



EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH NICK LITTLEFIELD

February 15, 2009
Boston, Massachusetts

Interviewer
James Sterling Young

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TRANSCRIPT

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Young: This is an interview with Nick Littlefield, in Boston, the morning of February 15.

Littlefield: I have covered in detail the legislative agenda from 1995, when the Democrats went into the minority and Senator Kennedy took such a key role in resisting the [Newton] Gingrich revolution, so to speak. Not only did he stop the very radical ideas that the Republicans, under Gingrich, passed in the House, but Kennedy also blocked them in the Senate. In addition, he turned the equation around and enabled to get passed, over the Republican majority's objections, the Kennedy-[Nancy] Kassebaum health bill, the minimum wage increase, and the Children's Health Insurance Program, the Kennedy-[Orrin] Hatch Children's Health Insurance Program in particular. I've covered those areas.

I want to focus now on the first six years that I worked for Senator Kennedy, the four years of the first [George H. W.] Bush Administration and the first two years of the [William J.] Clinton Administration. Kennedy was in the majority during those years, although he was dealing with a Republican President for the first four years of that period. He shepherded an extraordinary amount of legislation through the Labor and Human Resources Committee. I want to talk about a number of areas of legislation, particularly education, national service, and job training and job-related issues.

As I've previously mentioned, when the first George Bush became President, following the eight years of the [Ronald] Reagan Administration, there was an opportunity for major social legislation to be enacted, because Bush was talking about being a "kinder and gentler" President, which meant there were opportunities in the education, healthcare, jobs, and civil rights areas. In fact, during the first Congress under Bush, 54 measures from the Labor and Human Resources Committee became public law, making it one of the most productive periods in the committee's history.

[BREAK]

Littlefield: There were more bills enacted through the committee than in any previous Congress, except for the 89th Congress in 1965 and '66, when the Great Society programs, including the

Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Older Americans Act, and the Manpower Act were first enacted.

To begin the 101st Congress, the Democratic Policy Committee, under George Mitchell, established its legislative agenda and identified 63 priority items for action in 1989 and 1990. Of those 63, 57 were enacted into law and 28, or almost half of these measures, originated under Senator Kennedy, in the Labor and Human Resources Committee.

I want to touch on some of the early legislation. The first big fight in 1989 was enacting the first minimum wage increase since 1981. There had been no minimum wage increase at all during the Reagan Administration. Senator Kennedy was able to shepherd through the Congress an increase in the minimum wage, from \$3.35 an hour to \$3.80 an hour for 1990, and to \$4.25 in 1991. This was a 90-cent increase, 45 cents each year. Once again, there was Kennedy leading the minimum wage fight, one of his signature issues. Looking back over his four decades, he had been involved in minimum wage issues from the very beginning of his career, but there was the 90-cent increase in '89.

We've talked about the 90-cent increase in '96, and then when he went back into the majority in 2006, there was another minimum wage increase, all led by Senator Kennedy. It's one of his great causes, and he always talks about it. I've gone through the increase in 1995–96, when Kennedy was in the minority, in detail. In 1989 he was increasing it with a Republican President—Well, twice he did it with a Republican President. He did it with both Bushes, in 1989 and in 2006, and he did it in the minority with Clinton. This is absolutely one of his signature issues.

Young: In an earlier interview, you had traced minimum wage from the beginning. You didn't include the increase in 2006, although you mentioned it, but you had covered that in some detail, I think.

Littlefield: I think that's right. When we really got going with the committee, we divided it into these four areas: jobs and labor-related issues, education, healthcare, and children and families. A significant issue in the jobs-related area, which we worked on very closely with Senator Howard Metzenbaum, was the Older Workers Benefit Protection Act. It overruled several Supreme Court decisions that had allowed employers to discriminate against older workers in employment benefits. That Metzenbaum-Kennedy initiative was enacted on October 16, 1990. Then came education, or education and training if we were to combine the two.

I want to talk about education in the first two years of Clinton, '93 and '94, which were very productive, but we started laying the groundwork for the education initiatives that came under Clinton back during the first Bush Administration.

What I remember particularly is that the second Education Secretary under George Bush was Lamar Alexander, the former Governor of Tennessee. He was very interested in school reform, as was Senator Kennedy, and he introduced the strategy of school reform, which was not Goals 2000, but was about focusing on standards and testing and other school reform ideas. Senator Kennedy worked with Secretary Alexander to establish an ambitious set of targets and goals.

They were the first step to the wholesale school reform that came to fruition in '93 and '94, in the first two years of Clinton.

That was the subject of considerable argument with the Gingrich Congress, because part of the Contract with America, or the Gingrich revolution, was supposed to be that there was no federal role in elementary and secondary education. Of course that view did not prevail, and we were able to stop the cuts that the Gingrich House passed in the field of elementary and secondary education. But this series of actions on school reform culminated in No Child Left Behind under the second [George W.] Bush, and we can trace it back to Kennedy's work with Secretary Alexander and the first Bush.

Other education initiatives during this first two-year period of my being there, with Senator Kennedy being the chairman and George Bush I being President, included some of the reauthorizations, including vocational education, the Carl [D.] Perkins Vocational Education Act. This was always an issue that Senator Kennedy was focused on—job training, vocational education. School-to-work was one component, and that's what this Carl Perkins vocational ed legislation was. Another component was improving the skills of the existing workforce so they could get better jobs in the workforce. The third was training the unemployed so that they could get work. There were three pieces: the student, school-to-work, piece of it; upgrading the skills of the incumbent workforce; and training the unemployed who needed to be trained.

We focused on all of those areas, and in 1990 Senator Kennedy shepherded through the Carl Perkins vocational amendments, which was a reauthorization and the most comprehensive strengthening of vocational education legislation since the program was enacted in 1963 as part of the Great Society. Job training is an extremely difficult, dense, complex topic that operates under the radar. People are unaware of how much of it goes on, but there's a community of people who are *deeply* involved in job training. Kennedy had been involved in the Job Training Partnership Act with Dan [J. Danforth] Quayle, which we'll talk about in a minute because it came up for reauthorization during those years.

I was always amazed that when you have a conference on job training thousands of people come from all over the country, and they're deeply committed to exactly each funding stream and each program and each strategy. It's a world that people don't appreciate, but it's absolutely crucial.

Young: What is the profile of these people who come from all over the country? Are they schoolteachers?

Littlefield: Some of them are in schools. Of course there's always been a great debate on whether students should be set onto two tracks in high school, whether they should go into the voc ed [vocational education] track or stay in a general education. And there are schools that are just voc ed. There are people on both sides of these issues who stake everything, their whole being, on fighting for one position or the other. There are schoolteachers who work in schools, who also work to try to get high school students prepared for jobs. There are people who teach in voc ed schools, where all they're doing is training high school students for jobs. That's the high school, under-18, first-job part.

There are lots of federally supported and state supported programs for job training for people who are out of work. There's another set of people who belong to these community organizations, who belong to federally funded training centers. The Job Training Partnership Act set up PICs, private industry councils, that try to coordinate the needs of the businesses in a given community, to hire new people with what the federally funded training programs are training people to do. That's another world, with lots of money in it and lots of very strongly held views.

I have a friend in Boston, named Neil Sullivan, who runs the Private Industry Council for Boston. He's a fabulous person who is very smart and knows all about this stuff, if you ever want to get into it, because it's below the radar screen. There's a lot of money involved and it's crucial to providing trained workers for the needs of local economies and for getting people into work right out of high school. I knew nothing about it. I always found it very dense and difficult to get down in the weeds. It was never very sexy as a political issue, but it was very much there and it was very important and had people who felt very strongly about it. Any time you tried to revise any aspect of job training policy, you'd hear from a group of constituents for whom that was out of the question.

There was a question of whether we were going to call it "job training." At one point, in 1994, I think, Bob Shrum said we should stop calling it "job training" and call it "job education," because everybody is committed to education but "job training" sounds like something that they're not so committed to. But I think it's still job training.

The Senator was also very interested in making sure that math and science were properly taught in the schools. He's always been focused on the quality of math and science education. He championed, and led the enactment of, the Excellence in Mathematics, Science and Engineering Education Act in November of 1990, which provided grants and contracts for programs in schools and colleges to improve math, science, and engineering education.

The way Kennedy would work in these areas in which he took a real interest—because it was so clear that we needed to build up our science capability—was that he would find an expert, from Massachusetts if possible or from somewhere else. This time he found a professor at MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] named Michael Dertouzos, who wrote a book on how America would lose its competitive edge if we didn't train scientists and mathematicians more effectively. We held a series of hearings, up here in Boston and in Washington. Kennedy was always very interested in math and science education; it fits with his interest in health research.

We had a hearing at the Boston Museum of Science on how to teach math, because there was a former civil rights activist, now teacher, Bob Moses, who had spent the past 15 years creating new ways to teach math. Kennedy was absolutely riveted by this and we held a hearing. Moses, as I say, had been a civil rights leader in the South, but he ended up in Boston, running this extraordinary new way of getting students interested in math. That was another of Kennedy's interests.

Another thing that he did in 1990, during those first two years I was with him, in the training area, was something called the Defense Economic Adjustment, Diversification, Conversion, and Stabilization Act. This was using Defense Department appropriations to assist workers in

communities in adjusting to military spending cutbacks, to train for new jobs. This was a typical Kennedy strategy; he would look for funds wherever they existed and would then try to steer them into one of his priorities. Here were training and relocation; this was a very substantial investment in job training and he got it out of the Defense Department.

Young: Was it connected also with base closings?

Littlefield: Probably.

Young: Which can be devastating.

Littlefield: I don't know exactly the timing. I know it was in November of 1990 that it was enacted, but the BRAC [Base Realignment and Closing Procedures], the base closing operations, I think, were a little later than that. But definitely, he saw an opportunity to get some funding for training and he went at it in the defense realm.

Another area that fits within the education group is the arts. I cannot recall whether I've told you the story of the National Endowment for the Arts, because it's a good story if I haven't told it to you. It's how Jesse Helms wanted to kill the National Endowment and how Senator Kennedy and Senator [Claiborne] Pell saved it.

Young: I don't think I've heard *your* story. I've heard *about* it.

Littlefield: Nobody knows it the way I do, I promise you.

Young: Yes, so why don't you give it? There's nothing wrong with repetition.

