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Looking Past the Surface: A Look at the Office of Senate and its Environment and the Implications of Public Versus Private Morality

by

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April 1994
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Senior Project

Looking Past The Surface: A Look at the Office of Senate and its Environment and the Implications of Public Versus Private Morality

April 20, 1994

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Senior Seminar
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My reasons for doing this particular Senior Project stemmed from an initial personal conflict I had due to my internship experience last fall. Upon learning of the possibility of acquiring an internship at the state office of a United States Senator, I was thrilled. What an excellent opportunity to further my knowledge of leadership! However, my excitement was soon extinguished. When I soon learned of the controversy that surrounded the Democratic Senator from Virginia, Charles Spittal Robb, I had serious second thoughts. Fortunately, there were few alternative internship sites available, the semester was already under way, and I therefore decided to ignore the rumors and to accept the internship position. If I had refused the opportunity, I would have lost an extremely valuable learning experience.

The doubts I initially experienced plagued me throughout my internship experience, and have continued to affect me during my Senior Project. The fact that articles focusing on Senator Robb and his alleged indiscretions have continued to surface throughout my involvement with Robb's State Headquarters has not helped to put my insecurity to rest. Instead, I have realized that the Senator's private life is no concern of mine, only his public life. I feel fortunate to have had the internship experience to help me realize that there is more to a Senator than the scandals and stereotypes that surround him.

Very early in my internship experience I began to realize the extent to which Robb's staff worked to improve the lives of their constituents. Before my internship experience I had an extremely negative image of senators. I was convinced that they were more concerned about their own personal gain, golf score, reelection, and sexual relations than representing and helping those that had elected them. I soon became aware of my naiveté. Maybe it was the dozen, five foot file cabinets filled with thousands of constituent
casework files that tipped me off. Or maybe it was the number of calls by concerned constituents that were carefully recorded that gave me a clue. Or better yet, the legislation that my internship supervisor was proposing to help veterans cope with the problems that faced them in veterans hospitals. Or lastly, was it the work Robb's office was doing to help the city of Petersburg with its FEMA appeal that was the reason? Looking back I think it was a combination of all four. In any event, I felt that it was my responsibility to make others aware of these positive and beneficial occurrences in addition to all the negative press people were already aware of. As a leader, I felt that I needed to communicate the good that the Senator's staff was accomplishing to others.

This desire became one of the goals outlined in my internship contract:

_I will attempt to dispel the myth, to myself and others, that political and political offices are an aberration of the accepted ethical climate._

_Along with this I will attempt to determine how a leader can work to communicate the idea of leadership as service._

Therefore, I was thrilled to learn of the project my internship supervisor had planned for me. He was interested in developing a presentation to give to college students about constituent casework. This project directly addressed the above objective, and presented an opportunity to communicate the service contributions of a senator, rather than the scandalous contributions that quenched the media's thirst for dirt. Before my internship experience, I was completely unaware of the existence of casework, and I suspected other college students were in a similar situation. However, most people are aware of the controversy surrounding Robb. I decided it was time that they learned about the positive side as well.
Somewhere along the way I decided that Robb's relationship with Tai Collins, or his choice of party activities were not important to me. Although I do not personally agree with the possibility of an extra-marital affair, or a drug-related party, what is relevant to me is his acts in the political arena and the number of people that has helped. It was not any easy process to reach this conclusion. I consider myself a person with high moral standards, and it really bothered me that I was working for someone with such a sordid personal life. It bothered me that the initial excitement on people's faces, that resulted upon hearing of my internship with a United States' Senator, would disappear when I told them the name of that Senator. However, after working in the State Headquarters for four months, I realized that the good the Senator's office contributed to society far outweighed the negative elements of his personal life.

My decision to concentrate on Robb's public life is as controversial as his alleged acts. Many people feel that a public servant's private life is relevant to their ability to lead, and to the quality of their leadership. I am not of that belief. The fundamental question is how much do the American people have a right to know about the private lives of their public servants? Is there a distinction between public and private morality, or is it one and the same?

Many people support the argument that if a person aspires to be a moral and political leader, than he/she must exhibit a higher standard than that of the common citizen. (Iggers, Star Tribune.) Along these lines, morality is equated with character, and to some people the character issue is everything. Thomas Reeves, author of A Question of Character: A Life of John F. Kennedy, feels the private distinction is bogus. Reeves states that character is "what you are at the deepest level" and that "what you are
inevitably affects what you do.” In addition, if a person lies or cheats in his private life, then he will be consistent in his public life as well. (Iggers, Star Tribune.)

On the flip side, Jay Rosen of New York University feels that there is an important distinction between private and public character. He states that what candidates do in private is largely irrelevant, and what really matters are their public actions. (Iggers, Star Tribune.)

Recently, the character issue has been beaten to death by the media harping on the questionable character of its political and social leaders. Gary Hart, Jim Bakker, Chuck Robb, Clarence Thomas, Bill Clinton- all these names have plastered the headlines of America's newspapers at one time or another. But why? Were the headlines related to their positions on the issues, or their positions in bed? Why have these men, and their corresponding women, become household names? Because the media has given these people, and the scandals that surround them, a medium to be observed and heard.

Although the media has always played an important role in politics, due to the fact of instant information and advanced technology, their influence has never been felt more strongly. These men and women are the rule makers of the public versus private morality game. Nicholas Von Hoffman, in his article “Should the press play vice cop? Peephole journalism,” spoke of the transformation that has occurred in American journalism. Where certain topics were once taboo for publication, today there are no such restrictions. (Von Hoffman, The Nation.) Famous people's sex lives, especially politicians, are fair game, and are often front page stories.

Before the Gary Hart/Donna Rice scandal, the policy was not to print or air anything that linked a politician and sex together- unless it had become
part of the public record. For example, the Ted Kennedy/Mary Jo Kopechne scandal was reported to the public because it was related to a serious police matter. At this point it had become part of the public record. Another example was when Representative Wilbur Mills was knocked out of politics because of his drunken association with a fan dancer. However, it reached the front page headlines only after the police had arrested them both for being in the tidal basin near the Jefferson Memorial. Lastly, even though Federal Bureau of Investigations agents had offered several newspaper editors the transcripts of a small sex orgy at the Willard Hotel involving Martin Luther King, Jr., the story was never printed. The incident was a private matter, and had never become part of the public record or official action. (Von Hoffman, The Nation.)

After Gary Hart, all that changed. His political destruction was a warning that the system was different now, and that the old guidelines for journalistic discretion had vanished. The people's right to know had become the highest value. But where should the line be drawn? Just how much do the people have the right to know? Why is it necessary that they know the name of Hart's adulterous partner, or what specific sexual actions Bill Clinton and Gennifer Flowers engaged in? I would argue that the media has done more to add to the problem of the immorality of today's leaders, than to discourage it.

Has the press gone too far? On the January 10, 1994 broadcast of the MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour, this exact topic was discussed. This topic of discussion resulted from Bobby Ray Inman's decision to no longer become the next Secretary of Defense because of the manner in which public figures are treated today. Upon being asked by James Lehrer if he thought that the press had become too nasty and personal in its discourse, Larry Sabato, a
professor of government and foreign affairs at the University of Virginia had this to say:

"The real thing is that we've entered an era of attack journalism when just about everybody and everything is a target, whenever they're nominated for high public office, whenever they run for high public office, and increasingly over the years we've added more and more subjects to for investigation, and we've lowered the standards of journalism. They're allowed to look into what was previously considered private life, a legitimate reservoir of private life for public people, and they're allowed to print things and to air things that are unsubstantiated, that are essentially gossip and rumor without substantial evidence to back them up." (MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour, January 19, 1994.)

There were several reasons to explain the media's move toward the more personal issues. Bill Kovach, curator of the Neiman foundation at Harvard, and former editor of the Atlanta Constitution and Washington bureau chief of the New York Times, agreed that the standards have changed. He feels this is due to the fact that there are so many more journalists out there than there were years ago. Where twenty people covered a story ten years ago, two hundred journalists cover it now. This proliferation leaves more room for those who are not truly concerned with journalism, nor who their story may damage. (MacNeil/Lehrer News hour, January 19, 1994.)

Ben Bradlee, the former executive editor of the Washington Post, agreed that information used to be controllable in a way that it isn't now. "Twelve guys covering the White House in Roosevelt's days can make some really good, intelligent decisions for the common good. But you can't make that kind of distinction now about a private life of somebody if you go out and leave the White House and see the private life person on television and
talking. I mean, it's very well to say I'm not going to publish that and I'm not going to look into that, but there it is looking back at you." (MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour, January 19, 1994.)

During this same episode of the MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour, Ellen Goodman, a syndicated columnist with the Boston Globe, was questioned as to whether she felt any constraints when writing a column. Her response was that she had been "very concerned about the kind of 'hit and run' journalism over the last year in particular, that we have, in fact, hurt a great many people who've come into public life and been slapped with a media label and then ended up as a kind of road kill." She directly referred to former Deputy White House Counsel, Vince Foster's last words in his suicide note, that character assassination is sport in Washington. She attributes this practice partially to speed and partially to thoughtlessness. (MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour, January 19, 1994.)

