hispanics if we had redrawn the line for maximum Democratic advantage, so we drew the lines to protect Henry and Maxine. Is it any wonder that Henry Waxman and Maxine Waters are the least likely to compromise on anything or deal with any Republican when they are representatives for life?

And the same thing happens to Republicans. You have the same problem, where the district lines are drawn. So, if you want a crusade that's going to change the House of Representatives in a way that will take it back to the Scoop Jackson era, crusade for district lines drawn in the House on something other than political lines. And when the Supreme Court ruled that you could draw a line for political purposes in order to make sure that African-

Americans got some House seats, the lawyers in the first Bush Administration Justice Department said, this is the way we make the solid south Republican. And they did.

So, Cynthia McKinney gets elected in Georgia, but all of the voters who might cause other people in Georgia to think twice about taking very strong conservative positions, because they had those voters in their district, all those voters are corralled into Cynthia McKinney's district. And of course the only challenge to her has to come from a Democrat.

Earmarks, I heard earmarks mentioned. Earmarks is one of the great distractions, one of the great diversions. It's no amount of money at all, but it is tremendously important constitutionally and culturally. Constitutionally, the bedrock position of the Founding Fathers was the separation of powers and they gave the Congress the power of the purse, thinking the Congress would be the dominant of the three branches.

They gave the President the power of the sword in case we went to war we would have one leader, and they gave the judiciary life tenure so the other two branches couldn't mess with them. And increasingly, we have seen the Congress get weakened as the power of the purse runs down Pennsylvania Avenue and ends up at the White House. And the only vestige of the Congress exercising its power of the purse and saying, we get to decide how money gets spent, is earmarks.

So, what do we do in the name of defending the Constitution? We say we'll let the President decide how everything gets spent. There should be more earmarks, not less. Sorry, Wall Street Journal.

You track the expenditures of government by the number of

earmarks. You track the irresponsibility of government by the number of earmarks. Look, in this year we just had this many and now we've got this many. So, naturally, we're spending out of control. Nonsense. The more earmarks, the more responsibility.

Let me tell you what it's like without earmarks. Before Congress started to exert itself and exercise its power to determine how the money was going to be spent, it all came down to the White House. I was in the Nixon Administration, I was on the receiving end of those phone calls.

This is the way it works:

"Mr. Bennett?"

"Yes, sir, Congressman. Glad to hear from you." That's a lie, but all right. "Glad to hear from you. What can I do for you?"

"Mr. Bennett, you're aware that I sit on the Appropriations Committee that controls you department's budget, are you not?"

"Oh, yes, Congressman. I'm very much aware of that."

"Fine. There's a project in my district that I want funded, and here it is. And if it's not funded the next time Secretary Volpe comes before my committee he's going to have a very hard time."

"Thank you, Congressman. Appreciate that very much."

Walk down the hall, say to the budget director, "We've got to fund this."

He'd say, "Why? It's terrible."

I said, "I know it's terrible, but we've got to fund it. Here's why."

"Oh, okay."

With an earmark, that Congressman has to put his name on it, has

to put it in the paper, has to defend it. You get rid of all the earmarks and the phone calls will come down and everything in Chicago will get funded and everything in Wilmington, Delaware will get funded and anybody who comes from a Republican district will not get funded, and the Republican will stand up and say, “Aren’t I pure because I didn’t ask for any earmarks?”

I say, “Yeah, you’re pure, and the Vice-President and the President really appreciate it.”

And then when they come to me and say, “Well, you’re my representative in Congress and this really makes a whole lot of sense.”

And I say, “Yeah, it really makes a whole lot of sense. And I’ve taken the earmark pledge.” I never took it, obviously, and that’s one of the reasons I’m not there -- “I’ve taken the earmark pledge so I’ll help you out to get what you need.” Here’s President Obama’s phone number. You call him and good luck.

But that’s one of the great diversions and we’ve swallowed it.

All right, what are the great issues? I’ve talked about gerrymandering from a political standpoint. The great issue we face is the economic issue and I want to put it in slightly different terms than we usually hear about it.