Littlefield: Some of these topics are not first-burner priorities. I've gotten most of the first-burner priorities off my chest and these are important elements of the whole Kennedy agenda. I won't get the dates right, but I'll get the story right.

In '89 and '90, roughly, the National Endowment for the Arts had a significant budget, probably in the \$200 million range, maybe not quite that much, and the National Endowment for the Humanities likewise. Those programs had been created by Senator Pell of Rhode Island back in, I assume, the '60s. They were crucial programs in the world of the arts because they provided funds to artists and community arts organizations and established organizations like the Boston Symphony and the Museum of Fine Arts. It was a drop in the bucket in terms of funding, compared to what other countries do, but nevertheless, it was a commitment by the federal government to the arts and humanities.

What happened in '88, '89, and '90 was that there were several very controversial art exhibits that somehow were traced back to, in some part, federal, National Endowment funding. The two famous examples were the [Robert] Mapplethorpe photographs in Cincinnati, and a particular photograph by an artist named Andres Serrano, which involved a crucifix in a jar of urine, or something like that. The Mapplethorpe photos were homoerotic and the Serrano thing was obviously denigrating of particular religious views. I don't believe that either of these exhibits was *totally* funded, or created in any way, by the National Endowment funds, but the funds were involved somehow in the showing of the work.

Jesse Helms, the Senator from North Carolina, who was the scourge of everything left-wing, or everything of the liberal community, jumped on these as an opportunity to attack the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities and to cut them back. He would go to the floor day after day with pictures of these photographs and paintings, and would blast away at the National Endowment for the Arts. It wasn't a time when the Democrats were exactly eager to stand up against that kind of demagoguery, nor were they eager to defend federal funding for either of these projects, so the National Endowment for the Arts was in real trouble and could easily have been wiped off the map. That's what Helms was trying to do.

There was a desire on Senator Kennedy's part and Senator Pell's part, particularly, to save the National Endowments. Fortunately, Senator Kassebaum was the chairman of the Subcommittee on Education for the Labor Committee, and Senator Hatch must have been the chairman or the ranking member. We decided to try to work on this reauthorization with Senator Kassebaum, so it was Kennedy's staff, Kassebaum's staff, Pell's staff, and perhaps Hatch's staff, but I think it was mostly Kassebaum's, trying to figure out what to do. How could we possibly salvage the National Endowment for the Arts when everybody was throwing criticism at it?

We looked very carefully at the statute and tried to figure out a way of dealing with this. I remember these meetings with Kassebaum's staff. Kathy [Kathleen] Kruse on Senator Kennedy's staff was his person for the arts, which by the way reminds me that I should talk about him and some of the artists that he has worked with over the years. Remind me about that; that's another set of stories about his interest in supporting Broadway stars and painters and the like, and his own painting, I don't know how much you've heard about that.

Young: I've seen a fair amount of it, but I don't know much about it.

Littlefield: Will you make a note on those two things? We'll touch on them before we leave.

We somehow had to figure out how to make sure that National Endowment funds wouldn't be used for something obscene or something that denigrated religion. But of course if we created censorship, if we said in the statute that the money cannot be used to create anything obscene, what would that mean, and who would be the decider of what obscenity was? We all know Potter Stewart's "I know it when I see it," but you can't write legislation that way and you can't award funds contingent on "I know it when I see it." In addition, the arts advocates went nuts. They went just as nuts on their side if you tried to censor what they were doing, so we had to get very clever.

We talked to the Senator and came up with the idea that we would write into the statute that if a person were convicted of obscenity in a criminal trial, criminal obscenity, then that person would have to return the money to the National Endowment. That seemed like a very sound solution because it enabled Kennedy to go to the floor and say, "We have an ironclad statute that says that if a person uses any National Endowment funds or grants for work that is determined to be obscene by a jury, in a trial, then that person will have to give the money back. We now know that *no* money will be used for anything that is found to be obscene." Kennedy had it all; he could go to the floor and make all these arguments.

Of course, we knew that it was very unlikely that anybody would ever be convicted. In Cincinnati even, Mapplethorpe was convicted, but it was thrown out on some ground. We knew that it was unlikely that anybody would be convicted and that if they were, it would probably be a good thing that we got the money back. This enabled Kennedy to go to the floor and say, “Senator Helms, for anything that is proven to be obscene, the money will come back, so you do not have to worry. We will *not* spend government money on anything that’s obscene.” Kassebaum accepted this; Pell was delighted with it. They all went to the floor; we won the vote; and the National Endowment is in the law now because we came up with this very clever—That’s a typical Kennedy tactic: figure out how I can go to the floor and win the debate on this without completely violating our principles about what we want to do with a particular government program.

Young: Were you on the floor?

Littlefield: Oh, yes.

Young: Had Helms been filibustering?

Littlefield: It wasn’t filibustering; it was just that he would go to the floor and talk about this all the time. I’m sure he filibustered the National Endowment for the Arts reauthorization, but we won because we had—I remember during a debate we had big, blown-up copies made of Renaissance paintings of nude women and the like by Leonardo [da Vinci], Titian [Vecellio], and [Paolo] Veronese. We brought them all down to the floor and said, “Would Senator Helms say that these paintings should be banned and the National Endowment for the Arts should never support a museum that shows these paintings?” It was a full-scale donnybrook. Senator Jay Rockefeller loves art and is very involved in buying art and giving art away, and he was great on this. I remember him coming to the floor with Old Master paintings of nudes.

Young: What was Helms’s behavior on the floor?

Littlefield: It was mostly about homosexuality; that was his number-one target. He went after homosexuals in connection with HIV/AIDS [Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome] and he went after homosexuals in connection with the National Endowment for the Arts—whenever there was an opportunity. At that time, there was not a lot of eagerness on the part of Democrats to defend on those issues. You would be looking around for people to speak and you’d notice that the floor was mysteriously empty on the Democratic side. [laughing] These were all within Kennedy’s bailiwick, whether it was health or the arts or whatever. He was always great with it.

Young: Where was Senator [Robert C.] Byrd on this issue?

Littlefield: Senator Byrd was never very comfortable with the issue either, as I recall. I think he was a traditionalist and would have probably sided with Helms on the NEA [National Endowment for the Arts]. But there were a whole bunch of Republicans who were on the boards of their local museums, so they supported the NEA. We won, handily, once we’d figured out a way to navigate through the criticism being leveled at the agency, but solving this problem was crucial to the continuing existence of the NEA. It did lose a big chunk of money. The money was definitely cut back, but eventually it will come back. I don’t know what happened, finally, to the

[Barack] Obama stimulus, because there was \$50 million in there for the NEA. I don't know whether it was taken out on the final bill that just passed. I'm talking about the current, 2009 stimulus.

Young: Where was Bush on this? Didn't he defend the National Endowment?

Littlefield: I think he probably did. I don't think he got into the fray, but he certainly signed the bill; he didn't veto it. We also moved the NEA away from contemporary artworks to cultural, regional celebrations of traditional American art, so there was a lot of movement in that direction. The NEA has not been supporting cutting-edge contemporary artists the way it used to, although that may be changing now; I don't know. It's a great example of how crucial Kennedy was to the arts.

He loves music, particularly loves painting also, and he was very much aware that his brother, President [John F.] Kennedy, and Jacqueline Kennedy were very focused on the arts and the role of the arts in American life. Kennedy always was a champion of the arts, and came to know many of the successful Broadway performers. When there were events at the Kennedy Library in Boston, the annual dinner, say, or the annual Irishman of the Year dinner, he had the notion that in addition to the speeches and the serious [John F. Kennedy] Profile in Courage Award, the evening should be topped off by musical performances.

Every year—if we just focus on the Kennedy Library Annual Dinner and the Irishman of the Year Award, which was always held at the Kennedy Library around St. Patrick's Day, or even Senator Kennedy's big birthday parties, which happened maybe every five years—where there was a public event, there would always be musical entertainment. Probably through his sister Jean Smith, who lived in New York and who was very plugged in to the Broadway scene and had a lot of friends there, he started meeting some of these performers and inviting them to come to the Kennedy Library to perform. Over the last five to ten years, many of the great stars became part of the group that would come back and perform.

One of the leading male Broadway stars now is a man named Brian Stokes Mitchell, who was the lead in *Ragtime* and the lead in *Kiss Me Kate*, *Man of La Mancha*, and *South Pacific*. He's a big, big star, and has become a friend of Senator Kennedy's. He came to Senator Kennedy's house to sing for his 70th birthday. He came to the Boston Symphony Hall for the tribute to Senator Kennedy that was held during the Democratic Convention in 2004. I'm not sure he's been to the Kennedy Library, but he probably has. Kelli O'Hara, the current star of *South Pacific* on Broadway, has done *The Pajama Game* and various other shows recently for which she won awards. She's been to at least one of the Kennedy Library events, and they always sing three or four songs. Then the Senator each summer conducts the Boston Pops or goes to the Boston Pops concert when it's held at the Cape; there are Broadway singers who come for that and he's befriended them. There's a woman named Marin Mazzie who is a fabulous Broadway soprano. Senator Kennedy loves to hear her sing.

And there are the classical musicians, Yo-Yo Ma particularly, and the conductor/composer John Williams. One time [Betty] Comden and [Adolph] Green, the great Broadway lyricists and songwriters who wrote *On the Town* and many, many musicals, came to the Kennedy Library

and performed. There's a long list of musical stars and celebrities who have performed music at Senator Kennedy's big events at the library, at his house, wherever.

In recent years, he always asks the singers—and I'm sure he did this before my time—to hang around afterward. If it's at the Kennedy Library—On the seventh floor there's what's called the “family room,” where the family gathers after Kennedy Library events. He invites the singers up to the family room and there's always an impromptu show that goes on up there. He usually gets me to be his piece of it and then he joins in, but I provide the confidence factor for him. For me these are quite extraordinary, because I'm not that good, by any means, but I can carry a tune. I end up getting to sing duets with the great Broadway stars up in the family room of the Kennedy Library.

Comden and Green, at the very end of their lives, performed and then came upstairs. Betty Comden, who was the lyricist for the [Leonard] Bernstein musical *On the Town*, and I sang the duet of a song called “Lucky to Be Me,” an incredibly beautiful song written by Leonard Bernstein and Betty Comden. Here I was, in the Kennedy family room at the Kennedy Library at about midnight, singing back and forth with the person who wrote the song with Leonard Bernstein. When you think about it, that's pretty incredible.