Obviously, if an actual journalist, and member of the collective category "media", is aware of a problem, the rest of society is too. This can be evidenced by a 1993 poll taken by the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research. When questioned whether they felt that news organizations presented the news dealing with political and social issues fairly with all sides, or do they favor one side, 63% of those surveyed said they felt the news organizations tended to favor one side. When questioned whether the news media put too much emphasis on positive, or too much emphasis on negative news, 64% said that the media put too much emphasis on negative news. When asked whether the news media had too much influence over what happens today, too little influence over what happens, or do they have just the right amount of influence, 58% said that the media has too much influence over what happens today. And finally, when people who have
completed a college education were asked whether they feel most news reporters are just concerned about getting a good story and that they don't worry very much about hurting people, 63% agreed. (Bowman, et al, The Public Perspective.)

The sensationalist journalist has a great deal of power in the United States today. No longer is it necessary to have proof to back up allegations in an article, and the public perception is that the media has a great deal of influence in American society today. Clearly, the media has overstepped a boundary when a man's public servant career is destroyed over matters that have nothing to do with his public performance or any criminal activity. Apparently, the people had a right to know that Gary Hart lied about his marriage infidelity when pressed by the media. The editors and reporters who kicked in Gary Hart's hotel-room door, obviously felt the American people had a right to know about his infidelity. But did they have the right to know?

The above question leads to yet another one, is it ever justifiable, or at least forgivable, for one who holds or seeks high office to lie to the public to protect himself? Suppose there was evidence pointing to the fact that such an official lied about his marital infidelity. Is this lie enough to demonstrate unfitness for office? Apparently not, since Bill Clinton was elected even after admitting to marriage infidelity with Gennifer Flowers. More and more the public sentiment is shifting to a desire for an emphasis on the politicians and their viewpoints on the issues, not their private sexual history. Some degree of sympathy has been extended to such figures, in order that we do not judge too harshly those who lie (or who we suspect of lying) in order to defend themselves from the ever more shameless intrusions of the news media into deeply private matters. (Taylor, Texas Lawyer.)
Would a lie to protect oneself and the private business of one's family truly demonstrate a fundamental character flaw? Does it prove that a person is not trustworthy simply because he has taken a step to deflect a barrage of questions that are not the public's business, and that he should not have to answer. (Taylor, Texas Lawyer.) Whether Clinton had an affair or not, does not give the media the right to delve into his private affairs. The issue is not whether his acts are moral or not, nor whether he lied to protect himself from potential damage. The issue is that a public servant's sexual affairs are not the business of the public unless it interferes with his job. If such an affair were to prevent the leader from fulfilling his obligation to his followers, then it would be relevant. But such is not the case with Gary Hart, Bill Clinton, or even Chuck Robb. The sooner the media and public accept this, the closer we will be to solving the problem.

However, an example of where the sexual affairs of a public servant are relevant is in the case of the Clarence Thomas appointment to the Supreme Court. If in fact he did make sexual advances toward Anita Hill, this is of interest to the public because he is about to be appointed to one of the most prestigious legal positions in the country. Here he will be seeking life tenure on a tribunal that derives its authority from public trust and its integrity. Would it be consistent with the ideals of the Supreme Court to have a person who has sexually harassed an employee residing on this tribunal? I think not. (Taylor, Texas Lawyer.)

Then there is the question of whether it is possible for public servants to be more virtuous than the public they represent. After all, they are only human. If we were to remove all the people that have ever committed an immoral act from the potential list of public servants, how long would that list be? As Stuart Taylor, Jr. said in his February 10, 1992 article in the Texas
Lawyer, "Politics are, after all, the art of the possible. And it's quite possible--indeed, certain that we won't find anyone with a shot at the presidency who's free of sin." (Taylor, Texas Lawyer.)

That brings us full circle to our original personality, Senator Charles Robb. After the controversy that has surrounded he and his family during his Senate term, he is a strong proponent of the belief that there are certain aspects of a public official's life that should remain private. He also stressed that no one should expect a leader to be perfect. (Schneider and Eure, Washington Post.) These two ideas are the cornerstones of the written, public confessional distributed in early March of this year to Democratic leaders. This letter, better late than never, addressed several unanswered questions regarding his alleged affair with beauty queen Tai Collins, his reported presence at drug-related parties in Virginia Beach, and the Wilder tape investigation. Are these matters private? Yes and no. This question can be answered by viewing whether the matter is part of Robb's private life, or whether they have passed into the realm of public record.

Let's first address the beauty queen. According to Collins, the two first became acquainted in June of 1983 at a ribbon-cutting ceremony in Norfolk, right after she had been crowned Miss Virginia. The two developed a relationship not soon after that. She claims that the relationship was platonic for the first ten months, and that it crossed the line in 1984 while Robb was in New York for the Democratic National Convention. This is where the infamous massage occurred, which until the letter to the Democratic leaders was sent this past March, was the only thing Robb would admit to. However, Collins claims that the massage was the first step to bigger and better things.

According to Collins, she initially had no intention of exposing the affair to the public. The relationship ended because, "We just grew apart."
It was not until she could no longer stand the harassment she claims she was enduring, that she came forward with her story. She asserts the harassment was committed by Robb's people in an attempt to keep her quiet. "I'm not out to destroy him. I'm out to end harassment out of my life." (Larry King Live, January 1, 1992.)

The Senator, however, advocates a different position. The above quotes by Collins were taken from the transcript of the Larry King Live show on January 1, 1992, in which she was a guest. This appearance followed an October interview with Playboy magazine, in which she told of her affair with the respected Virginia Senator while nude. Senator Robb's office sent this comment to be aired on the show:

"Tai Collins, a professed devout Christian who has sold nude photographs of herself to Playboy magazine, has made a series of inconsistent and false charges about Senator Robb. Her commercial motivation is obvious. Put simply, this is a case of fabrication for profit. Senator Robb has repeatedly explained that no affair ever took place- platonic, romantic, sexual, or otherwise." (Larry King Live, January 1, 1992.)

Whatever the reason for the relation of her story, the effects to Senator Robb and his career were still the same. His career has been put in jeopardy. Issues that should have been kept within the privacy of his family, were aired out for the nation to see, and the media ate it up. Despite Robb's denials, and the testaments of those close to him, the issue has still captivated the media's attention.

Senator Robb: "There is clearly a commercial element in all of it. There was an assumption on the part of many that it might have just been something that was a fantasy, or whatever, that was created, but when it develops commercial implications
then it's clearly much more serious and it's something that we have to be very much concerned about." (Larry King Live, January 1, 1992.)

**Lynda Robb:** "My husband did not have an affair with this woman. My husband has always told the truth. He has worked hard to be a good public servant to the people of Virginia— as governor, as senator. He's a good father and a good husband and I am outraged that somebody, in order to further their career, in order to sell their body to Playboy, would make these fantastic—salacious fantasy, in order to promote her career." (Larry King Live, January 1, 1992.)

However, no matter how sincere his denials were, Robb's fatal mistake was that he allowed himself to be sucked into the game. By eventually offering the explanation to the media that he had stopped at the brink of infidelity after enjoying a nude massage performed by Collins, he destroyed the barrier of privacy he could have hid behind. (Taylor, Texas Lawyer.) A better course of action might have been to take a hard line and to refuse to comment, stating that such matters were not the concern of the public. His record as a public servant was. Instead, Robb continued to flounder, and his career suffered.

Although the sexually related media attention is not justified, the other two controversies that have plagued the Senator's term of office are. The media attention stems from allegations that in the early 1980's, Robb, while Governor of Virginia, was a guest at parties in Virginia Beach where illegal drugs were being used. In addition, it has been alleged that some of the guests at such parties were not the type of women that a married man— much less a governor, should associate with. Collins states, "He should have remembered [he was married to the daughter of a former president] when he
was at drug parties with prostitutes and high school girls and putting himself in positions where it would come back to him. He should have used better judgment than that, as a governor of a state." (Larry King Live, January 1, 1992.)

Robb has not seriously been accused of actually using the drugs. However, the mere fact that he witnessed illegal activities and did not report them, and that he kept such questionable company while he was the governor of Virginia should be a concern of the public. These acts cross the boundaries of private and public life. When a public servant is implicated in an illegal activity it then becomes public record, as the Kennedy/Kopechne example illustrated earlier.

The public's right to know also extends to the tape scandal embroiled in the Wilder/Robb feud. This element of the Robb saga dealt with the possession of an illegally recorded car phone conversation between Virginia Lieutenant Governor L. Douglas Wilder and the chairman of his campaign finance committee, Daniel Hoffler. Senator Robb claimed that the tape was delivered anonymously in 1988, and remained in the office's possession in a file cabinet for two years before it was leaked to the press. After excerpts had been leaked, Robb's aides then destroyed the tape. Robb later admitted that it should have been destroyed much sooner. (Ayres, The New York Times, June 26, 1991.)

The tape featured Lieutenant Governor Wilder gloating over rumors about Mr. Robb's personal life, predicting that he was finished politically and then bragging that he had successfully urged a reporter to write stories about the rumors. (Ayres, The New York Times, June 14, 1991.)

Whether such actions by Wilder are unethical or not, they are overshadowed by the fact that federal and state laws prohibit eavesdropping.
on cellular telephone conversations or disclosing their contents. (Gerth, *The New York Times.*) Due to the nature of the case— the fact that the tape's existence has broken state and federal law, and the players involved are the leading politicians of Virginia, the issue should be of great concern to the Virginia constituents. This matter, like the drug issue, concerns questions of illegal actions, and therefore has crossed over from the private realm to the public.