I don’t care if somebody comes to me and says, “The debt is so big, the debt is so big, and it’s so much per child and it’s going up so much per second,” and so on. I say, “That doesn’t make any difference.” I want to know, how big is it compared to GDP? How big is it as a percentage of the economy? And, more specifically, that number you can give me, this number you cannot, but we have to be aware of, what is the national debt as a percentage of the

national borrowing capacity? That's not a number we can come up with with any precision.

But the United States of America has the size of the economy, the GDP, and with an economy as big as ours, we have a borrowing capacity in addition to the size of our GDP, and you put those two numbers together and you say, all right, it's X -- whatever X is.

Now, once we get to the point where the debt exceeds X, we're Greece, we're Portugal, we're Ireland, we're Zimbabwe. As long as we're this side of the line, wherever that line is, we're okay.

Now, the debt as a percentage of GDP has been as high as 150 percent. When? You're the think tank. When was the debt 150 percent of GDP? Nineteen forty-six. We survived it because we knew it was not going to keep growing, that once we got over the war and stopped funding the war, it would come down, and it did, partly because we weren't funding the war and partly because, quite frankly, we inflated our way out of that problem. But we got it under control and we survived.

Now we are approaching that line, wherever it is, in peacetime. You say, we've got a war in Afghanistan, that's peanuts compared to World War II. And the driver behind our approaching our ability -- ultimate ability to borrow is entitlement spending, and everybody has known that forever. This is not a new revelation. Paul Ryan is not the first one to point it out even though you would think so from the editorials that are being written about it.

I ran for the Senate in 1992 and I used some rather unorthodox language in talking while I did it. For example, I said, "Social Security is a Ponzi scheme and we have to do something about it and we have to do it now." This is

1992. I got elected. So, my first meeting, strategic thinking by the parties, I sat down with my fellow Republican Senators, and, you know, what are we going to do, and I said, "We've got to address Social Security before it runs us over the cliff."

Senator was sitting next to me, stood up, walked around the table, and took a seat as far away from me as he could get. And he said, "I don't even want to be in the same room with you while you're talking like that." Ronald Regan talked about that back in 1986 and we lost control of the Senate in the next election.

All right, when I was chairman of the Joint Economic Committee we held hearings; I came up with a solution to Social Security. One of the witnesses, a Democrat, Bob Posen, got me on the road of that. I sat down with him, we worked it out, we got some other things, he didn't have 100 percent fix, he was about an 85 percent fix, we fiddled around with things over about a six month period. We came up with 100 percent fix for Social Security, submitted it to the Social Security trustees, they vetted it, came back and said, "Yes, this is a 100 percent -- this will fix Social Security in perpetuity." I went to McConnell and I said, "This has got to be the Republican position on Social Security." He looked at it and he says, "Bob, absolutely. As soon as you get your first Democratic co-sponsor."

Well, I never got one. I trolled across the aisle, I did everything I could. "Bob, this is a great idea, Bob -- " Wonderful comment, one fellow said -- Senator said to me, "You know, you really know this stuff. You could be staff."

(Laughter)

He said, "We're going to do it. Bob, this is right." I said, "Look,

take my name off of it. Do whatever you want, but this is what we've got to do for the country, Social Security."

Social Security is the easy one. Healthcare is the hard one. Social Security is easy.

He said, "We're going to do it, right after the next election." Well, that's the problem, the next election never comes.

Now, they did sit down after President Obama was elected and said, "Okay, we're getting serious. Come in, tell us your ideas," so on, and I went in, I laid the thing out. "Yup, that's great. Okay, we're going to do it. Just one thing we want to change." I said, "What's that?" knowing in advance what it was. He says, "We've got to add a tax increase." I said, "Okay, you're Democrats, I understand that, and I'm out of here," because that's what's got us in this problem all along, we keep promising more and more benefits and then how are we going to pay for them and then we put in that tax increase and then the demographics change and then we're stuck, and this thing -- "No, if you're going to add a tax increase, I'm not here."

"Well, we're going to do it without you." Two years ago Social Security is off the table, nobody talking about it. Paul Ryan's raised it, Democrats are demagoging it, and we're right back where we were in 1992 when I ran the first time, which means we're right back where we were in 1986 when Ronald Reagan was talking about it. We're 30 years later and we knew 30 years ago we had to do this, and we didn't.