Young: That's better than Broadway.

Littlefield: It's pretty good. *[laughing]* But then there's the one that I don't think I will forget, and there are some fabulous pictures of it, after the tribute to the Senator at Symphony Hall in Boston during the Democratic Convention in 2004. This was one of the very hot tickets during the Democratic Convention. Symphony Hall was packed. John Williams had put the show together, so it was Yo-Yo Ma, Bono [Paul David Hewson], and I'm sure Glenn Close was one of the performers, along with Stokes Mitchell and his costar, Audra McDowell, another big, big female Broadway star. They had just all done their great pieces and it was a wonderful, wonderful evening. Afterward we went downstairs to some smaller room where we were having a reception.

Of course the Senator got started. There were probably 100 people at the reception and the Senator decided he wanted to start singing, and I had to be the lead to get the thing going. We all went up and stood behind a little podium he had. He had a piano player set to play. We got Stokes Mitchell and Audra McDowell up to the front and me in the center. It must have been 45 minutes. We sang every song from *My Fair Lady*, every song from *Oklahoma*, every song from *South Pacific*, at full volume. I have some fabulous pictures. I think it was too much for Audra after half an hour and she sat down, but it was Stokes and Senator Kennedy and me going through the Broadway repertoire, the [Richard] Rodgers and [Oscar] Hammerstein and [Alan] Lerner and [Frederick] Loewe repertoire. It was very good fun. I think the people at the reception were just startled beyond belief.

Senator Kennedy's love for the arts, his love for music, I can't—I was lucky enough to share that with him. I did talk about the life of music in the Senate around him. It's very much a part of who he is and what he loves. There's a grand piano in one of the living rooms at Hyannis Port and I know that during the last years of her life, when the Senator was visiting his mother, he

would get a pianist and they would sit downstairs and go through all of her favorite songs. He knows the Irish songs as well as the Broadway songs.

It's ironic. Often when a performer is going to perform for Senator Kennedy around St. Patrick's Day and they're going to do some Irish songs, they inevitably think they're going to do "Danny Boy," and they do "Danny Boy" unless somebody has gotten word to them that the Senator doesn't really like "Danny Boy." It's too sad. He likes the more upbeat Irish songs. It always annoys him if the first song that the poor, unsuspecting performer is performing is "Danny Boy" and he doesn't know that the Senator does not like "Danny Boy" and doesn't want to be anywhere near anybody singing "Danny Boy." It's a part of Kennedy. I don't know when it all started except that he could always sing.

For the birthday party for his 75th birthday, which would have been two years ago, the one at the Kennedy Library, Senator Kennedy learned and sang, with accompaniment, "Some Enchanted Evening," from beginning to end, in front of the whole audience. Alone. Big, big success. He did great with that; I think he practiced it.

At one point, Vicki [Reggie Kennedy] gave him singing lessons, maybe five or eight years ago, but it didn't really work because I don't think the teacher understood the special richness of his voice. He needed to have big romantic songs, not Cole Porter, not croony songs. He's not a crooner; he's more of an operatic enthusiast. But he has very good pitch, so he can always be exactly on key, and he has a big, rich bass voice. If you can find a song that's right in that range, where passion is the underpinning of the song, he can absolutely sell it to an audience.

It gets harder with the Cole Porter patter songs. He loves it and is not averse to taking a shot at it; he loves to sing. He likes to have me up there, standing with him, but I'm not allowed to overshadow him, of course. I have to be a little bit in reserve at any point that he's going to join in. When he's not joining in, he wants me to be Ezio Pinza, of course, but when he's joining in, I'm supposed to be more or less the supporting cast.

Young: Can you do that on a duet?

Littlefield: Oh, yes. We sing duets all the time.

Young: How do you not be equal?

Littlefield: Well, at that point we just go for it. Usually, if I'm in the audience, he's up there thanking the performer, Glenn Close or somebody else, and then he says, "Nick, could you come up here?" We're in black tie; there are 500 or 1,000 people who don't really want any more of this; it's at the end of the evening; and he says, "Get up here, Nick. Nick? Where's Nick?" I've learned that I can't *not* go, because he will not accept my not going, so I go up there. Maybe three or four years ago, he persuaded, I think it was Glenn Close, or it could have been some other brilliant Broadway soprano, to stay up there and we sang, the three of us, "I Could Have Danced All Night" from *My Fair Lady*, and it brought the house down.

It's a side of him that—There aren't that many people who have been as deeply exposed to it as I have. We're always exchanging CDs [compact discs] and he has a CD player on the boat. As I talked about yesterday, two summers ago we were out on Penobscot Bay on a foggy day with no

wind. The boat was just drifting, and for three or four hours we just went through scores of CDs that we had on the boat. It was great.

Young: What about his painting?

Littlefield: His painting is interesting. He's not doing as much of it now—He wasn't even before he got sick—as he did about 15 years ago, where he was taking lessons in the Senate every week, and he would go with one of his grandchildren and they would work on paintings. That's been sporadic through his life. He started after his back injury in 1964, when he painted the most well known of his paintings, the one of the houses in Hyannis Port, where, as he said, he took liberties; he moved the church over to get the steeple into the picture. That one he painted in 1964, then there's a painting of daffodils that he painted for Vicki when they were going to get married. That's another one we all know. He's painted many paintings of Maine and I have three or four of them, copies of them, with inscriptions, big framed pictures. When he makes a painting, often he gets it reproduced, photographed—a full-size reproduction—has it framed, and gives it to people with an inscription on it.

Young: In 1964, after the plane crash, you mentioned his painting at that time.

Littlefield: He took up painting at that time.

Young: While he was in the frame?

Littlefield: I don't know. I don't know how you'd paint in a frame, but that's the painting. Every year for the last five or six, maybe more, years, his Christmas gift to everybody has been a calendar, which initially was just Senator Kennedy's paintings of the Hyannis breakwater and the beach and the house and the Maine scenes. Recently it's been expanded to include paintings of his stepdaughter, Caroline Raclin [Kennedy]. She just graduated from college and is a very good painter. He clearly likes people seeing what he's done in that regard. I think he enjoys showing his musical talent and showing his painting talent. He loves both things and people, who get a big, big kick out of it. His friends, his colleagues, and the people in his audiences get a big kick out of both of these things.

But back to the first two years of legislating under the first Bush, after I got there.

Young: Can I ask a question about education?

Littlefield: Yes.

Young: Wasn't the charter school issue heating up?

Littlefield: Not really. It may have been heating up. The issue was support for religious schools, for private schools. It was whether the federal government would allow funding to go to the private religious schools and maybe also to charter schools. This was a line that Senator Kennedy drew; he would stick to no public money for private religious schools.

Young: Vouchers.

Littlefield: We fought that. No voucher systems. He fought that and I know that that's—

Young: I don't recall whether they were part of Lamar Alexander's—

Littlefield: I don't, either. It probably would have been; he would have been for that. It wasn't the central piece of it. The central piece of it was testing and standards, developing standards for what students need to learn in the fourth, eighth, twelfth grades. I think to talk about education, you would want to talk to Ellen Guiney, Terry Hartle, or Clayton Spencer.

Young: We've talked with at least two of those.

Littlefield: They can tell you the whole education saga.

Young: [George H. W.] Bush made a big public identification of himself as the education President.

Littlefield: He did, and that's what Alexander was all about. I remember the first Education Secretary, Lauro Cavazos, was not—

Young: It didn't work out.

Littlefield: Didn't work. I think he was from Texas, Houston or something. He didn't work out particularly and that's when Alexander came in. There was a big skirmish that Kennedy was involved in with Alexander, over his confirmation. There were many issues with how much money Alexander had made since he left office, some of which had started during the time he was in office as Governor. Senator Kennedy held a series of hearings and there was a real question of whether Alexander would be confirmed. There wasn't any smoking gun. The material was put into the record, and Alexander was confirmed and later became a Senator. Once he was in, Kennedy worked very closely with Alexander on school reform. A lot of what later happened to reform federal aid to elementary and secondary education you can in part trace back to this period under Alexander, when the Department of Education was doing stuff around school reform.

I'm moving now to the area of children and families, which was where the biggest initiatives occurred during the first two years of the first Bush term. I remember working very hard on increasing the authorizations for Head Start, which was one of Kennedy's big focuses, early education.

Thinking about early education reminds me that over the time that Kennedy was the chairman of the committee, between 1989—well '89 is what I know about—up until 2000 or so, there was a big transformation in the understanding of how the brain develops in preschool children. Kennedy was very interested in this, *early* education. At one point he developed a relationship with the Heller School at Brandeis University. The dean, Jack Shonkoff, had been the chair of a study task force that proved that the brain is developing during the first three years more than it will ever develop again, and that if you don't give kids the right kind of stimulation during that period they'll never catch up. Kennedy became very interested in this and has focused on early education for 18 to 20 years. Math, science, school reform, early education—all of these areas bear his imprint more than that of probably any other legislator. When one is looking at his

record in education, starting with birth and going through lifelong learning, he has been the dominant player in every one of these stages of federal policy to deal with education, or brain development in the case of very young children. Kennedy has been the leading person all the way through, on all of these issues for 25 years.

Young: Should people compare it to healthcare?

Littlefield: Absolutely. Healthcare has gotten more attention, but what I wanted to do today is to talk about the education stuff.

Young: Yes, I know.

Littlefield: Again, it's not as sexy in some ways, but from about '89, when Reagan left office, the commitment to education as a top-priority issue has grown and grown in this country, and Kennedy has been at the front of that charge as far as federal involvement is concerned. But early education was one of his passionate interests throughout this whole period. We had hearings; we did all sorts of analyses of Head Start.

Head Start is one of those areas where if you touch it in a way that the advocates don't like, you get into a lot of trouble. He had at one point introduced a bill, before I got there, that had something to do with Early Learning. It was going to be in the *schools*. The schools were going to open up to three-year-olds or something. This was very controversial because the Head Start centers didn't want the money that they might get to go to the schools. They didn't believe the schools would spend it on *early* education, because they have so much else to do. So Kennedy got into trouble with the Head Start community and it took a little while to get that trust back. This Head Start authorization in 1989 did bring it back and then it was a close relationship for the rest of the next two decades, as he led the charge for more money for early education. He was constantly introducing bills for early education and working with Republican cosponsors to try to get things passed.