The story leak has been traced to Robb's chief of staff, David K. McCloud. He, along with two other aides, were suspended from duty by Senator Robb pending an investigation into the origin of the tape and its subsequent release to the press. Robb has maintained his innocence regarding the origin of the tape, and its later release. He said that he had committed no crime or breach of ethics. He admits that, "by treating the matter as nothing more than sensitive political gossip, I made a mistake. For that I apologize and take full responsibility." (The New York Times, July 20, 1991.) Robb also apologized for not immediately disclosing his staff's involvement and agreed to fully cooperate with the Federal grand jury investigating the case. After a three-hour appearance, the grand jury declined to indict Robb. (Richmond Times Dispatch, March 12, 1994.)

To be sure, the tape incident has hurt both of the men's political careers. The perpetual feud between the two men has done little to advance their political careers. At the dawn of the 1992 presidential race there were hopes that the state of Virginia, which used to be called "the mother of presidents", might revive its claim. Virginia sought to do this with its two leading politicians, Robb and Wilder. However, after the dust has settled, and the election come and gone, it seems doubtful that the two may regain their previous political status. Larry Sabato is very pessimistic, "Robb's career is
dead, and Wilder's is in intensive care. Virginia, the mother of presidents is no longer pregnant." (Richter, The Los Angeles Times.)

In an attempt to put the controversies of Robb's first Senate term to rest, on March 10, 1994, Senator Robb sent a five page apology to hundreds of Democratic leaders acknowledging "faults, foibles, and human frailties." (Allen, Richmond Times Dispatch.) It was an effort to put the matter of his alleged indiscretions to rest, but most critics say it may have done more harm than good. The letter denies rumors of drug use, and involvement in the Wilder taping incident, but conceded to "socializing under circumstances not appropriate for a married man." (Wines, The New York Times.) Robb supporters are more positive, but seem to feel the letter has come six years too late.

In any event, any good that was gleaned from Robb's confession was marred by a set of damaging memos that were leaked to the press less than six hours later. Robb's staff claims that his enemies leaked the excerpts at a time when it would be most politically damaging to his career—right before he began his statewide tour to kick off his reelection campaign. A particularly damaging excerpt from a memo that Robb wrote himself to chief of staff McCloud is as follows:

"I haven't done it often, but the 'beach atmosphere' can provide a healthy change of pace for me -- and for many others. It's fun to socialize and party occasionally in a less cloistered or less puritanical environment, and a pretty girl will still turn my head and I'm not going to pretend otherwise."..."I can't imagine anyone in either public life or private life who hasn't done something that they wouldn't want to see reported and discussed publicly -- and I've never claimed to be a candidate for canonization." (Richmond Times Dispatch, March 12, 1994.)
Yet another excerpt is taken from a March 29, 1991, memo to Robb from McCloud. In it McCloud criticizes the press for being slow to pick up on the political story, and instead concentrating on another type of story:

"A story about a Virginia Governor who had married the President's daughter, been a war hero, lived a charmed life, had a political career without any curves in it, and seemed destined to be the first Virginia President since the early part of this century. A man the press believed was a real honest to goodness 'straight arrow', a serious and thoughtful politician who the press and the public could trust for a change.

"Imagine their interest, not to mention their curiosity, when reporters began hearing rumors that their Governor was at Virginia Beach socializing with men an women of questionable reputation, attending parties where cocaine was being used, and having sexual relations with young women some of whom were prostituting themselves for illegal drugs. Add then the hype of [various lawyers, investigators, reporters, commentators, politicians, and hangers-on] ... and you have a recipe for political disaster."

(Richmond Times Dispatch, March 12, 1994.)

By choosing the route of the confessional letter, Robb's strategy has been compared to Clinton's, when questions of his character and integrity ran rampant. "What he did was to adopt Clinton's tactics. Admit to mistakes, keep your admission at a generalized level, and suggest neither the media nor the public ought to interfere in your desire to maintain the stability of your marriage," describes Dr. Robert D. Holsworth, professor of political science at Virginia Commonwealth University. (Wines, The New York Times.)
With all the controversy over Senator Robb's personal life, and the investigations surrounding the Virginia Beach parties and the Wilder tape, is it even realistic for Robb to pursue re-election? Some would say no. An editorial in the March 12 Richmond Times Dispatch supports this position:

"In light of the inconsistencies between his Thursday letter and the memos ... he might rethink not only whether he should say no more but also whether he should run again. For the Democrats it truly may be time for an unsullied someone -- and for Senator Robb to step aside."  (Whitley, Richmond Times Dispatch.)

Is it time for the Senator to call it quits? If he is truly innocent of all the accusations, would his decision to step out of the limelight only concede victory to the enemy? And would the state of Virginia be the better for it, or would it lose a valuable and dedicated public servant? To answer this question, it is necessary to look at the Senator's track record- what he supports and what he has accomplished.

The following is a bulleted summary of his accomplishments as both a governor and senator, and what he hopes to achieve in his second senate term. These issues relate more to Robb's national involvement rather than his specific state interaction. Due to the fact that my work during my internship dealt more with state affairs, I was not very involved in this area. However, after the bulleted summary I have included a description of one of the projects that I specifically worked on as an intern, which had a state focus to it. This example epitomizes the reasons why I feel that the loss of Charles Robb as a public servant would be a terrible loss to the people of Virginia, as well as the people of the United States.
Chuck Robb: A Commitment to Public Service While Governor (1982-1986)

Fiscal Responsibility
- Balanced the state's budget and provided new, high quality services without a tax increase
- First Virginia governor in modern history to reduce the size of state government, cutting the number of state employees
- Reduced the regulatory budget through the elimination and simplification of state regulations

Improving Education
- Channeled over $1 billion more into public schools without raising taxes and fully funded Standards of Quality for Education
- Invested in innovations like electronic classrooms, and established magnet schools in math, science, and the arts

Rebuilding the Economy
- Over 400,000 new jobs were created -- more than twice the rate of new job creation in the previous four years

Fighting Crime
- Fought for tougher anti-crime laws, including stronger laws against drunk driving
- Tough and fair law enforcement, including enforcing the death penalty
- The result: crime index decreased nearly 15% during his term

Protecting the Family
- Developed family health programs, including pre and post-natal care
- Increased child support enforcement

Promoting Human and Civil Rights
- Appointed a record number of women and minorities to positions in state government, including boards and commissions
- Strongly and consistently supported a woman's right to choose

Taken from the "Robb for Senate 1994" Campaign Pamphlet
Chuck Robb: A Record of Achievement in the Senate
(1990-1994)

Fiscal Responsibility
• The Concord Coalition, a non-partisan grassroots organization dedicated to eliminating the federal budget deficit, named Robb to their Senate Honor Roll for his votes to reduce the deficit
• Supports and co-sponsored the Balanced Budget Amendment and line item veto
• Refunded over $1 million to the U.S. Treasury from office funds

Taking a Tough Stand Against Crime
• Supports death penalty and tougher sentences for criminals
• Authorized the Violence in Schools amendment to the Crime Bill
• Favors expansion of community policing
• Voted for the Brady Bill and a ban on assault weapons

Fighting to Support Women and Families
• Supported family and medical leave
• Fought sexual discrimination in the workplace
• Consistently stood up for a woman’s right to choose
• Supports the Equal Rights Amendment
• Fought for increased funding for breast cancer research
• Supported a major effort to reduce infant mortality

Improving Education
• Original Co-sponsor of the National & Community Service Act
• Supports full funding of Head Start
• Co-sponsored legislation to make college loans more affordable
• Endorsed for re-election by the Virginia Education Association

Taken from the "Robb for Senate 1994" Campaign Pamphlet
Chuck Robb: A Vision for the Future of Virginia

Robb's Platform:
• Reform Health Care System -- To provide quality health care that is accessible and affordable to all

• Control and Reduce Violent Crime

• Welfare Reform -- Break the cycle of poverty and dependency, by policies that focus on work and personal responsibility

• Preserve America's strength while converting to a post-Cold War world

• Protect the rights and liberties of all Americans

• Increase the opportunities for high skill, high wage jobs by expanding international trade and moving to develop the information superhighway

• Improve our system of education, so our children are ready to complete and win the economic battles of the next century

Taken from the "Robb for Senate 1994" Campaign Pamphlet

Clearly, with all the accomplishments of Robb as a public servant, it would be a strategical error of the Virginia people to count Robb out of Virginia and national politics. By viewing the summary of his achievements, the programs he supports, and where he hopes to go in the future, it is obvious that Robb has his constituency as the first priority. His dedication and commitment to the women and the family show that Robb does respect the familial institution. How could he better combat the charges of infidelity
and neglect to his family, than working to improve the family life of all Virginians?

On a more familiar note, during my internship experience I had the opportunity to work in conjunction with my internship supervisor on a project which dealt with veterans affairs in Virginia. My supervisor, Jim Connell, is both the Deputy State Director of Robb’s State Headquarters, and he also doubles as Robb’s Legislative Assistant on Veterans Affairs. By shadowing Jim, I was able to witness both a leader in action, and a legislator. The following is a case study in which Senator Robb directly responded to the needs of his constituency.

Due to the fact that Robb is a veteran of the Vietnam War, veterans’ issues have always been a high priority for him. In April of 1992, Senator Robb became aware of a tragic situation in one of the veterans hospitals in Virginia. After the bodies of several psychiatric patients were found on the grounds of the Salem VA Hospital, having taken their own lives, Robb was prompted into action.