And, as I say, Social Security is the easy one, healthcare is the tough one. Medicaid is going to bankrupt the United States and every state in it simultaneously. Great line out of Lamar Alexander when we were debating

Obama healthcare.

He said, “Well, we should put a provision in this bill that would require every Democrat Senator -- or every Senator who votes for it,” that meant every Democrat, “every Senator who votes for it, to go home and be governor of his state and try to run his state budget under the terms of this bill because every state will be bankrupted by what this is doing.” That coming from a man who was governor of his state.

The Democratic governors agreed with him. The press didn’t make a big deal out of it but the National Governor’s Association was appalled at what the Obama healthcare plan would do to state budgets.

I was presumptuous enough to send President Obama a memo after he got elected. I said, “Look, I have no standing, this is tremendously presumptuous and really pushy on my part, okay, now let’s get to it. This is a Nixon goes to China moment for you. You’re inheriting an economy that is in serious trouble, and if a Democratic President says, ‘Let’s do something about entitlements,’ and follows through, you will build enough political capital that you can then do anything you want, in healthcare or the environment or anything else, but it’s the entitlement spending that’s going to destroy us, just the way it’s the entitlement spending that did what it did to Greece, the entitlement spending that did what it did to Ireland, and so on, and it’s the Democrats that have always won the election by demonizing the Republicans for bringing it up.” So, a Nixon goes to China moment.

The President was kind enough to call me after he got the memo and thanked me for it and say nice things, but he didn’t get to it and he made strategic planning, he made an enormous strategic mistake, and I’ll end with this

and then answer any questions you might have. Instead of attacking the great issue, which is we are approaching the point where we will exceed the borrowing capacity of the United States, and if you don't think that's serious, for a big, well-functioning, prosperous nation, go talk to the people at General Motors, with a big prosperous, well-functioning company but they kept borrowing money and borrowing money and then suddenly they could not get out from under it. They were the paradigm of what happens to you when you're big and prosperous but you exceed your borrowing capacity.

President decided he was going to do healthcare. All right, fine. I was into healthcare. Ron Wyden and I were working on a healthcare bill. Went down and talked to the President about it. They sat down in the White House and they said to themselves -- I have this from one of the folks who said it -- "We're not going to make the mistake Hillary made." Hillary wrote the bill in the basement of the White House with nobody watching, so when it came out, nobody had any ownership. The Congress wouldn't buy into it, it ultimately died at it's own weight. It did. Hillary care was not voted down, it just collapsed. Nobody ever voted for it, it just died. And nobody liked it.

So, we are going to be smarter than that, we are going to let the Congress write the bill so that they have buy-in. Reach out to Bennett. I got a phone call from Tom Daschle. I got visits from Nancy-Ann DeParle, "Reach out to the other Republicans." I said, "Look, I'm with you. Let's do this. This is the biggest entitlement. We've got to bring health -- got to do the healthcare thing right." Oh, that's wonderful. I said, "I want this to pass with 70 votes in the Republican -- in the Senate." Which meant you had to get 20 Republicans to vote for it -- no, 10. I guess they had 60 Democrats. He said, "That would be

wonderful. We could pass this bipartisan -- "

All right, we're going to let the Congress ride it, and they laid out some general guidelines. But do you know how binding and powerful general guidelines are? It's like spaghetti, and that meant, okay, here are the general guidelines, now you write the bill, and as the Senate was kind of gearing up for it Nancy Pelosi said, "Wow, we get to write this bill? Henry, what do you want in this?" So, Henry Waxman and George Miller and Nancy Pelosi sat down and they produced a bill that was a total disaster. And now the cement is hardening around that disaster, and the President -- I like him. I admire him in many ways, but he just didn't understand how bad the House is, and the comment that I got from somebody close to him, he says, "We didn't understand how much the House hates the Senate."

Obama and Biden are both Senators and the mantra in the House goes all the way back to, who? Sam Rayburn? You know, the Republicans are the opponent, but the Senate is the enemy and, boy, they wrote a bill that is just terrible.