Part of this was one of the biggest bills we did in those first two years, the Child Care Quality Improvement Act. That was the first federally supported child care initiative since World War II, which was the last time that the federal government had been involved in child care. Kennedy worked out with Bush a billion-dollar-a-year federal child care program, and that was very hard fought because the right wing was very determined not to let the federal government do child care at all. The theory was that if the federal government was paying for child care, that would encourage mothers to go to work and not stay home to take care of their children. Well, as Kennedy pointed out, they had no choice; their families couldn't survive without the second paycheck, so what was going to happen?

There was a movie called *Home Alone* that was out about that time and we used that. I think Bob Dole or somebody tried to offer amendments to keep the child care bill from going forward and Kennedy kept referring to it, "*Home Alone* is what Bob Dole seems to champion, *Home Alone*." The child care bill was one of those negotiated—excruciating hours and hours of negotiating it because there were issues of not only funding for child care but also of child care *quality*, because there were a lot of second-rate child care providers.

Young: Is this about day care centers?

Littlefield: Yes, except child care is different. It's everything from someone's home, where they take in two children, to settings in church basements, where they take in 20 children. We had the longest debates about whether or not the money could be used for church child care. I think we concluded that it could be because those were some of the best child care facilities. But then there was a question of whether you could have a crucifix on the wall. This was all debated at incredible length. All of these bills seem as if they just come and go, but they don't; they take years. It took two years to do the child care bill, negotiating every inch of it: How many children could you have per teacher? What would be the ratio? That was all set in statute, believe it or not, because the issue of child care quality was so crucial to Kennedy.

Then there was a fight over the money, and we negotiated directly with the Bush Administration, with Tom Scully, who worked in the first Bush Administration at OMB [Office of Management and Budget], a very smart guy who later ended up in the second Bush Administration, as the administrator for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. He'll remember much more about the child care negotiations than I do. We involved Andy Card, who you've probably interviewed for Bush. I don't know if you've interviewed him for Kennedy.

Young: Yes, for Bush.

Littlefield: He has a long history with Kennedy, because he was Chief of Staff for Bush during all these bills. We would always go to Andy Card if we couldn't get [John] Sununu to agree with us. This child care bill was historic, because we'd waded into this very contentious area. We got out of it with the first big bill to provide funding for child care since World War II.

The biggest bill by far of this period was the Americans with Disabilities Act. I assume you've talked to Carolyn Osolinik?

Young: Yes.

Littlefield: So you know the story of that and the negotiations with the Bush Administration. That was done in our committee, even though Carolyn worked in the Judiciary Committee. The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Civil Rights Act of '91 were both handled in our committee because it was a better committee for these bills and the jurisdiction was fine either way.

Young: We also talked with Connie Garner.

Littlefield: She didn't come until much later, in the late '90s. I hired her, actually, in '97 or '96. She's great, and still there; she's the expert on disabilities issues.

Young: She was an activist, though, wasn't she, earlier?

Littlefield: She may have been an activist, but she came to us from the federal government as a detailee. You have interviewed her and you've interviewed Carolyn, so you know about this, and Jeff Blattner was also involved in that, I think.

The Americans with Disabilities Act—When you think of 44 million disabled people, for whom probably nothing had been done by the federal government in 25 years, that has had a larger

impact on more people. It's completely transformed the way people with disabilities are regarded by the entire population.

When I was growing up, if you were deaf, you were shunted off the main track and you would have little chance of having anything like a normal life. If you were in a wheelchair or were a paraplegic, there was little that you could do to get around on your own. The Americans with Disabilities Act dealt with these obstacles and expectations. It said wait a second, people with disabilities have the capacity to work. We just have to make it possible for them to get around and work if they wish to and if they can. Society has basically adopted all that. When you think that every single curb out these windows has wheelchair access and every building has wheelchair access, and deaf and blind people have all sorts of accommodations, it's an incredible transformation to take advantage of the skills of all these people with disabilities. So this act—talk about what government can do to change attitudes as well as to change reality.

Young: Were you in on this from the beginning?

Littlefield: No. This was enacted in July 1990. I arrived, remember, at the beginning of '89, and they'd already been working on it. It was mostly done. I was certainly aware of it and involved, because I was the staff director of the committee, but it was being handled by the Judiciary Committee staff, even though they were working in our committee. I was part of all the markups and everything, but it was handled by Carolyn and Jeff and whomever else and not by the Labor Committee staff.

Young: Dole was very much a part of that, too.

Littlefield: Yes, he was, and Tom Harkin, and there were various other people.

Young: Yes. Lowell Weicker.

Littlefield: Yes. Senator Kennedy had been interested, and his family had been interested in people with disabilities, obviously, through Eunice Shriver and all sorts of other issues, including the Special Olympics. The family has been long involved in this.

That reminds me of the lore I learned about the Labor Committee. A series of very liberal Republicans had been the leaders of the Republican wing of the Labor Committee going back to the '70s, when Kennedy first joined. Republicans on this committee like Jacob Javits from New York, Senator [Robert] Stafford of Vermont, or Senator Weicker of Connecticut were progressives, liberals if you will. At least in Education, particularly, there was always a tradition of bipartisanship.

When I was there, Pell was the Education Subcommittee chairman. There was no health subcommittee because Kennedy wanted to run that out of the full committee, but there was an Education Subcommittee, which Claiborne Pell ran. At the beginning of my time, it was Senator Kassebaum, but before that, there had been Weicker, Stafford, and Javits, and I'm sure others. The tradition of working on this kind of legislation in a bipartisan way was very strong in the Labor Committee, unlike in the Finance Committee, where the southern Democrats had headed it forever and it was very much used in a different way.

I have one more storyline and then we'll keep going with education, although this was part of education. The National and Community Service Act was passed in November of 1990, and enacted into law under Kennedy's leadership and sponsorship. This was the first government funding for community service or national service in many, many years. This is another of those worlds in which there are people who are deeply involved in the issue of national service and the idea of, instead of going into the military, doing a year of service in the community and being paid for it or getting scholarships for it. The area of volunteerism and how to get people to volunteer in their communities is one of Kennedy's greatest passions. His belief is that people should give back to their communities. "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." This was absolutely one of Kennedy's top issues all the way through the time that I was there, and obviously before.

I already talked about the first day that I started working with Senator Kennedy, February 13, 1989. The night before, he had one of the issues dinners at his house, with a group of experts on national service, people who had been toiling outside of government, driving the issue of community service and national service, full-time service, in return for something, scholarships or what have you. It was a movement. People believed a) it's very good for the communities because of all the work that gets done, and b) it's good for the people because it gives them a sense of worth and a sense of giving back. People supported this for all sorts of reasons.

Kennedy had the idea to talk about how to put together a national service legislative initiative. Kennedy was *totally* committed to this, so he created this program. This is another one of the programs for which we negotiated with the Bush Administration to get the money. We got \$75 million per year, or maybe over three years, to create the Commission on National and Community Service. The goal was to get the money out to people where it would do good in terms of national service programs, to try to flesh out what was going on in the country with all of these volunteer programs, to try to get it all in hand so that we could figure out how to strengthen that web of community volunteers and the like.

Kennedy was very committed to this, and put together legislation. We worked at that time with Harris Wofford, another big believer in national service. He was the secretary of training in Pennsylvania. He had not yet been elected Senator, which didn't happen until '92. He was a great ally on this. Kennedy knew him and there was a lot of back and forth with him, but this legislation took a long time to develop, because we had to bring in all the constituents. It took a long time to get enacted, because to get the money we had to negotiate with Andy Card, John Sununu, and Boyden Gray at the White House.

Young: Bush had something called "a thousand points of light."

Littlefield: Yes. He was interested in this issue. He had his thousand points of light in his convention speech and his inauguration speech, so we knew he was interested in service. They didn't believe that you should get paid for volunteering. The Bush people were all for a thousand points of light, but not having the government pay for any of it. We were saying, "Well, if you don't let people get some reward, then they can't afford to do it, not full time certainly. Maybe *your* friends can, but the average American can't." This went on for a year at least, negotiating this bill. There was no activity in the House, so Kennedy had to try to create a companion initiative from the House.

It was great. He went over to the House and literally went door to door. We made a list of everyone who had served in the Peace Corps and Kennedy went over to everyone who was in the House who had served in the Peace Corps and met with them one by one. Everyone was very startled, because to see a Senator come over to the House is very rare, and to see a Senator come over and talk to junior House members is even rarer. But Kennedy said, “That’s how you do it. What do you mean? Are we going over? Let’s go! Let’s go find these people.” Leon Panetta had had a national service bill of his own, so he was interested in this and became one of the cosponsors. We got it passed finally and it was probably \$75 million. It created a commission that was going to study and make recommendations about how you could ramp up to scale a major national service program.

Of course in 1992 that became a central element of Clinton’s campaign, and then legislation was enacted in ’93 or ’94, which Kennedy sponsored and championed and for which he led the floor fight. That ultimately led to AmeriCorps, which was Clinton’s big proposal to expand federal funding for national service, which is now up to \$500 million or \$600 million a year. It’s taken off like a rocket, all built on the foundation that Kennedy provided.

Young: The commission must have rendered a report.

Littlefield: It rendered reports. It was transformed into a different body, a governing board for the whole national service movement, which grew out of the Clinton legislation, which, again, Kennedy and we were deeply involved in crafting and designing.

Young: Was Eli Segal involved?

Littlefield: Eli Segal. Did you interview him before he died?

Young: Yes. He was interviewed in the hospital. It was an extraordinary interview, but was interrupted because doctors and family were in and out of the room. He died a week after the interview.

Littlefield: Oh, Lord! Oh, my heavens. Was it about Clinton or about national service?

Young: It was about Clinton *and* national service.

Littlefield: Well, Eli sat in my office after Clinton was elected—He was going to be in charge of it—and we worked the whole thing out with a woman named Shirley Sagawa. Have you interviewed her? She’s the guru of national service. She worked for Kennedy on the committee staff before I arrived there. She left Kennedy’s staff and we put her on the National Service Commission in 1991. She had worked for Kennedy in education. She got into this then. She would be a great person to talk to. The other one would be Alan Khazei, who founded City Year, which was the prototype up here. Kennedy and I loved City Year and got involved with that. That was one of the models for the program.