On April 14, 1992, the Honorable Charles S. Robb requested that the Human Resources Division of the General Accounting Office conduct an investigation of the Salem, Virginia, Department of Veterans (VA) Medical Center to look into complaints that poor management and staffing shortages were undermining the quality of patient care.

VA’s Salem Medical Center is a 525-bed full-service facility. It provides acute medical, surgical, and psychiatric care; intermediate care; long-term psychiatric care; nursing home care; and hospice care. Originally solely a psychiatric facility, it is now a referral center for acute and long-term psychiatric care for other VA hospitals in Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee, and Washington, D.C.. The Salem hospital serves approximately 113,000
veterans in twenty-five counties of western Virginia, with nearly half of the medical center's inpatient's there for psychiatric care.

The circumstances leading up to the investigation are tragic. The facility had been plagued with chronic problems in nurse staffing, medical record-keeping, and the performance of certain psychiatrists and nurses that was "resulting in poor quality care for some patients." Apparently the declining conditions at the Salem facility had their toll. On March 25, 1992, a forty-two year-old Vietnam veteran, with a history of suicide attempts, was found hanging from a tree. He had been missing from the hospital for over a month. Ninety minutes earlier, a patient happened upon the remains of another patient who had been missing for four months. In May of the same year, the remains of a patient missing for seventeen years were found. In December, the body of yet another patient was found. He had walked away a day earlier.

What caused such acts of desperation? A shock and outraged public demanded to know. Senator Robb was determined to find out. After a five month investigation by the GAO, the investigative arm of Congress, a forty-five page report was submitted to the Senator. The report outlined the areas that desperately needed improvement, many directly related to the psychiatric wing of the hospital. Senator Robb stated that he was most concerned with examples of patient neglect within the psychiatric units. "I'm concerned that these psychiatric patients -- arguably the most disenfranchised group of veterans -- have not been receiving proper care," said Robb. "Our veterans deserve better."

Examples of neglect were referred to throughout the report. The GAO report mentions several details in the psychiatric wing, "the physical condition of the premises was poor, and patients were not receiving
appropriate care. In that unit there was only one part-time psychiatrist assigned to thirty-eight patients, there were no doors on the toilet stalls, or curtains on the shower area, and a strong smell of urine permeated the area. Further, patients on this unit were dressed in hospital gowns with open backs, and were wearing a waterproof canvas diaper with a disposable inner pad. The diapers fit poorly around the patients' legs, and urine leaked out on the floor, creating a fall hazard for patients and personnel.

In addition, the report cited some startling statistics. Records in one unit noted that "30% of the records did not have notations about the circumstances leading to the patient's admission, or the patient's chief complaint, 80% did not contain a relevant social history or any data from the patient's family, 90% did not specify the treatment modalities to be used, 90% did not contain progress notes indicating patient response to treatment, and 100% did not cite any short-term and/or long-term treatment goals or reassessment dates for the patient."

Since the time that the suicides caused the Salem hospital to gain national notoriety, several steps have been taken to improve the facility. To begin with, the leadership of the hospital has been replaced, and has already begun to make effective improvements which have resulted in a full accreditation from the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations in September. This is considered to the highest seal of approval a hospital can receive. In the GAO report, new director, John Presley is praised for restoring staff and public confidence in the facility's management and for addressing quality of care issues. However, there is still room for improvement, and it is important to maintain this high level of effective management, in order that such problems will not occur again.
The most shocking aspect of the entire situation at the Salem VA center is that it took the suicides of several patients to cause its problems to be noticed. Senator Robb addressed this, 'I'll say this; by the looks of this report, it appears that the first S.O.S. went out about the time the ship's captain was up to his knees in bilge water. I don't think we could have waited any longer to cast out the life rafts, and I am very concerned that the Department's internal review mechanisms didn't identify or correct these problem earlier."..."To know that these problems are being addressed now is little solace when you consider that at least two of these psychiatric patients took their own lives before any outside intervention took place."

This case study is an example of how the needs of the constituents were addressed when those needs were brought to the attention of the Senator. His purpose for being elected was to represent the people of Virginia and their needs. By launching an investigation of the Salem facility, Senator Robb was responding to the needs of his constituency.

However, the responsibility of the Senator's leadership position does not end with recognizing and addressing the problem. As a leader, it is his responsibility to assure that this situation does not occur again, and that the psychiatric patients do not reach such high levels of desperation that they feel their only option is suicide. After all, who is to say that this lack of veteran concern, especially psychiatric veterans, is unique of only Salem’s VA hospital. It is possible that this situation may exist in other VA hospitals, or that there is potential for it to develop. The job of a leader is to create change in order to produce a better situation for his/her followers- a situation that is more consistent with the follower's needs. To do this, Senator Robb had to create change, not just in the Salem hospital, but he must take it to a broader level. He must initiate change for all VA patients.
This is exactly what the Senator has attempted to do. After the GAO report was made public, Senator Robb pledged to work with the VA, representatives of the various veterans organizations, as well as the National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems, in an effort to establish whether the issue might be addressed legislatively. In conjunction with his Legislative Assistant for Veterans Affairs, Senator Robb created and proposed several pieces of legislation that would improve advocacy for veterans with psychiatric needs, and would give these veterans the same opportunities and programs that they might receive in non-veteran hospitals. This is where I became familiar with the situation at Salem, my internship supervisor, Jim Connell, is the Senator's Legislative Assistant for Veterans Affairs. Together they have worked to create real, far-reaching change in VA hospitals through legislative efforts.

Clearly, Senator Robb exhibited true leadership by initiating measures to assure that a problem which tormented a faction of his constituency would never occur again- in Virginia VA hospitals, or anywhere else. Not to minimize the severity of the indiscretional accusations, but can the state of Virginia, or the entire country, afford to lose a public servant who works for such positive and beneficial change?

I felt that the answer was no, and having undergone a personal transformation on my position since the beginning of my internship experience, I felt it was time to communicate to others what I had discovered. I felt this conviction strongly enough to dedicate the focus of my Senior Project to communicating why Robb should be allowed to continue the good that he has already achieved.

Before I begin the description of this project, I feel it necessary to mention a disclaimer. As a resident of Virginia, I support Senator Robb as a
candidate- not because of the personal choices he has made, but because of the advances that he, and those that work in his name, have made for the people of Virginia. I may not agree with his private lifestyle, or personal choices, but I recognize the fact that a person may make mistakes and still be a good person. If personal mistakes completely discredit a person's integrity, a major part of the world's population would be disqualified. Through personal experience I have learned that a person may still have a great deal to give, regardless of an immoral act. To admit one's mistake is to their credit, and I feel there is no better example of character and integrity than to have the courage to continue to try to improve the world around you, despite the constant criticism you may face.

It is with this in mind that I decided to disregard what I feel has either already been addressed and investigated by legal officials, or is simply none of my business, and concentrate on the achievements that the Senator has made and has the potential to still make. Let me present to you my Senior Project Presentation.
The United States Senator:

Analysis of the Office and the Political Environment

Senior Project Presentation

By Jennifer A. Chiappetta

In Conjunction With Jim Connell

And the Cooperation of the office of the

Honorable Charles S. Robb
Purpose of Presentation

1. To inform college students of the positive contributions and opportunities for change made possible by a public servant at the Congressional level

2. To examine the formal organization in more depth in order to determine the large amount of good that is done in the Senator's name by his staff.

3. To educate students about the transactional nature of the political leader/follower relationship, as well as in the arena of the legislature.

4. To make undergraduate students aware of the ideas of leadership as a form of service, and the accountability an elected official has to his/her constituency.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Jim Connell introduces himself and the purpose of this presentation. (refer to purposes listed above) Instructs students to write down their top three national and local concerns. (Collect)

B. Three Quotes that Respond to the Three Main Points of Presentation

1. Negative Quote:
   a. "A politician is not as narrow-minded as he forces himself to be."
   b. "It all comes under the heading of democracy. As bad as it is, it's the best scheme we can think of."
   c. "Write to your congressman, even if he can't read, write to him."

All three quotes are taken from the book based on Will Rogers' life, I Never Met a Man I Didn't Like.
2. Formal Organization Quote:

"The design of an organization, its structure, is first and foremost the system of control and authority by which the organization is governed."

- Richard Daft

3. Transactional Leadership Quote:

"The legislative structure does not naturally make for positive, comprehensive, principled- that is, transforming leadership; it makes for an accommodating, brokering, incremental- that is, transactional leadership."

James MacGregor Burns

4. Service and Accountability Quote:

a. "Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile."

- Albert Einstein

b. "The ear of the leader must ring with the voices of the people."

- Woodrow Wilson

II. DISPELLING THE MYTH

A. Address quote in Introduction regarding negative government.

B. Interactive Bumper Sticker Exercise- Lead discussion about outcomes.

Purpose: Confront the negative stereotypes students have about government, and legislative government in particular.

C. Follow Up With Ideas in book Why Americans Hate Politics

1. Relate interactive exercise to the reasons why Americans hate politics listed in the chapter outline.

2. Discuss whether Robb is viewed as a conservative or liberal in the way he votes and the programs he supports.
and proposes. How has this dichotomy limited his legislative successes?