So, it gets over to the Senate and we have to start from complete scratch, but the House has already got the buy in, the sense of ownership, that the White House was hoping they would have around a piece of perfectly awful legislation. So what are we going to do in the Senate? Well, then, all this wonderful let's bring the Republicans in, I get sat down by a senior Democrat that says, "We really appreciate your interest in healthcare. Now butt out. We're going to write the bill to suit ourselves." So, they start writing the bill and Teddy Kennedy's committee and Kennedy is off in Florida -- Teddy's off in Florida because of his illness, so Chris Dodd, who also happens to be chairman of the

Banking Committee, has to do double duty, and then Max Baucus is saying, “No, this is going to be my bill”, so the jurisdiction is going on and -- you know, the decision to stay out of it and let the Congress write it is beginning to look like a really dumb decision because it was.

There wasn’t the kind of leadership out of the White House on either the House or the Senate that said, “This is not just guidelines, this is what we want to do. If we want Bennett in, if we want Lamar Alexander in, if we want Judd Gregg in,” those are people that were cosponsors of the Healthy Americans Act, otherwise known as Bennett-Wyden or in Oregon, Wyden-Bennett, “let’s get him in. And Max Baucus, if you don’t want him in, too bad. I’m from the White House, this is what the President wants, and we want them at the table.”

When Daschle called me he said, “Absolutely, you will have a seat at the table.” And then the Presidential leadership disappeared. I didn’t have any kind of seat at the table, I didn’t even have a blogger -- a tweeter sitting in the back of the room telling me what was going on. None of us did. Republicans were completely frozen out and as the bill emerged in the Senate, and it was a better bill than the House bill, but it was still a mess, you had Democrats looking at it saying, “I can’t vote for it.” I can’t vote for it for this reason, that reason, whatever. At which point Bill Clinton comes to the Democratic conference and says, “You know why we lost the election in 1994? Because we did not pass Hillary’s health bill. Vote for this no matter what it says.” That was his message; the Democrats will lose the next election unless you vote for this. And David Axelrod goes on television and says, “I know the President’s numbers are down, but the day the healthcare bill passes, they will jump up eight points.” And we all look at each other and say, “What is he smoking?”

So, Harry Reid, come up with 60 votes. Well, nobody is better at coming up with votes than Harry Reid. That's why he's the leader. So, he goes to Mary Landrieu and says, "Mary, you hate this bill, I hate this bill. Okay, what is it going to take? I've got my checkbook out." The number was $300 million for Louisiana. The Louisiana Purchase. And then the cornhusker kickback -- we had fun naming all of these. The best moment was Barbara Mikulski when one reporter said to her, "Is there anything in this bill for Maryland?" And she said, "No, because I didn't know the bazaar was open," and stepped on to the elevator.

Harry put together the 60 votes and they passed it and the President's numbers went down and the tea party movement was born, and Bob Bennett lost his seat. TARP probably had more to do with it than healthcare, but because I had cosponsored a healthcare bill with Ron Wyden, the Club for Growth comes into Utah, Bennett Care equivalent of Obamacare, you're in favor of a government takeover -- the thing was a total disaster of Congressional relations.

Now, I'll wind up by saying I think the President learned something out of his first two years just the way Bill Clinton did out of his first two years and I think you're going to see more coherence coming out of the White House. I spoke to a high level Administration official who clearly does not want to be quoted saying things are a lot better now that Bill Daley is the Chief of Staff. But that's what makes politics so interesting and makes your job at Brookings secure, constantly something to analyze and some to look at it.

But just think about this: the great issues and the great diversions, and Brookings mission should be, as Scoop Jackson's career was

dedicated to, identifying the great issues and looking past the great diversions.

Thanks so much.

(Applause)

MR. MANN: Thank you all for coming. We've had a rich and interesting, informative morning. I felt the juices flowing as Senator Bennett was talking. I was going to challenge him on any number of matters and I was thinking "Rashomon" this same story but unfolding through different eyes and views, but that's the great thing. The kind of discussions and debates that we have here and he has really enriched our conference and I thank him very much for coming and I thank you all for coming. We are adjourned.

* * * * *

CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

/s/Carleton J. Anderson, III

Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Virginia

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