Kennedy loved the idea of full-time service, but even more than that, he loved the idea of instilling the habit of volunteering in people from the youngest age right up through adulthood. I think he was one of the authors of the Meals on Wheels program and senior volunteer programs. Volunteerism has been one of his major causes through his whole career, public service really, so

he was very insistent that all these national service programs—whether it was the first one that he did in '89 and '90, to create the Commission on National Service, or the bigger Clinton national service program—also be programs for schools, so that there would be volunteerism in schools. He loved the idea that to graduate from school you had to have done x number of hours of service. He was always talking about how four-year-olds can go to old-age homes and meet with seniors and fold their napkins or do something. Everybody can volunteer, and he thought that every school should have volunteer programs.

Springfield, Massachusetts, had a very active requirement in its schools, of everybody volunteering, going back to the four-year-olds—age-appropriate volunteerism. We befriended the person who ran that, and brought her down to Washington. She became part of the movement down there. Whenever he found an expert, if he could, he would get them involved and work with them closely.

Young: It's now standard.

Littlefield: Is it?

Young: Yes.

Littlefield: Well, this was Kennedy's thing.

Young: My grandchildren, they have to do a certain amount of community service.

Littlefield: That's great. Who would know that this was a Kennedy thing? He had this idea that it isn't enough just to do the full-time programs, because not everybody can do that. "I want this to be millions and millions of people, for little bits of money," so the commission was giving money to school districts to put these programs in place and to hire volunteer coordinators.

This is another thing. When you try to put together all the varied interests of Senator Kennedy, the breadth of his interests is something that we haven't really focused on. We've talked a lot about healthcare, but there are all these others under the radar: job training, the arts, national service. Kennedy was the leader. He was *the* number-one player, the man who set the direction, who set the priority, who brought the issue to the forefront, legislated it, and threw money into the picture. Now City Year is a big behemoth and gets two-thirds of its money, or half of its money, from the federal government. It gets probably tens of millions of dollars a year for service programs, all because Kennedy got the ball rolling after he met the City Year people and started focusing on volunteerism and the federal role in supporting and expanding community service.

Think of just those first two years of Bush after Reagan, when there was this pent-up opportunity to do something about this. Think of minimum wage, older workers protection, vocational education, math education, arts, community service, disabilities, Head Start, child care. Then there's the Homeless Assistance Act that Kennedy got deep into, because homelessness was a big, big problem then. It still is, but it was particularly visible at the time.

None of this crosses into the healthcare area, which is what he's so well known for, but the healthcare agenda during this time was—I think I've touched on it, but maybe I should quickly

run through it. It was extraordinary in its breadth, starting with the National Health Service Corps, which places physicians in urban and rural underserved areas. He salvaged that program; Reagan had basically defunded it and Kennedy saved it in 1990. It's a mainstay for getting graduated doctors out into the rural underserved areas.

And then there's his work for the Ryan White AIDS/HIV—I've talked about that story. There's \$2 billion a year today for funding for people with HIV that wouldn't exist without Kennedy.

He did a legislative initiative focused on minority health. He did a legislative initiative to strengthen the standards in emergency medical assistance and trauma assistance, and then two other bills that are health related that are under the radar, except they're obviously very important. One is the Nutritional Labeling [and Education] Act. At that point, in 1990, there were no labels on food about nutritional contents or calories or what have you, nothing, and there were no rules about what the makers of food could put on their packaging. Talk about an earthshaking, world-changing piece of legislation we now all take for granted. When we go to the supermarket, we look on the package to see what's in the thing. It's stunning that that was a Kennedy initiative. Who knew that? For the first time, it established uniform regulations for food labels and ensured that consumers had access to this basic information. The Nutritional Labeling and Education Act, November 8, 1990—Kennedy.

And medical devices. There was no comprehensive regulatory program for medical devices. There were for drugs, at the Food and Drug Administration, but nothing for medical devices such as wheelchairs, hospital beds, pacemakers, heart valves, CAT [computed axial tomography] scanners, and the technical, highly complex medical devices. He updated and strengthened the regulatory system for this class of products.

At the same time, he was moving through and reporting out his universal healthcare legislation. In each Congress we had hearings and moved the bill, with the ongoing Kennedy focus on universal coverage, which I hope will come to a climactic success this year or next year, with him leading the charge.

That was the first Congress. You can see, again, it's not only the breadth of Kennedy's interest, but the significance of many of these initiatives, even with a Republican President.

[BREAK]

Littlefield: Now I'm going to talk about the next Congress, 1991 and '92, still with the first President Bush. There are several overriding preliminary points.

First, there was some concern among Bush's political advisors, principally John Sununu—who was the one who reflected these concerns, but I'm sure they were hearing them from all sorts of people—that Bush had done too much social legislating in the first two years. It's not surprising if you look at the list: 27 bills, child care, the Americans with Disabilities Act, minimum wage, Head Start. All of this stuff was too much for the conservatives, so there was some worry that they would lose their enthusiasm for President Bush, if they had ever had it, and he did have to run for reelection in two years. Sununu basically announced there would be no more social legislation that Bush would be part of. That changed the “kinder and gentler” direction in which we'd been headed with all this other stuff. It was not going to be the same this Congress.

Secondly, we were approaching the Presidential election, so there was much more political stuff and partisanship.

Thirdly, there was the first Iraq War, on which President Bush spent all of his time. It was in 1990 that the first Iraq War occurred. It was fine to focus on the Iraq War, and all of the Democrats mostly opposed doing it. It worked out well because they got in and got out and everything, but—

Young: They didn't go to Iraq.

Littlefield: That's right, or rather they didn't go to Baghdad. Senator Kennedy was the leading Democratic voice driving the agenda back toward domestic concerns. I've talked before about how each January he would give his own sort of state of the union speech, his own agenda-setting speech. He did this for all the years that I was there, and after, I imagine.

In January 1991 we had a series of hearings in the Labor Committee on the ongoing needs of working families, on the domestic level. Senator Kennedy said the following, which I think describes his focus substantively and politically and from a policy standpoint for this 102nd Congress:

If the Administration continues to neglect our problems at home, refusing to act against this recession, then the Congress will have to take the lead and stand up for the people who are being hurt in this economy. We will focus on the changing workforce, the importance of education and training, the crisis in healthcare, and the tragic consequences for our future if we fail to help our children develop into productive adults.

Then he had hearings on education, on healthcare, on children, on the workforce, and drove that message, those issues, on a daily basis. Having lived through it, I believe that that was one of the turning points, which was picked up by Clinton, obviously, in his campaign, “Putting People First.” But Kennedy had framed the issue. Bush was all about the Iraq War. We had a recession at home, had families that were hurting in these areas, and had to do much more domestically. Kennedy drove that issue every single day, with speeches on the floor, with hearings, with legislative initiatives, and then Clinton picked it up and ran for President and was elected.

Of the key bills that actually happened in this Congress, probably the most important one was the Civil Rights Act of 1991, which I'm sure both Jeff and Carolyn talked about.

Young: Yes, they have, but I'd like to hear some more on that if you have some more to add.

Littlefield: Well, there had been, over the preceding few years, seven Supreme Court decisions that had sharply reduced protections against discrimination on the job because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or disability. This act overruled those decisions and, for the first time, provided damages as a remedy for intentional job discrimination, including sexual harassment for women, religious minorities, and persons with disabilities. This was worked out with Bush, with I think Boyden Gray. I think he was the general counsel for Bush who worked on this. It was championed by Republican Senator [John] Danforth, so it was a Kennedy-Danforth proposition, but it was crucially important.

Young: It was Kennedy's initiative?

Littlefield: Yes, but he had his Republican cosponsor. I'm quite sure it was Danforth.

Young: Yes, it was Danforth.

Littlefield: You may have interviewed Danforth.

Young: Yes, we did.

Littlefield: Did he talk about this, the Civil Rights Act?

Young: Yes, but not at great length.

Littlefield: I remember how surprised we were that Danforth was such a champion of Clarence Thomas. Thomas had worked for Danforth, so that was one piece of it, but considering that—Anyway, who knows? There was the Civil Rights Act, which again was a Judiciary Committee-staffed proposition. I didn't do that in the Labor Committee.

Young: The first act was vetoed the first time it went around, because it was a quota bill.

Littlefield: Okay, I remember that now.

Young: You remember that?

Littlefield: Yes, I do, it's coming back, yes.

Young: My understanding was—it may be incorrect—that Kennedy moved to the background and it became Danforth's, to get it passed the second go-around.

Littlefield: That may be, I don't know. With the Republicans Kennedy had gotten so much out of Bush that Bush was nervous about giving him anything more. But it happened and Kennedy was the leading Democrat, whether he was in the background or not.

The Job Training Partnership Act, JTPA, needed to be reauthorized and we reauthorized that in 1992. That was to reform the largest federal job training program, \$4 billion a year to educate and train the frontline workforce, and provide better targeting of services to reach those most in need, higher quality services, and strengthening the program requirements to prevent abuses. There was a lot of controversy around JTPA. This was another Kennedy-Republican thing that had been enacted several years before, with Kennedy and Dan Quayle. We had hearings and special reports.

During the course of this was when I first met Hillary Clinton, because she had been appointed executive director of a taskforce on high skills and high wages in the U.S. economy. This was quite a blue-ribbon taskforce, chaired by a former Republican Senator from Maryland and a Democratic Senator, and she was the executive director. Ira Magaziner worked on it with her and it produced a very important report on all the things that needed to be done to improve the skills of the American workforce, which would increase wages. It's one of the things about Mrs. Clinton that people don't remember, that she was very technically knowledgeable about training the workforce. When we had a hearing for her report, she came and delivered the report, and we then turned the report into legislation. We developed omnibus legislation, which we ultimately passed piece by piece during the first two years of the Clinton Administration. Then there was a lot of focus on training programs.

One of the most dramatic Kennedy projects of 1991 was passing legislation to enforce a settlement on a railroad strike in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, et cetera. In April 1991, a major railroad strike stopped everything; the city of New York came to a halt, and economic activity in the Northeast came to a halt. Kennedy got right into the middle of that and came up with legislation that resulted in a return to work within hours, providing 40 days of binding negotiation of rail disputes and preventing the ongoing interruption of interstate commerce, which could have been devastating. He was the guy who could talk to the unions and talk to management and get this thing worked out. He brought in all sorts of experts from everywhere, and we got everybody around a table, figured it all out, and got it done. He was the chairman of the Labor Committee, so it was within his jurisdiction, but who would have assumed that he would have been the central force in bringing the strike to an end, and he was.