3. Discuss negative campaigning and Robb's involvement in the practice—how about in the upcoming election?

III. OVERVIEW OF THE STRUCTURE OF A FORMAL ORGANIZATION

A. Communicate the ideas of Daft's Book, *Organizational Theory and Design*

   1. Culture

      a. Define culture and ideas behind it.

      b. Relate the idea of "Mission Culture" that describes Senator Robb's offices.

      c. What is the mission of Senator Robb and his staff in relation to his constituency? Incorporate Jim's philosophy—"People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

   2. Introduce the ideas of authority and power, relate to corresponding opening quote. How do the offices of Senator Robb, specifically the State Headquarters, engage in "power and politics"?


   1. Mission Description

   2. Explanation of Roles

   3. Background of Process

   4. Jim's Role as Legislative Assistant

C. State Headquarters Operation

   1. How its mission differs from that of the D.C. office

   2. Explanation of Roles
3. Interaction With Five Other Field Offices- example of horizontal power.

4. Jim's Role as Deputy State Director

IV. TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND THE LEGISLATURE

A. Insights of James MacGregor Burns in His Book Leadership

1. Transactional Leadership
   a. Define concept of transactional leadership. Relate the corresponding opening quote.
   b. How is Robb a transactional leader?

2. Legislative Leadership
   a. Define legislative leadership and its limitations.
   b. What role does Robb play in the Senate? (Refer to Chapter summary of "Legislative Leadership: the Price of Consensus").
   c. Discuss the subset of legislative leadership within the transactional category.

3. Interactive Exercise to Symbolize Competing Issues
   a. Top Five Concerns of Country
   b. Top Five Concerns of State

   Purpose: to illustrate the frustration of both the leader and the constituent due to the competition of numerous national and local concerns fighting for attention.

V. LEADERSHIP AS A FORM OF SERVICE AND THE ACCOUNTABILITY TO THAT CONSTITUENCY

A. Leadership as a form of service- relate to Einstein quote.
This concludes the presentation, and I will now go into the reasons for why I decided to structure it in this manner, and my reasons for including the information that I did.

The scope of this project is to create a presentation that would be used for educational purposes in leadership, political science, or government college classes. During the course of the semester I created a presentation that my internship and Senior Project Supervisor, Jim Connell, would present to the audience referred to above. The presentation seeks to educate students of the contributions that senate offices, and their senators, make to society, as well as the conditions and limitations of the political environment they are surrounded by.

Originally, part of the project was also to secure opportunities for the presentation's delivery, but due to time constraints this was not possible. A semester is not enough time to create a credible presentation, with enough time to make it on to a college professors syllabus. Therefore, the following section of this paper will only include an explanation of the presentation, not an evaluation. It is my intention that the presentation will be given at some point in the following academic year.

My first concern in drafting the presentation was that it would not turn into a campaign tool for the upcoming election. Not completely realizing my position on his re-election at the beginning of the Spring 1994 Semester, I did not feel that I could create a presentation whose primary focus was to extol the virtues of the Virginia Senator. I also felt that with the recent reopening of the Robb controversies, brought about by the Senator's March letter, such a focus might be suicidal to the purposes of the presentation. My greatest fear is
that the purposes of the carefully planned presentation will be undermined by negative audience participation stemming from their disagreement of the personal conduct of Senator Robb.

Therefore, I made a conscious decision to focus the presentation on the generic office of senator and the political environment that he/she is confronted with by the nature of that position. On the other hand, I felt an obligation to incorporate the actions of Senator Robb that would illustrate the points I was trying to communicate, and that would exemplify the positive versus the minimal negative contributions to political life. Due to the fact that I would not be giving this presentation, I felt it necessary to explain to Jim the reasons for the generic focus of my paper, and he agreed.

Not only does my presentation directly relate to the internship objective that I cited at the very beginning of this paper, but it relates to two others as well.

To increase my understanding of the role of the leader/follower relationship in a government setting by examining the accountability an elected official has to his constituency, and also the potential influence the constituents have on his decisions.

- To be able to identify and evaluate the formal organizational structure of the Senator's State Headquarters, focusing on whether there is a predominant hierarchical structure, reciprocal influence, etc., and whether I can make any suggestions based on my experience and training that might make it more efficient and productive.

I felt that if these objectives were of interest to me, that they might be of interest to other students as well. In making this presentation I had the advantage of being a student, therefore I knew what would be of interest to
the intended audience. But also being a former employee of Senator Robb's, I had the advantage of knowing what there was to offer as far as material for a presentation. The purposes of the presentation reflect the influence of my internship objectives. I decided to structure the presentation to parallel each of the purposes that were initially outlined.

The process whereby the presentation was created was comprised of a series of meetings with Jim. The initial meeting in January was to determine the basic ideas of the presentation. Due to the fact that Jim would be delivering the presentation and that I was creating it, it was necessary that we have a great deal of communication regarding its contents. How this communication worked was that I developed an initial outline of the presentation, and then discussed it with Jim. After discussing it with Jim, the initial outline was adapted incorporating our discussion. With its revision, I was able to determine the focus of the presentation, and to develop its structure. It was then that I began to research the ideas that would make it educationally valuable.

I relied heavily on the texts used in Dr. Couto's political contexts class. This was because the texts he chose conveyed many of the ideas I was trying to communicate. I then composed my research in an executive summary that I could present to Jim for each set of readings. I included discussion questions where I thought the reading could tie into Senator Robb. I also furnished Jim with the actual chapters so that he could draw from his own ideas, not just what I felt was important out of the reading.

I primarily drew from four texts: two from Dr. Couto's class—*Why Americans Hate Politics* by E.J. Dionne, Jr., and *Leadership* by James MacGregor Burns; one text from Dr. Hickman's Formal Organizations class, *Organizational Theory and Design* by Richard L. Daft; and lastly, I utilized the
paper I had written for my internship experience last semester entitled, "The Dynamic Nature of the Leader/Constituent Relationship as Seen in Senator Charles S. Robb's State Headquarters". This may not seem like a large number of sources, but the information drawn from them was enough material to create the length of the presentation I was striving for. At the very most, the presentation could only be an hour and fifteen minutes maximum, and there were interactive exercises to be included, as well as the inherent knowledge of the Robb context to communicate.

The final form of the presentation will only be witnessed when Jim actually delivers it. What I have done is furnished Jim with a final presentation outline, as well as the summaries, and he must then present it. How much innate knowledge he provides, and his interpretation of the research I have done, will obviously effect the delivery of the presentation.

The "INTRODUCTION" was mainly comprised of quotes that paralleled the structure of the presentation and its purposes. I felt that quotes were an effective way to catch the viewers attention, but also to give them something to think about right from the beginning. As indicated, many of the quotes that corresponded with the "Dispelling the Myths" section were taken from the book I Never Met a Man I Didn't Like. This book was based on Will Rogers' life, and was suggested by Jim because of Rogers' unique style of political commentary. The other quotes were either taken directly from the readings I summarized for Jim, or I found in a book collection of quotes that I found relevant.

The "DISPELLING THE MYTH" section was one of two sections where an interactive exercise was included. Jim and I both felt it was necessary to have audience interaction, and I suggested an exercise I had done at a Greek Leadership Workshop. When done at this workshop, the purpose was to
realize what stereotypes are common of the Greek system. But more importantly, it was to determine how they are perpetuated. In terms of this presentation, the activity works in this way: Adhesive bumper stickers are distributed, and students will be asked to create a sticker that finishes this sentence, "When I think of politics I think of...". Then the bumper stickers are collected, displayed and compared for the reasons I described regarding the Greek Leadership Workshop. The benefit of such an interactive activity is that stereotypes can be identified and discussed. Through this process we become one step closer to confronting and erasing the negative stereotype that corresponds with politics in general. From this point, the ideas of the book _Why Americans Hate Politics_ are integrated.

Through the "OVERVIEW OF THE STRUCTURE OF A FORMAL ORGANIZATION" I have attempted to incorporate some organizational theory. This information is useful in the even that any of the students will eventually be employed in a formal organization, they have at least become familiar with some of the theories. It was also an attempt to make a potentially dry subject, the structure of the Robb organization, more interesting. This section is obviously less generic than the others, but it still only utilizes the Robb's organizational structure as an example.

In the next section, "TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND THE LEGISLATURE", I have referred to the "bible" of Leadership Studies, MacGregor Burns' book, _Leadership_. Transactional leadership is such a major component of a senator's legislative role, that I thought it deserved an entire section. The second interactive exercise is also found here. At the very beginning of the presentation, each student in the audience will fill out a paper with the top five concerns he/she feels are important in both the United States, and the state of Virginia. It is during this section that the
results will be discussed. The purpose of this activity is to illustrate the number of competing issues that fight for a legislator's attention, and the frustration that results from both the leader and the constituent.

The final major section of the presentation relies far less on academic literature, and more on experiential accounts. In the "LEADERSHIP AS A FORM OF SERVICE AND THE ACCOUNTABILITY TO THAT CONSTITUENCY" section, I have combined both the experiences of Jim, and the experiences of myself. This section is the major defense against the argument that a senator is only corrupt and does nothing for his constituency. It is here where the practice of casework is introduced, and specific examples of Robb's contributions are cited.

The presentation ends with the reiteration of the four purposes of the presentation, and a question and answer session.