Young: That's really an executive-type thing, you would expect.

Littlefield: Yes, it is.

Young: Is that one of those, "Where was George?" moments?

Littlefield: I don't know. I don't know that George would have had the credibility with labor that Kennedy had. Work on healthcare continued and there were many smaller healthcare bills. This was the period when—I told you the story about Jesse Helms and Joe Biden and the ten healthcare bills that Helms had held up, I think.

Young: You did.

Littlefield: Helms agreed to let them all go in return for Biden letting a judge go through. This was at 2:00 a.m. one night in 1992. In any event, there was a series of Kennedy projects in healthcare, moving universal healthcare through the committee, but it didn't, of course, happen

with Bush as President. The Prescription Drug User Fee Act was a major initiative in terms of the Food and Drug Administration. It provided that there would be user fees assessed with each application for approval of a new product, which would enable the FDA to double its staff. This was a big—The FDA was in terrible shape. It was understaffed; there were things that had ground to a halt; and drugs weren't getting approved. It was agreed by the industry, and Kennedy was at the center of this, along with Orrin Hatch—the two of them did this—that this was the way to get the money into the system, to speed up the process of FDA.

One of Kennedy's great projects over the years has always involved community health centers. Did you interview the doctor from Boston Medical Center who worked with Kennedy? He's a sailor and lives up in Maine now—Phil Caper.

Young: No, I did not.

Littlefield: He was one of Kennedy's first healthcare staffers.

Young: I know about that.

Littlefield: You met him.

Young: Oh, yes. Yes we did. We interviewed him multiple times. Didn't he stay with Kennedy?

Littlefield: He went to work for Kennedy. He was a resident at Boston Medical Center and Kennedy heard about something he was doing. He came down and they created the Community Health Service Program.

Young: He was one of the labor organizers, actually, in one of the hospitals.

Littlefield: That's right.

Young: The doctors at Boston City, I think.

Littlefield: He is a doctor.

Community health centers have been one of the Senator's great passions. We were constantly doing legislative efforts to strengthen community health centers, and here we extended Federal Tort Claims Act protection to community health centers, and other improvements.

Substance abuse—mental health and substance abuse—was another area of great interest for Kennedy. He strengthened the commitment to dealing with this. We actually changed the name, to create the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration in the federal government. This legislation authorized \$4.5 billion a year to combat substance abuse and mental illness and reorganized the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration. It transferred agencies to the National Institutes of Health, reconstituting ADAMHA, the Alcohol Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration, as the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, SAMHSA, to concentrate on treatment programs and other services. Again, Kennedy went deep into the weeds in terms of substance abuse, mental health, treatment

programs, federal strategy. It's one of the things he's always worked on, has always been the leader on, and he ran this massive reorganization.

Other interests included primary healthcare, health objectives for the population at large. He worked on quality standards for such things as fertility clinics; mammography; HIV research; Alzheimer's disease research and training. There were education act amendments, and a pharmaceutical purchasing act, which enabled public hospitals and public health clinics to buy pharmaceutical products at the lowest price at which they were offered in the market.

There were no blockbusters, but ongoing—particularly in his focused areas of the FDA: a stronger FDA, community health centers, mental health and substance abuse, health promotion, standards-based care, including mammography, HIV. Then there was the reauthorization for the Agency for Healthcare Policy and Research. That agency is now called AHRQ, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. And there was his work on Alzheimer's disease, focused on research, training, and the like.

Again, he didn't slow down in healthcare. It was just that the biggies hadn't happened yet. The big one, universal coverage, he was always working on, always moving bills through the committee.

Young: But the Bush Administration was not interested in that at all.

Littlefield: Right.

Young: How did [Richard] Darman figure in—

Littlefield: Darman was involved in the child care debate. I met with him when we got to the final decision on child care funding. He was the point person, I think.

Young: He was involved with the budget.

Littlefield: It was [Thomas] Scully and Darman. Scully was a protégé of Darman's to begin with.

Young: And was Darman supportive on that one?

Littlefield: Yes. Darman had to sign off on the \$1 billion program for child care, and he did come around and sign off on it.

Young: Because he was—

Littlefield: He was above Scully.

Young: Yes, he was above Scully, but I think he was putting a stop to it, not just Sununu. I think they were very reluctant to take on anything new, though Darman was credited with the responsibility for getting Bush to accept the budget deal earlier—

Littlefield: Yes.

Young: Which didn't help Bush's chances.

Littlefield: No.

Young: Nor did the recession, which was—

Littlefield: Nor did Kennedy putting family issues at the front of the parade. I'll come back to education, but I remember another.

There was a major Kennedy-Hatch initiative during this period that was written into law that probably nobody knows about. Hatch and Kennedy had done the Ryan White [Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency Act] and they'd done FDA. Hatch was often looking for things to do with Kennedy, so we decided to have a dinner at Kennedy's house, for Kennedy and our staff and for Hatch and his staff, to see if we couldn't find some things to do together, in the health area particularly. We had the dinner and it was very cordial, but we didn't find anything in health that was big enough that we could get common ground on.

But it came up that there was a summer jobs program that had been cut way back that year, cut way, way back. It was probably abolished, so there were cities and states where kids had been promised jobs that they weren't going to get. What was that going to do? Talk about a long, hot summer. Hatch and Kennedy started talking about this and Kennedy said, "Why don't we do something about it? Why don't you and I agree to put half a billion dollars into these summer jobs programs all across the country? Let's pass legislation tomorrow. We can do that. We can't let these people be out on the street."

The upshot of it was that they agreed to it that night at dinner. Having failed to get healthcare, a patients' bill of rights, or whatever else they were talking about, they agreed to go back to the Senate the next day and introduce legislation on one of the emergency supplemental fire or hurricane acts that was going through the Congress. They agreed to ask for \$600 million to get distributed to these programs that were hiring students for the summer. It was passed and enacted; and provided an additional 300,000 youth with summer employment in '92. Hatch didn't like the idea of kids out of work, and Kennedy certainly didn't, and they wanted to strengthen the jobs program. Who knew that? But that's what came out of this dinner. We were all hoping something even bigger would come out of the dinner.

We're now back to education, and this is '91 and '92. The Higher Education Act amendments were reauthorized, \$100 billion for student loans, and we had a bill signing with Bush, I think in Virginia somewhere.

Young: It may have been in Charlottesville because Bush was—

Littlefield: No, it wasn't Charlottesville. We wanted to go into Virginia, but just barely, because nobody had much time.

A number of things happened in the Higher Education Act, amendments that were precursors of things for which Kennedy would keep fighting and would get later. This would provide more than \$100 billion for college costs for families for four years, expand the federal grant and loan programs, simplify the application process for financial aid, and include—One of Kennedy's

things was the I Have a Dream program from the Bronx, New York. Eugene Lang, a wealthy entrepreneur, promised a class of students in the sixth grade that if they went to college, he'd pay for it. He called it the I Have a Dream program. That kind of approach to getting kids to work, getting them to understand the value of school, was something Kennedy picked up on, and he put that program into the Higher Education Act, trying to replicate that on a broader scale. The big issue on this, from a policy standpoint, was the direct student loan demonstration project, which was introduced for the first time. That became a major direct loan program later, under Clinton.

There were several other education or school improvement efforts, and I think creating the Education Council, a commission to assess the impact of extending the school day and the school year, and creating a national council on standards and testing to review development of national educational standards and assessments. They did the Higher Education Act.

A couple of other things happened, too. For instance, the Family and Medical Leave Act passed in the Congress and Bush vetoed it, so we came back and it was the first item of business under Clinton. Then there was the Ready to Learn Act. I don't see Star Schools mentioned here, but Senator Kennedy is a big believer in distance learning, beaming lectures from one school to another, and he had legislation in that area, which he had introduced and enacted previously.

Now we get to what I wanted to talk about, which was Clinton. Clinton was elected in November of '92 and Kennedy was very much involved in the campaign. Clinton reached out to him, and there were meetings with the Kennedy family prior to his taking office. Kennedy had a big party, as usual, and we were now into a new world with a Democratic President. The overall focus—What Kennedy was doing here was giving speeches on this even before Clinton had been sworn in—was all about expanding opportunity and building security for working families. The areas were healthcare, jobs, and education. Kennedy legislated in overdrive, because we finally had a Democratic President.

The first thing we did was pass the Family and Medical Leave Act again. It had been vetoed by Bush the senior, and was the first measure that we pushed through our committee again. We sent it immediately to Clinton, before he'd even unpacked his boxes. The idea was that this would be Clinton's first bill. We got it through very quickly, in record time, sent it to Clinton, and sure enough, he made it a big deal. He talks now about the Family and Medical Leave Act as his first great legislative achievement. Well, he didn't have anything to do with passing the legislation. We'd already passed it. It had been vetoed, and we just re-passed it, but he had a lot to do with it because he signed it. That's a little imprecise to say that he'd been working on Family and Medical Leave and getting it through for months, because that's not what happened.

In terms of healthcare, Kennedy provided major support for research at the NIH [National Institutes of Health], including initiatives on women's health issues. I had been, at some point, amazed to learn—Somebody had done a study—that the NIH didn't do trials for which women were eligible. It was as if there was not going to be any research on women's health issues. Kennedy increased support for the NIH, but included initiatives on women's health issues, cancer, AIDS, and other diseases.

Young: Was this while the big healthcare reform was bubbling along?

Littlefield: Yes, the healthcare reform was bubbling along the whole way. Let me see what the date of this was.

Young: This was before a bill was presented?

Littlefield: Yes. It was enacted June 10, 1993, Clinton's first year, so it must have come right in. It had been vetoed by President Bush in 1992, so again it shouldn't have taken that long, and it didn't. It was enacted in June of Clinton's first year. The report on the National Institutes of Health Revitalization Act says it made women's health issues such as breast and cervical cancer, osteoporosis, and heart disease a priority at NIH; lifted the ban on fetal tissue research; reauthorized the National Cancer Institute and NHLBI, the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, to continue the fight against cancer and other serious diseases. Interesting, the phrase "chronic disease" doesn't appear in any of this and yet today everyone recognizes chronic disease as the number-one medical challenge that we face as a country, but it didn't even make it into the report in 1993. Then we have childhood immunizations, breast and cervical cancer, freedom of access to clinics.