Because of the inability to deliver the presentation, it is impossible to evaluate it. Therefore, I can only speak of what I hope it will achieve. I realize that this presentation will not change the minds of the diehard pessimists who insist on denouncing Senator Robb, or even politics in general. Even if it does nothing to persuade students that public servants should be judged by their political performance, and how well they address and meet the needs of their constituency, I hope it will at least have provided more information about the process of leadership, and the office of senator. In a very basic sense, the presentation is to inform- not persuade, and if people are less ignorant about the political process and its positive aspects, its delivery and creation are worth it.
Executive Summaries
Why Americans Hate Politics

By E.J. Dionne, Jr.

Why do Americans hate politics?

Americans view politics with boredom and detachment. For most of us, politics is increasingly abstract, a spectator sport barely worth watching. (page 9)

• Americans have begun to doubt their ability to improve the world through politics. (page 9)

• [Election campaigns] treat individual voters not as citizens deciding their nation’s fate, but as mere collections of impulses to be stroked and soothed. (page 9)

• Popular American sentiment- "If the government won't do anything for me, it damn well won't do anything against me." (page 18)

• Americans hate politics as it is now practiced because we have lost all sense of the public good. (page 332)

• Today politics is not about finding solutions. It is about discovering postures that offer short-term political benefits. (page 332)

• Americans hate politics because the trust and commitment have eroded, and with them the ideals of democratic citizenship. (page 334)

• "... A politics dominated by false choices and phony issues is something very much worth being angry about." (page 357)

• Despite their anger at politics, Americans still show a healthy appreciation for democratic institutions. They are angry precisely because they see our politics as insufficiently democratic and responsive. (page 357)

Problems with American politics today:

• The abandonment of public life has created a political void that is increasingly filled by politics of attack and by issues that seem unimportant or contrived. (page 10)
a. Negative campaigning, character issues and killer TV spots have focused too narrowly on the political process and not enough on the content of politics. (page 15) The focus of campaigning insistently seems to be on character assassination or divisive social issues that leave the electorate angry and dissatisfied. Once upon a time, the thirty second TV spots were positive. (page 16)

b. "Symbolic politics". When politicians use symbols to take the place of actual issues. For example, Willie Horton and Boston Harbor in the 1988 presidential campaign. (page 10)

Most of the problems of politics today stem from the belief in the false dilemma of liberalism and conservatism. This polarization prevents the nation from solving the questions that most trouble it, and make it impossible for consensus to express itself. We are encouraging an "either/or" politics based on ideological preconceptions rather than a "both/and" politics based on ideas that broadly unite us. In reality, America's cultural values are a rich and not necessarily contradictory mix of liberal instincts and conservative values. (page 14) False polarization of politics began in the 1960's and created a "cultural civil war" specifically in three areas:

a. Civil rights and full integration of blacks
b. Revolution in values re: feminism, childrearing and sexuality
c. Meaning of Vietnam- how Americans see their nation, its leaders, and its role in the world (page 11)

The purpose of democratic politics used to be to solve problems and to resolve disputes- "politics of remedy". However, since 1960's the emphasis has been on the same divisive issues. The decline of the ideal of "politics of remedy" has created a vicious cycle. To appeal to an increasingly alienated electorate, candidates have adopted a cynical stance that taps into popular cynicism, and thus wins them votes. But cynical politics do not resolve issues, and the problems get worse. (page 17)

How can we fix American politics?

Popular anger at politics is, in fact, a thoroughly healthy sign. Sn indication that our democracy is going through one of its periodic phases of self-correction. (page 357)
• Philosopher William M. Sullivan urges us to return to "the ideals of loyalty and service based on personal trust and commitment." (page 334)

• What is required to end the popular hatred of politics is the creation of a new political center that is neither conservative or liberal. Such a new center would be willing to admit past failures and would prefer problem-solving to symbolism. It would rather govern than polarize the country around continued themes and empty slogans. Lasting reform in a democratic society cannot take place in the absence of a broadly based consensus, and a new political center. (page 27)

• If our politics is to get better, it is crucial that we recognize that the fragmentation of American society has made public life more difficult. We need to find ways to tie the citizens back to the public life, not further turn them away. (page 18) Only by restoring our sense of common citizenship can we hope to deal with the most profound and political issues before us. (page 333)

RELATE READING TO PRESENTATION

A. Discuss whether Robb is viewed as a conservative or a liberal in the way that he votes and the programs he supports and proposes.

B. Discuss negative campaigning. Robb's involvement in practice—how about in the upcoming election?
Chapter 10: "Organizational Culture and Ethical Values"

**Culture** - the set of values, guiding beliefs, understandings, and ways of thinking that is shared by members of an organization and is taught to new members as correct. (Page 317)

- The purpose of culture is to provide members with a sense of organizational identity and to generate a commitment to beliefs and values that are larger than themselves. (Page 317)

**Culture Strength** - denotes the agreement among members of an organization about the importance of specific values. If widespread consensus exists about the importance of those values, the culture is cohesive and strong; if little agreement exists, the culture is weak. (Page 324)

**Mission Culture** - an organization concerned with serving the external environment, but is without the need for rapid change, is suited to the mission culture.

- Places a major importance on a shared vision of organization purpose. The vision provides members' work activities with meaning that goes beyond typically defined jobs and roles.

- Employees are given unusual clarity and direction about their role and purpose in the organization.

- Organizational leaders shape their behavior by envisioning a desired future state that is important to everyone. (Page 324-325)

Chapter Twelve: "Power and Politics"

**Organizational Politics** involves activities to acquire, develop, and use power and other resources to obtain one's preferred outcome when there is uncertainty or disagreement about choices. (Page 404)

**Politics** - the application of power and authority to achieve desired outcomes. (Page 387)

**Power** - the ability of one person or department in an organization to influence other people to bring about desired outcomes. It is the potential to influence others within the organization, but with the goal of attaining desired outcomes for power holders.
• When one person is dependent on another person, a power relationship emerges. Power is denied by having something someone else wants. It can be exercised vertically or horizontally. (Page 387)

• Power in organizations is often the result of structural characteristics. Organizational power is usually vested in the position, not in the person. (Page 386)

• **Legitimate power** - the authority granted by the organization to the formal management/leader position a manager/leader holds. (Page 387)

Authority is related to power, but is a narrower concept.

**Authority** - it can be identified by three properties:

a. invested in organizational positions - people have authority because of the positions they hold, not because of personal characteristics or resources.
b. is accepted by subordinates - subordinates comply because they believe position holders have a legitimate right to exercise authority.
c. authority flows down the vertical hierarchy - exists along a formal chain of command, where top positions have more power. (Page 388)

**Vertical Power**

• All employees in this construct have access to some sources of power. Each level in the hierarchy tends to be concerned with different power issues, and to rely on somewhat different power sources. (Page 388)

• The chain of command converges at the top of the organization - so authority is great for top offices. (Page 389)

• "The design of an organization, its structure, is first and foremost the system of control and authority by which the organization is governed."

**Top Level**

Receive their power from four sources:

a. formal position  b. control of decision premises and information  
c. resources  d. network centrality (Page 389)

**Middle Level**

Allocation of power to middle levels is important because power enables employees to be productive. (Page 392)
Lower Level

- Even though there is less power at bottom levels, people at this level often obtain power disproportionate to their positions and are able to exert influence in an upward direction. (Page 393)

- Both personal and positional sources of power are available to lower levels.
  Personal: expertise, effort, persuasion, manipulation
  Position: physical location, information flow, access (Page 396)

Horizontal Power

- Refers to relationships across departments. Each department makes a unique contribution to organizational success.

- Difficult to measure because power differences are not defined on the organizational chart. (Page 397)

RELATE READING TO PRESENTATION

A. Describe culture of Senator Robb’s State Headquarters. What is the common vision that drives its staff. Relate to the concept of "mission culture".

B. Discuss the concept of vertical power within the structure of State Headquarters and the Washington, D.C. office.

C. Discuss the concept of horizontal power by using the interaction of the field offices with State Headquarters as an example.

D. How do the Senator's offices, specifically State Headquarters, engage in "power and politics"?
Leadership

By James MacGregor Burns

Chapter Five: "Crucibles of Political Leadership"

What is Political Leadership?

- "For the study of [political] leadership the crucial distinction is between the quest for *individual recognition and self-advancement*, regardless of its social and political consequences, and the quest for the kind of status that can be used to *advance collective purposes* that transcend the needs and ambitions of the individual." (Page 106)

- Leadership plays an even more consequential role in converting economic and social expectation into *political demands*, that is, specific claims asserted directly against government. (Page 117)

- Political leadership is a product of personal drives, social influences, political motivations, job skills, the structure of career possibilities. These forces not only shape the rising politician but influence one another. (Page 126)

- [Political] "leadership is fired in the forge of ambition and opportunity." (Page 126)

How are the followers involved in the political process?