I'd like to talk about education. In this first two years of Clinton, we had Family and Medical Leave; we had the National and Community Service Trust Act, which supports community services activities by Americans of all ages and supports the new AmeriCorps project, which provides vouchers for college tuition in exchange for a year or more of community service. Under Clinton, we took the Commission on National Service, which was now three years old, and beefed it up with money and with direction to do certain things. That's when the national and community service movement really rolled into high gear.

We did 47 hearings on health reform, laying the foundation for further work the next year. Well, it's been 15 years and we didn't ever get back to it. We've been doing it piece by piece, but we never did the whole enchilada again.

Young: You had talked earlier about the healthcare fiasco.

Littlefield: Right, right. Now we move into education. There was a very dramatic series of initiatives relating to education, or undoing some of the problems that had crept in during the Reagan and Bush administrations. One cannot overstate what this was; it was the "Education Congress." It was not the healthcare Congress, because that was a fiasco. It was the Education Congress, but nobody cared; you couldn't get the attention for it that you could get to the big failure of healthcare, with the President involved.

Again, Kennedy looks at this from early childhood all the way through the end of life, but we're just focusing on up to, say, age 18. He's very focused on early, early interventions.

Young: Was this Goals 2000?

Littlefield: I'm getting to that. Yes, Goals 2000 is here, but I wanted to start with the early education. This is the education agenda during the first two years of Clinton. First came Head Start—a new Head Start funding bill that put Head Start on a path to reaching all eligible children, *all* eligible children. It was probably 50 percent to 30 percent then. We knew this was going to cost \$1 billion over five years to expand the program to cover pregnant women and

young children in the zero-to-three age group. That was a big compromise that was worked out. Now we had a friend in the White House, which was very helpful.

[LUNCH BREAK]

Littlefield: We've been leading up to talking about the education achievements in the first two years of the Clinton Administration, and making sure we've described the range of issues that Kennedy dealt with in the education sphere, from early childhood development through lifelong learning.

This 103rd Congress, during the first two years of Clinton, is most famous for the failure to achieve universal health reform, but it was very productive in other areas. I've spoken previously of Kennedy and the Labor Committee productivity in the 101st Congress. It was the same in the 103rd. In fact, in a speech at the end of the 103rd Congress, in October of 1994, just a month before the election, of course, when the Democrats lost, Senator Mitchell listed 13 major bills enacted by Congress. Of these 13 bills, more than half were reported by the Labor and Human Resources Committee under Senator Kennedy's chairmanship, including the Family and Medical Leave Act, Head Start expansion, Goals 2000, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, student loan reform, and national service. That describes the range of education bills, but let me just talk quickly about each of them. We'll do this going through the lifecycle.

We start with Head Start, putting Head Start on a path to reach all eligible children. This is where we were before we went to lunch.

Young: Yes, you were there.

Littlefield: The idea of reaching all eligible children, when the program had reached only half or less—You can see what an enormous step forward it was. It expanded the program to cover pregnant women and young children in the zero-to-three age group. We went down in age, whereas Head Start had focused on four-year-olds earlier. This drove Head Start down into the zero-to-three age group, which we now know is crucial because of the brain development issues that we were beginning to understand. That was done in the Human Services Reauthorization Act of 1994. That's point one: Kennedy was focusing on early childhood, expanding the Head Start program into the zero-to-three age group, and even to pregnant women, because we know that the health of the woman during pregnancy is crucial to the development of the child. This was the *early* childhood stuff that Kennedy was focused on.

Then there were two major pieces of legislation that dealt with elementary and secondary schools. The first was Goals 2000, the school reform legislation that built on what Kennedy had done with Lamar Alexander, which provided the precursor, ultimately, for No Child Left Behind. If you look at Kennedy's involvement with school reform and with increasing the federal role in education, it's that train of legislative initiatives. Goals 2000 supported local school reform, helped schools set high standards for what students should learn, and even included skills

training and set up standards for vocational education. It was more than \$5 billion in grants for five years.

Again, it was for locally developed reform programs, but encouraged the development of voluntary standards. We were still at the voluntary standards stage—which turned into mandatory standards under No Child Left Behind—for school courses to help teachers, communities, and parents plan the core curricula. The legislation supported teacher development and training to revitalize teaching, and created the National Skill Standards Board to set standards for training needed to prepare students and workers for jobs in the high-technology workplace. Although they were voluntary, the standards for schools, Goals 2000 focused on setting standards for what children are supposed to learn at various stages in their lives. It ultimately led to our focus on measuring whether they were achieving them as a way of proving the performance in schools, and set these national skill standards for job training in the school-based and worker-based training settings.

The Skill Standards Board was something that grew out of the high skills, high workforce, high wages commission report that I mentioned, that Mrs. Clinton and Ira Magaziner and various leading public officials had been involved in two or three years before. One of the ideas was that there needed to be national skill standards for different kinds of jobs, such as plumbers and electricians. The problem was that each state had its own, different, set of standards, so that if someone was trained in Massachusetts and moved to California, they'd have to start all over again in terms of getting their certifications. The idea was that there would be a *common* set of standards. People could go where the jobs were and not be trapped in a place where there were no more jobs. This was one of the top recommendations of the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce. Bob Reich—who was now the Labor Secretary and, being from Massachusetts, a friend of Kennedy's—and Kennedy worked very hard to enact these various pieces of the job training agenda. One of them was the Skill Standards Board.

The second big elementary and secondary education act was the revision and reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which goes back to Lyndon Johnson and the Great Society. This provided for federal support for local schools. This reauthorization restructured the program dramatically, increasing program flexibility, driving standards into the schools and holding schools accountable for standards, supporting professional development for teachers, and encouraging the use of computers in the classroom. It was more than \$60 billion for schools over five years, targeting funding to the low-income and middle-income communities that needed it the most, cutting red tape, increasing flexibility for *local* schools to carry out their own school reform programs.

The idea was to give more flexibility, but to have a recognized set of standards that would help to guide local schools and school reform, and then to encourage schools to measure students and set their performance at high standards, teacher development I mentioned, and technology in schools. The big federal support for schools was the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, ESEA. This was probably the most significant restructuring of the legislation, and, when combined with Goals 2000, signaled a major new level of involvement by the federal government in directing local schools.

Of course, after Clinton left office and the second Bush was elected, the No Child Left Behind legislation, of which Kennedy was one of the chief sponsors, took all of this to the next level. But there was a lot of criticism of Kennedy for the standards and the testing, by some people who don't like reform, because it goes in this direction. Well, he'd been committed to it for some time and Clinton was committed to it.

Young: Goals 2000, and the companion components of that, weren't enacted?

Littlefield: It *was* enacted into law. Goals 2000 authorized grants to the states and schools to carry out reform programs, and listed optional programs, including voluntary standards, et cetera.

Young: But what was the next level that you referred to, No Child Left Behind? Was there unfinished business in this?

Littlefield: It wasn't so much unfinished business; it was taking this idea of standards and measurements to a new level, where No Child Left Behind—The way it works is that there is a set of written standards that are developed in each state, based on a set of national standards. Students must be measured in various stages as they work through school. The results are publicized. Schools that don't show adequate improvement are required, ultimately, to be taken over by state monitors—I don't know about that. I don't know whether it goes beyond state monitors, but they are run by the states and taken out of the local community's responsibility if they don't show the kind of progress that they're supposed to show over however many years. We have very strict standards; we have testing of every student; we measure the student performance; and then we measure the schools.

[BREAK]

Littlefield: We took it from aspirational descriptions of how things might work, options for school reform, in the Lamar Alexander–Kennedy iteration, and during Clinton moved it to, “Here's money, states. Do this. It's voluntary, but this is what you should be doing to improve schools and to go along with school reform.”

Young: Under Bush.

Littlefield: The next thing that happened was Gingrich was elected to be the Speaker. Starting in '95, he tried to kill the federal role in government altogether. They tried to *abolish* the federal Department of Education. There wasn't going to be any more federal involvement in the schools while Gingrich was in the Congress. Then Clinton and Gingrich left and Bush came in.

With Bush it was “compassionate conservatism,” so education was the thing that he put his stamp on in the campaign to show that he was a different Republican from Gingrich. Kennedy got together with him and they picked up where they left off in '93 and '94. They took this idea of school reform—specifically standards, testing, measuring, publicizing, and punishing schools that don't improve their performance by taking the authority to run the school away from the

locality—All of these “sticks” were supposed to be accompanied by “carrots” of lots of federal money, to enable the school districts to do this. The problem is that Bush reneged on his commitment to put the money in, so the school districts are not performing up to snuff and now there’s much criticism of No Child Left Behind. Now we hope that under [Barack] Obama the money will start pouring in so we’ll have a much better chance to assess whether this strategy of testing and standards and measurement and publicizing and taking away control really works.

[BREAK]

Littlefield: So that’s a rather interesting trail. Nobody goes back to look at the origins of this and at what happened going back to Bush I, Clinton, Gingrich, Bush II, and Kennedy’s role all the way along. With Gingrich, Kennedy’s role was to resist the retrenchment, and then he picked it up again and increased the federal role even more under Bush II.

Another thing that Kennedy is very interested in is technology in the schools and computers in the classroom. There was a significant piece of legislation called the Technology for Education Act, which was enacted in 1994 also, which Kennedy was behind. He then led an effort in Massachusetts to wire every school and provide computer technology in every school district in the state.

For the next one, moving through sequentially, we now look at higher education and the Student Loan Reform Act. This was an enormous undertaking and an enormous achievement. In fact, there’s a whole book that’s been written about Kennedy, the Student Loan Reform Act, and the AmeriCorps legislation called *The Bill*, by Stephen Waldman. It’s interesting because it’s his view of what happened with student loan reform and the National Community Service Act. He tried to follow the legislation through, from the beginning of the Clinton Administration.

Young: He was in the Clinton Administration, right? Wasn’t he?

Littlefield: No. That’s Michael Waldman, his brother. Stephen Waldman is the author of this book and Michael Waldman was the one in the Administration.

This was another major Kennedy crusade involving federal student loans for college. He had been involved in this his entire time on the Labor Committee: Pell grants; student loans; Stafford loans; all the different kinds of loan programs—school-based loan programs, state-based loan programs. Kennedy was *always* deeply involved in all of them.

One of the things he had worked on for a decade or more, as of 1994, was the idea of *direct* student loans. In those, money comes from the federal government to the college to the student, and not from banks to the student, the reason being that the federal government could borrow money much cheaper than the banks could, and therefore the federal government could provide the loans to the students much more cheaply. Because the federal government was guaranteeing these loans that the banks were awarding anyway, why should the students be bearing the higher interest rate and paying the banks a profit, when there was no risk to the banks, because the

government would guarantee these federally guaranteed student loans? The banks were making billions of dollars of profits on this and Kennedy's thought was, *Why should this be?* People are always complaining about the banks because they're selling the loans from one bank to the next, so why shouldn't the program be run by federal government funds directly, direct student loans?

Of course the banks lobbied to preserve the program as it was, so they were major opponents of it. Some of the universities didn't want the federal government program because they feared what that might mean in terms of controls or strings attached to the money or what have you. They felt they didn't have the wherewithal to administer the loans. The banks administered the loans if the loans came from the banks. This was very contentious.

When they reauthorized the Higher Ed Act under the first Bush, in 1990 or '91, one of the things we did was open the door just a little bit to a pilot program for direct loans—maybe five percent of all loans could be direct loans from the government. We were going to try to test how it worked.

In this Student Loan Reform Act of 1993, we successfully increased the size of the direct loan program so that it would scale up over four or five years to be as much as 100 percent. I think it was going to be at 60 percent in x numbers of years, and would go on up. We calculated it would save taxpayers and students more than \$6 billion over five years by reducing interest payments and loan origination fees and by cutting out the profits that would go to the middle man. We also linked it to national service, saying that if students went into essential but low-paying careers that there would be flexible repayment options. The government would use the loans as a way of encouraging students to go into low-paying public service jobs. Well, this was extremely contentious. The markup and the conference were fought tooth and nail between the people who wanted to preserve the role of the banks and the people who, of which Kennedy was the leader—

Young: Was that on party lines?

Littlefield: It was somewhat on party lines, but there were some Democrats who didn't want to do it and some Republicans who did. For instance, if you were from a state where there was a big student loan administering facility, then you might want to preserve the system. There are regional coordinating agencies for these student loan programs and the banks have to coordinate through them. I'm not the expert that I used to be, but I know it made sense; there were several champions.

One champion of direct lending was John Silber, the president of Boston University. He, in fact, had come up with the idea and sold Kennedy on it maybe 20 years earlier. It seems like it's a no-brainer, but it was very contentious. We pulled it off, though, and linked it to national service through the loan forgiveness program. It was also linked with the AmeriCorps national service program that I described earlier. That was a complete sea change in how student loans were going to be awarded.

When Gingrich took over, though, they fought to ratchet back the level of direct lending each year, and put all sorts of roadblocks in the way, so that it dwindled over time. I think it spiked up the first year or two and then the Congress went at it with all the weapons they had and the thing came down.

Now that we're back, Democrats in control again, I believe that the direct lending program was reenergized last year or the year before when they did the Higher Ed Act. It's back in the mix, but it's another one of those under-the-radar, but crucial, areas where Senator Kennedy has always been the true champion and defender of student loans.

Young: Well, it's not under the radar—

Littlefield: In your life.

Young: No.

Littlefield: In university life.

Young: Yes. No, it's very much—

Littlefield: I don't know if U.Va. is a direct lending school or not. Schools have to decide which they're going to be, because then the university gets the money from the government and does it out. If the banks are involved, the universities are out of the picture; they don't have to do it.

Young: There has been this additional issue of universities steering—

Littlefield: Oh, right.

Young: Steering loans to certain banks.

Littlefield: Which is just another reason why the direct lending program would be a good idea.

In any event, look at education and Kennedy's interest and involvement in that, and his knowledge about and championing of reform. Think about his driving education into the zero-to-three early education—child care and Head Start down into the earlier years—and the school reform agenda to improve performance in schools, the federal role in that; and now student loans. He was always fighting to increase the level of the Pell grant, for instance, in addition to the other stuff that he did.

The next piece is national service, which I've talked about already, but we viewed that as another part of the educational agenda. Then there's also the school-to-work program. I've talked about school-to-work before, and this school-to-work program was another of the big ideas in Mrs. Clinton's high skills, high wages commission report. In addition to the skill standards, which I talked about, which we enacted in this period, we also created this new school-to-work program, because 50 percent of high school graduates did not go on to college as of 1993, and were going to go directly to the workplace.

What this initiative did was provide seed money for local school-to-work systems, designed to be run by local business, education, community, and labor leaders, within a broad federal framework. There were states designated by the Department of Labor as leading-edge states. They would get federal money and then the lessons they learned would be spread as more and more states were brought into the program.

We decided to have this program sunset after a certain number of years, the theory being that the local communities would have to pick up the program. We created, essentially, seed money. This was a new model with which Kennedy was going to approach federal policymaking: Let's try it. Let's create up-front seed money, and give the states, through a competition, the opportunity to compete for the money, to run school-to-work training programs bringing businesses, communities, local governments, and schools into the process. Over time, the money will fade away. If the programs have taken root, good. If they haven't, perhaps they weren't worth it in the first place. It was recognized that half of high school graduates weren't going to go on to college, but it created local incentives for local action.

That's the job training piece. That was a fairly ambitious education agenda for one Congress: expanding, revitalizing, and reforming the federal role in every aspect of education from the time a person is born until they get into the workforce, and even attempting to improve, streamline, and standardize training in the workforce.

There were other worker training pieces before I leave that area. Senator Kennedy's brother, Robert Kennedy, created something called the Bedford-Stuyvesant Foundation, which Frank [Franklin] Thomas, who was later at the Ford Foundation, ran. The idea was to put federal money into a whole community, in terms of education, services, housing, and tax incentives to businesses to locate there. You deal community by community or neighborhood by neighborhood. Kennedy became very interested in this.

There are community development corporations all over the country now. For instance, Massachusetts has 48 community development corporations. Kennedy created the National Community Economic Partnership Act of 1993, enacted in September 1994, which supported CDCs in bringing jobs and business opportunities into these urban and rural districts that have been designated and have public/private partnerships running them. So that's another of his interests over the years, the idea of community development corporations, which grow out of the Bedford-Stuyvesant project.

To wrap up '93 and '94, there was also a lot of healthcare work that was done that does not include universal coverage, obviously. The National Institutes of Health Revitalization Act lifted the ban on fetal tissue research, which I've talked about before. The Breast and Cervical Cancer Act focused on women's health, which, as I have mentioned before, was so left out of federal support and NIH research. Childhood immunizations and childhood vaccine initiatives set the nation on a track toward universal immunization, to protect all children from vaccine-preventable illnesses. That set up an initiative at the NIH to research and develop new vaccines and set up the availability of immunization services in communities so that it would be convenient for families. There was legislation to protect women's access to clinic entrances, to reproductive health services. The usual, smaller healthcare stuff kept being pushed forward, but of course the big enchilada—universal healthcare—failed.

My point is that all was not lost in those first two years of Clinton, particularly in education. Family and Medical Leave was vetoed by President Bush but then signed by Clinton as his first act. That gets us up to the election of 1994 and the saga of Gingrich winning and Kennedy taking the lead to hold back the enactment of the most extreme measures that Gingrich was passing in

the House. He couldn't get them through the Senate because Kennedy took the lead on resisting them.

We've covered the first two years of Bush, when there was much legislation; the second two years of Bush, when there was less legislation; the first two years of Clinton, when there was a lot of legislation, but it was overshadowed by the failure of healthcare, but when there was certainly much legislation in other areas, particularly education and job training. We've talked at length, in great detail, about the two years of Gingrich, where Kennedy was the dominant figure in either party, even though he was in the minority. We've talked about the first year of the subsequent Congress, when Kennedy passed the Children's Health Insurance Program. The beginning of the following year is when I left, but the next big bill that he was involved in was the Medicare Prescription Drug Act. He played a key role in the impeachment proceedings, getting a bipartisan agreement with Senator [John] McCain.

Young: Was that coming to a head when you left?

Littlefield: No. It started while I was there, but it didn't reach impeachment while I was there.

Young: But the special prosecutor was—

Littlefield: I can't remember. I don't remember whether he was or wasn't. I assume he was. And then we have the Iraq War, where Kennedy was so outspoken in opposition, and we have No Child Left Behind. The two legislative initiatives that the second Bush talks about as his greatest achievements are in education and Medicare prescription drugs, both of which were Kennedy-led efforts, with resistance from his own party in both cases. In the case of Medicare drugs, he fell off the bill when the House hijacked it.

Young: Did Kennedy have a good working relationship with the second Bush?

Littlefield: I don't know. It seems as if there have been various stories that they did, but I don't know. I did not overlap for a day with President Bush. I know that they always joked when they saw each other.

If one looks at what happened when Bush came in, that made it harder for Kennedy to do big legislative things. It's not surprising; we still had a right-wing Congress and Bush was going to veto anything he didn't like, so that they couldn't get the Patients' Bill of Rights done; they couldn't do the tobacco regulation bill they wanted to do. All the energy was sucked up by Iraq. The two bills that Bush did do in the social domestic program were bills, as I said, that Kennedy did with him, but Bush was not going to do big bills in the social spending area for the most part. Things like Mental Health Parity slipped in. That's very big, but it didn't cost the federal government that much money.

Young: They worked together on immigration.

Littlefield: Immigration they worked on together, but of course that didn't work either. In the olden days, those bills somehow would have found their way into being enacted, but by now, the ability of the Republicans to resist Kennedy's efforts probably had—They had figured out more about how to do that than they had figured out in '95 and '96 and '97. It became that a) they

were in charge of the Congress, and b) they had a Republican President whose advisors at least, were very close to the House Republicans. It just was not going to happen that Kennedy would get quite the same opportunity to move legislation as he had earlier. But he's taken the big issues—I'm speaking only about the issues within my realm, which did not include foreign policy, banking, finance, or armed services, but included pretty much everything domestically in terms of its effects on people and families. There just has not been anyone, before or since, with the breadth of impact that Kennedy had during this period.

That may be it for now.

Young: Okay, that's it for now.