- There are many environmental elements considered significant to political participation:
  a. family  
  b. status group  
  c. education  
  d. class  
  e. political party  
  f. work group  
  g. residence  
  (urban/rural)

Studies have been done on the extent that participation varies directly with more education, higher socio-economic status, greater age, male sex, and settled residence. Followers that are embedded in such environments can only be activated by stimuli that take context into account. (Page 131)

- Followers also have *political* contexts. They hold all degrees of identification, attachment, affiliation, membership, loyalty and disposition to activity in parties and organized interests. (Page 132)
• V. O. Key, Jr. makes a distinction between two types of public—attentive vs. inattentive. He states: "Between, that is, the relatively small, interested, informed public that directs a stream of influences on leaders, and the mass public that pays some regard to political matters but has to be shaken out of its latency and shocked or propagandized into paying attention and participating." (Page 132)

• MacGregor Burns notices that time availability is a key factor in the public’s participation in political affairs. Burns remarks: "Last year’s non-participant may be this year’s activist; this year’s aroused citizen may be disgusted by the results and become next year’s apathetic. There is a constant flux and heave in the political world that is hard to capture and label." (Page 133)

• When followers feel politically alienated it is often because they feel politics has rejected them. They also often believe that, whether or not they vote, either the establishment, a few insiders, or the system will make the decisions regardless. (Page 135-136)

Chapter Thirteen: "Legislative Leadership: The Price of Consensus"

"Leadership is necessary [in legislative leadership] for the initiating, monitoring, and assured completing of transactions, for settling disputes, and for storing up political credits and debits for later settlement." (Page 344)

In examining legislative leadership, the phenomena of transactional leadership is obvious. MacGregor Burns says that no legislature lives up to the tradition of transactional leadership more faithfully than the United States Senate. He also remarks:

"The legislative structure does not naturally make for positive, comprehensive, principled— that is, transforming leadership; it makes for an accommodating, brokering, incremental, that is, transactional leadership." (Page 362)

What exactly is transactional leadership?

• Such leadership occurs when one person takes the initiative in making contact with others for the purpose of an exchange of valued things. Each party to the bargain is aware of the power and attitudes of the other. Their purposes are related only in terms of their utility in the bargaining process, but this process does not bind them together. A leadership act took place,
but it was not one that "binds leader and follower together in a mutual and continuing pursuit of a higher purpose." (Page 19-20)

- Most leader and follower relationships fall into this category, especially in groups, legislatures and parties. Some examples of transactional exchanges are jobs for votes, or subsidies for campaign contributions. (Page 4)

- "Legislative structure... exemplifies transactional leadership. It rests on reciprocal responses of leader and led to perceived wants, needs, expectations and values." (Page 368)

- Transactional leadership depends on conflict for movement whose resolution may lead to higher levels of expectation and social change. If legislatures are not responsive to their constituency, transactional leadership fails. (Page 368)

**The Legislative Arena and the Role of Leadership Within**

**Legislature**- by definition is a political marketplace where representatives agree or disagree over policy and ideology and compete for restricted resources. (Page 351)

- "Internal legislative leadership has failed to overcome- except when it has been backed up by powerful executive or party sanctions- the slowness of legislative deliberation, the often archaic lawmaking machinery and procedures, the devices for minority obstruction and delay, and behind all this, the fragmentation innate in the relationships of legislators representing separated constituencies and the multi-party or multi-faction systems that divide legislators into not simply an action-minded minority, but numberless factions equipped with absolute power or partial veto powers." (Page 345-346)

- The individual legislator is under several constraints:
  a. Local forces- When the legislator is perceived as representing a constituency with a unified view and attitude toward all issues. This severely limits his/her freedom of action.
  b. When legislators are bound hand and foot to the organized interests of their constituency
  c. Political party rule in their districts (Page 347)

- There are countless opportunities for the individual member to exercise leadership within the legislature- be it within party and governmental leadership or with his/her constituents. In regards to the latter, legislators often have the opportunity to shape constituents' attitudes by taking strong positions in the legislature and in the district. (Page 349)
• Conflict is inherent in the role of the legislator, the question is how the legislator perceives it and acts on it. Here they have considerable latitude in the manner in which they can respond to conflict:

1. Legislators represent the aggregated needs, wants, attitudes, and interests of the whole constituency against external claims. May be divided on local and national issues. Their solution: legislators are more likely to think and act in response to a spectrum of choices, rather than limit their considerations to the local vs. national dichotomy. Legislator needs to realize that they are intertwined.

2. Representing certain interests within the constituency against others within it. (Page 351)

Roles Within the Legislature:

Ideologues- speak for the doctrines supported by their district, but more often a small, but articulate minority. Not afraid to vote and talk across party and other established lines.

Tribunes- may view themselves as representing primarily the people back home, or the polity as a whole; see themselves as a strong link between popular aspirations and governmental action.

Careerists- their career in the legislature is a value in itself, and may be a stepping-stone to a higher office, but not as a means of serving broader goals or interests. They advance their career by helping public or private groups that can help them.

Parliamentarians-

a. Technician- expert in parliamentary procedure and has a major part in expediting or obstructing legislation.

b. Institutionalist-seeks to protect the parliamentary institution itself- they are "institutional patriots”.

Brokers- most universally recognized role; see themselves as an indisputable role in mediating among antagonistic law makers, balancing interests, weighing all sides, tempering conflict, and creating legislative unity and action.

Party Loyalists- agents if strong party organization in their constituency or the legislature.

Policy Generalists- work for a broad program, often a party program.

Policy Specialists- focus their legislative efforts on one problem, in which they become recognized as an expert, enthusiast, or bore. (Page 353-354)

What determines the kind of role legislators will play and the political leadership for which they will position themselves? Their perception of
the conditions that structure their legislative situation in a (usually) competitive situation. (Page 355)

The Committee Structure

MacGregor Burns calls the committee structure the most significant, persistent, and visible part of the legislative system.

- The standing committees of both houses offer opportunities for legislative leadership.
- They have been tagged as "little legislatures".
- Their most impressive feature is their stability- they represent small structures of durable and predictable power, structures that are a solid part of the overall legislative system. (Page 360)

RELATE READING TO PRESENTATION

A. Where does Robb invest his loyalties, locally or nationally, or does he take the integrated approach?

B. What role does Robb play in the Senate?

C. How has Robb exhibited transactional leadership?
THE DYNAMIC NATURE OF THE LEADER/CONSTITUENT RELATIONSHIP AS SEEN IN SENATOR CHARLES ROBB'S STATE HEADQUARTERS

Woodrow Wilson once said, "The ear of the leader must ring with the voices of the people." (Page 29) During this past semester I had the opportunity to witness this occurrence through working at the State Headquarters of United States' Senator, Charles S. Robb. Being an intern at this office placed me in the perfect position to study the leader/constituent relationship, just one type of the broader category of the leader/follower relationship. This relationship is at the very heart of the Senator's purpose for leading. Being an elected official, he is directly responsible to his constituency, which makes this interaction different from all other types of leader/follower relationships. In addition, the representative nature of his leadership position holds him directly accountable as well.

By studying this relationship, I was actively trying to realize one of the objectives set forth in my Internship Contract. This objective states:

Through interacting with the people in this office, I will attempt to dispel the myth, for myself and others, that politics and political offices are often an aberration of the accepted ethical climate. Along with this I will attempt to determine how a leader can work to communicate the idea of leadership as service.

I realized this goal by witnessing and participating in several facets of the business of State Headquarters. I participated in several special projects in the
name of the Senator, I witnessed the extensive amount of casework conducted by his three caseworkers in the Richmond office, and I, myself, directly interacted with constituents on a daily basis. I achieved this objective for others, by communicating the numerous times I witnessed experiences of helping others to my internship class, and to my friends and acquaintances. By sharing what I have seen, at least twenty people have been enlightened of the positive aspects of a Senator's work, instead of only being subjected to the negative stereotypes that surround such a high political office.

An example of a special project mentioned above, and one that epitomizes the nature of the leader/constituent relationship is the Veterans Hospital in Salem, Virginia. This case study will illustrate an example where an elected official was called upon to respond to the needs of his constituents.

On April 14, 1992, the Honorable Charles S. Robb requested that the Human Resources Division of the General Accounting Office conduct an investigation of the Salem, Virginia, Department of Veterans (VA) Medical Center. VA's Salem Medical Center is a 525-bed full-service facility. It provides acute medical, surgical, and psychiatric care; intermediate care; long-term psychiatric care; nursing home care; and hospice care. Originally solely a psychiatric facility, it is now a referral center for acute and long-term psychiatric care for other VA hospitals in Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee, and Washington, D.C.. The Salem hospital serves approximately 113,000 veterans in twenty-five counties of western Virginia, with nearly half of the medical center's inpatient's there for psychiatric care.

The circumstances leading up to the investigation are tragic. The facility had been plagued with chronic problems in nurse staffing, medical record-keeping, and the performance of certain psychiatrists and nurses that was "resulting in poor quality care for some patients." Apparently the
declining conditions at the Salem facility had their toll. On March 25, 1992, a forty-two year-old Vietnam veteran, with a history of suicide attempts, was found hanging from a tree. He had been missing from the hospital for over a month. Ninety minutes earlier, a patient happened upon the remains of another patient who had been missing for four months. In May of the same year, the remains of a patient missing for seventeen years were found. In December, the body of yet another patient was found. He had walked away a day earlier.

What caused such acts of desperation? A shock and outraged public demanded to know. Senator Robb was determined to find out. After a five month investigation by the GAO, the investigative arm of Congress, a forty-five page report was submitted to the Senator. The report outlined the areas that desperately needed improvement, many directly related to the psychiatric wing of the hospital. Senator Robb stated that he was most concerned with examples of patient neglect within the psychiatric units. "I'm concerned that these psychiatric patients -- arguably the most disenfranchised group of veterans -- have not been receiving proper care," said Robb. "Our veterans deserve better."

Examples of neglect were referred to throughout the report. The GAO report mentions several details in the psychiatric wing, "the physical condition of the premises was poor, and patients were not receiving appropriate care. In that unit there was only one part-time psychiatrist assigned to thirty-eight patients, there were no doors on the toilet stalls, or curtains on the shower area, and a strong smell of urine permeated the area. Further, patients on this unit were dressed in hospital gowns with open backs, and were wearing a waterproof canvas diaper with a disposable inner
pad. The diapers fit poorly around the patients' legs, and urine leaked out on the floor, creating a fall hazard for patients and personnel."

In addition, the report cited some startling statistics. Records in one unit noted that "30% of the records did not have notations about the circumstances leading to the patient's admission, or the patient's chief complaint, 80% did not contain a relevant social history or any data from the patient's family, 90% did not specify the treatment modalities to be used, 90% did not contain progress notes indicating patient response to treatment, and 100% did not cite any short-term and/or long-term treatment goals or reassessment dates for the patient."

Since the time that the suicides caused the Salem hospital to gain national notoriety, several steps have been taken to improve the facility. To begin with, the leadership of the hospital has been replaced, and has already begun to make effective improvements which have resulted in a full accreditation from the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations in September. This is considered to the highest seal of approval a hospital can receive. In the GAO report, new director, John Presley is praised for restoring staff and public confidence in the facility's management and for addressing quality of care issues. However, there is still room for improvement, and it is important to maintain this high level of effective management, in order that such problems will not occur again.

The most shocking aspect of the entire situation at the Salem VA center is that it took the suicides of several patients to cause its problems to be noticed. Senator Robb addressed this, 'T'll say this; by the looks of this report, it appears that the first S.O.S. went out about the time the ship's captain was up to his knees in bilge water. I don't think we could have waited any longer to cast out the life rafts, and I am very concerned that the Department's
internal review mechanisms didn’t identify or correct these problem earlier. ... "To know that these problems are being addressed now is little solace when you consider that at least two of these psychiatric patients took their own lives before any outside intervention took place."

This case study is an example of how the needs of the constituents were addressed when those needs were brought to the attention of the Senator. His purpose for being elected was to represent the people of Virginia and their needs. By launching an investigation of the Salem facility, Senator Robb was responding to the needs of his constituency.

However, the responsibility of the Senator’s leadership position does not end with recognizing and addressing the problem. As a leader, it is his responsibility to assure that this situation does not occur again, and that the psychiatric patients do not reach such high levels of desperation that they feel their only option is suicide. After all, who is to say that this lack of veteran concern, especially psychiatric veterans, is unique of only Salem’s VA hospital. It is possible that this situation may exist in other VA hospitals, or that there is potential for it to develop. The job of a leader is to create change in order to produce a better situation for his/her followers - a situation that is more consistent with the follower's needs. To do this, Senator Robb had to create change, not just in the Salem hospital, but he must take it to a broader level. He must initiate change for all VA patients.

This is exactly what the Senator has attempted to do. After the GAO report was made public, Senator Robb pledged to work with the VA, representatives of the various veterans organizations, as well as the National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems, in an effort to establish whether the issue might be addressed legislatively. In conjunction with his Legislative Assistant for Veterans Affairs, Senator Robb created and proposed
several pieces of legislation that would improve advocacy for veterans with psychiatric needs, and would give these veterans the same opportunities and programs that they might receive in non-veteran hospitals. This is where I became familiar with the situation at Salem, my internship supervisor, Jim Connell, is the Senator's Legislative Assistant for Veterans Affairs. Together they have worked to create real, far-reaching change in VA hospitals through legislative efforts.

In addition to legislative efforts on behalf of constituents, there are more direct ways in which the Senator serves the people of Virginia. Direct communication between the leader and constituent can be identified in casework. The role of the constituent can be more clearly identified in this area due to the fact that there is direct interaction with the constituent via telephone, mail, or in-person communication.

The caseworker carries out one of the major responsibilities of the Senator. This is to investigate citizens' complaints against the government or its agencies, and to assist in addressing these complaints. These complaints are received by the caseworker, whose efforts, dedication, and knowledge of "the system" often provide favorable results. Out of the seven caseworkers, three in Richmond, over twenty-five categories are covered, each caseworker specializing in particular areas. Each day I assisted in processing approximately one hundred pieces of mail. Mail from constituents and Government agencies. It is here that I became aware of the concerns that plagued Senator Robb's constituency. Problems ranging from labor disputes, to child support. In the mailroom of the State Headquarters are file cabinets filled with thousands of files of constituent casework.

On top of casework, the office receives many phone calls from the citizens of Virginia, voicing their opinions and concerns over impending
legislation, or communicating their problems to the caseworkers. The phone rang off the hook after Clinton’s healthcare plan was announced, and again when the Brady Bill was passed. Many constituents were very upset when they called, but it was our job to document their concerns for the Senator to see.

The cornerstone for all interaction between the Senator and his constituency is communication. In all three examples mentioned above, special projects, casework, and direct dealings with constituents, communication is what all three aspects have in common. Without communication, the Senator would have no idea what his constituency needed. In order for the Senator to address the concerns of his constituency, it is necessary for this constituency to communicate its needs. The leader/constituent relationship is a reciprocal process. Both the leader and his constituents must communicate, in order that the leader answer the needs of the people he represents. John Gardner states in his book entitled On Leadership, that effective two-way communication is essential to proper functioning of the leader/follower relationship. There must be not only communication from the leader to his constituents, but also communication from the constituents to the leader, including dissent. (Page 26) In the context of the Senator’s office, this is done through casework, telephonic communications, and in-person visits.

Another unique aspect of the leader/constituent relationship is that the elected leader is directly accountable to those who have elected him. Gardner discusses this relationship in the third chapter of his above mentioned book. He says that leaders are almost never as much in charge as they appear to be, and followers are never as submissive as they might seem. (Page 23) Senator Robb is directly accountable to his constituents because he
must represent them to the best of his ability if he wants to be re-elected. He can choose to ignore the needs of his constituents, but then he is neither being a good leader, nor will his constituency re-elect him. Elected leadership is an entirely different type of leadership because the power ultimately rests in the hands of the constituent/follower. Followers have about as much influence on their leaders as their leaders have on them.

For example, Senator Robb can vote as he pleases on Clinton's health care reform, but there will be consequences. He must take into consideration the effects that this plan will have on the tobacco industry, the livelihood of Virginia's industry. If he votes without considering what his constituency wants, there will be consequences. As Gardner mentions, leaders can go against the grain, but not without cost. (Page 24)

A third aspect of the leader/constituent relationship is that constituents play a bigger role than originally expected in the leader/follower relationship. This aspect re-emphasizes the two-way character of the relationship mentioned earlier. If there exist good constituents, then these constituents will often produce good leaders. (Gardner, page 24) If the constituency is apathetic, or does not communicate with its leader, then the leader cannot determine what his/her constituency wants, and therefore bases the decision on his own ideas. On the other hand, if the constituents are involved in the process by offering their opinions and ideas, a leader will more often be able to make decisions which are consistent with his followers. When the citizens of Virginia called to voice their opinion about the continuation of the United States' military occupation in Somalia, the constituents were taking an active role in government.

Problems do arise, however. The idea of representing one's constituents is not so cut and dry. What happens if two factions of the
Virginia constituency differ? Senator Robb must be aware of all the different factions of his constituency, and must be willing to take these into account. Only then can he make the best, and most representative decisions.

An interesting concept is discussed in James MacGregor Burns' book, *Leadership*. He mentions the limited nature of the leader who is accountable to his constituency. The elected leader is limited by the interests of their constituency, and is therefore severely limited in his/her freedom of action. MacGregor writes, "The leader is perceived as representing a constituency so unified in its attitudes toward the central regime or toward other areas of the nation that the representative's freedom of action is sharply limited."..."The only kind of leadership the legislator could display under these conditions, it would seem, consists of thinking up new and more ingenious ways of dramatizing the compacted attitudes of the people back home." (Page 347)

An example of this, in the experience of Senator Robb, is that the issues that he is confronted with do not change from year to year. People have always been concerned with improving health care and hospitals. However, it is the responsibility of the Senator to find new ways of representing the constituents' concerns. This opportunity clearly arose when news of the suicides at the Salem hospital was brought to his attention. By initiating an investigation, Senator Robb found an innovative method to meeting the needs of his constituents, and bringing attention to those needs. With the investigation, came the possibility of new legislation. A further step towards realizing the needs of those he represents.

In conclusion, by interning at the State Headquarters of Senator Robb's office, I was able to learn the nature of the leader/constituent relationship first hand. I witnessed first hand how the government can be responsive to its constituency. Daily, I witnessed the business of constituent services that
Senator Robb's office offered, be it through special projects such as the Salem VA hospital investigation, the constant concentration on the constituent through casework, and the direct interaction with the constituent. Without this leadership experience I would never have realized the essentially service-related aspect of the Senator's work, and the transactional relationship that exists between himself (and those that act in his name), and the constituents. During the course of my internship I have attempted to share my realizations with others, so that more people would be aware of the positive aspects of a Senator's role, especially in light of the controversy that has surrounded Senator Robb.

This experience, as a whole, has given me a tremendous amount of leadership knowledge, and has helped to illustrate ideas that I have learned about in my coursework, such as the leader/constituent relationship. This knowledge will be extremely useful to me in later years because I hope to enter the political realm. An understanding of this relationship can only help increase my chances of success. In the present, it also makes me more aware of the accountability my elected officials have to me, and that I can effect those that I have elected.
ENDNOTES

PAPER:


PRESENTATION:


