



JOHN JOSEPH
Moakley
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John Joseph Moakley Oral History Project

Oral History Interview with

George Crawford

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Interview Summary

George Crawford, a member of Congressman John Joseph Moakley's congressional committee staff from 1989 through 2001, discusses his career as a House Rules Committee staff member, acting staff director and staff director of the Rules Committee. His interview explains how he came to work for Congressman Moakley; Moakley's relationships with his colleagues, his constituent service, and his political leadership; how Capitol Hill has changed over the years; and how Moakley's public service legacy is a model for government service.

Subject Headings

Crawford, George, 1954-

Moakley, John Joseph, 1927-2001

Pepper, Claude, 1900-1989

United States. Congress

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This interview took place on September 30, 2004, at the United State Capitol Building,
Room H204, Washington, D.C.

Interview Transcript

STEVEN KALARITES: Alright, we're here with George Crawford at the U.S. Capitol Building. It is September 30, 2004. Thank you, George, for taking the time.

GEORGE CRAWFORD: Thank you for coming down.

KALARITES: We'd just like to begin with some background questions of your career, where you're originally from and how you got into public service?

CRAWFORD: Oh my god. Originally, I was born in Kansas. Grew up in Kansas, Colorado, ended up in California—however old you are in fifth grade, ten, eleven years old. And then spent—growing up through college in California. Went to graduate school for a year in New York, came down here because of a woman, still married after twenty-four years. She was working for Senator [Alan] Cranston at the time—this was 1980—and convinced me that working on the Hill was a great life.

I started on the Hill in April of 1981 working for a congressman from Miami, Claude Pepper.¹ And started as a legislative assistant 1981, making 12,500 dollars a year. And two years later Dick Bolling,² who was chairman of the Rules Committee,³ announced that he was going to retire. And Mr. Pepper was the next senior member on the Rules Committee, and he became chairman in 1983. He asked some of us, on his personal staff, to move over to committee staff.

¹ Claude D. Pepper (1900-1989), a Democrat, represented the state of Florida in the U.S. Senate from 1935 to 1950, then represented Florida's Miami-area congressional district in the House of Representatives from 1963 until his death. He served as chairman of the House Rules Committee from 1983 to 1986.

² Richard W. Bolling (1916-1991), a Democrat, represented Missouri's Fifth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1949 to 1983. He was chairman of the House Rules Committee from 1979 to 1983.

³ The House Rules Committee is responsible for the scheduling of bills for discussion in the House of Representatives. According to the Rules Committee website, "bills are scheduled by means of special rules from the Rules Committee that bestow upon legislation priority status for consideration in the House and establish procedures for their debate and amendment." (See <http://www.rules.house.gov/>)

“Sure,” you know. So, I went to committee staff in 1983 with him. And he was chairman until 1989 when he died on Memorial Day of 1989, and Mr. Moakley became the chairman.⁴ And he asked some of us to stay on committee staff. And I said, “Sure.” So, that’s when I started working for the boss—was in 1989; I guess it would have been technically the day right after Memorial Day.

I was professional staff at that time—Jack Dooling⁵ was the staff director. And Jack—I’m sure you probably in some of these conversations—Jack became pretty ill in 1990, 1991. We had been working on a clean air bill just around the Memorial Day break, as I recall. And Jack called me into his office about two in the morning and Jack was—he was a brilliant guy, but he wasn’t necessarily the most direct guy in the world. And I sat down and he said, “Well, Winston Churchill—,” and he started talking to me about Winston Churchill. And I think, What is this all about?

So I’m listening and I’m trying to figure out what Jack is talking about. And after about twenty minutes he said, “So, what I’m saying is that, there might be some health issues that I’m going to have, and I want you—and Joe and I have talked—and we want you to be the person who’s going to fill in for me for any reason. I need to be out on some sick leave.” And I said, “Well, great Jack, I appreciate the confidence that you and the chairman have in me.”

And he says, “A title and salary adjustment will follow.” And so I got home, and my wife said, “How was your day? How was work?” And I said, “I’m not sure, but I think I got a raise. I think I got a promotion and a raise, but I’m not really that sure.”

Sure enough Jack, about three months later, just around Labor Day, Mr. Moakley called me into the office, and he said, “Jack is not doing well. He’s in the hospital. And it’s time for you to step in and do what we’ve asked you to do.” I said, “That’s great, that’s great. I’m sorry about Jack, but yeah”—and he said, “Well, what’s wrong?” I said, “I don’t think Jack ever told anybody.” “Yeah, he did, I’m sure he did.” I said, “I don’t think he did.” And he said, “You’re

⁴ Congressman Moakley was chairman of the House Rules Committee from 1989 to 1995.

⁵ Jack Dooling was a member of Moakley’s congressional staff from 1974 to 1991.

right, Jack probably didn't." Everybody over the summer was just like, What are you doing, getting into my business? Why do you keep asking me? I was terrified that Jack was not going to show up one day and the boss was going to turn to me and say, "What's going on, on this ag [agriculture] bill?" and not be able to respond.

So the boss says, "Okay, your first job is to write a memo to everybody on staff. Tell them that in Jack's absence you're in charge. And make it sound like you told them three months ago, but everybody forgot." (laughter) So sure enough, first memo that I wrote for the boss was, "As you might recall—"

So anyway, in the fall of 1991, I became the acting staff director for the Rules Committee. And then Jack never really came back. And then died later on, I guess probably the spring of 1992.⁶ And so I became staff director for Mr. Moakley at that point. And was with him until he died on Memorial Day in 2001. Every time Memorial Day rolls around I hold my breath these days.

So anyway, I worked for him for twelve years I guess it was. And was staff director for him for ten of those years, nine of those years, whatever.

KALARITES: So what were your first impressions of the congressman—Congressman Moakley?

CRAWFORD: Well, you know, when I first saw him was back in 1983, of course, when I was working for Mr. Pepper on the Rules Committee. And Mr. Pepper was born at the turn of the century. He was born in 1900. So I started working for him in '81. He was eighty-one years old, Rules Committee—eighty-three when he became chairman. He was old but active, real sharp. But, the people's impressions of him were, well he's old so he must be losing all of his mental faculties and everything.

Mr. Moakley was real good about defending him in a lot of ways, and making sure that people were trying to imply that the senator was beyond his time, that he wouldn't stand for that. He

⁶ Jack Dooling passed away on March 16, 1991.

was by contrast relatively young. (laughter) He was probably at that point in his mid-fifties, would have been in his fifties at that point. Always was a guy in the caucuses, you know, the democratic caucuses before—the committee Democrats would caucus before a hearing. And the staff director, Tom Spulak⁷ at that time, for Senator Pepper, would be the only staff person in that caucus. And would lay out this is what the bill is, this is a policy involved in the bill, these are the politics surrounding the bill. And then answer any questions, and sort of say this is what the leadership is interested in us doing.

Now, Mr. Moakley was obviously the close confidante of Speaker O’Neill⁸ when the Speaker was still there. And so Mr. Moakley would be the—well, they’re all the Speaker’s representatives on the Rules Committee, but Mr. Moakley was the Speaker’s guy on the Rules Committee. And so you know you look to him to see what the Speaker was interested in and what the Speaker wanted.

Sharp inside player, you know, got a much fuller appreciation of that once I started working for him. But, also a guy who everybody liked, everybody got along with. After working with him for a long time, after the Gingrich explosion in the House of his ethical tribulations, there was a bipartisan task force that was created to come up and review the ethics process. And on the Republican side—on that it was chaired by Ben Cardin and Bob Livingston,⁹ and on the Republican side, this guy named Bill Thomas who’s now the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, who has been described as the least liked man on both sides of the aisle.

But, he and the boss would get along great. And one time they were talking and I was walking back from a meeting with the boss and I said, “How do you put up with him?” He said, “He loves cars. I love cars, he loves cars. All we do—did you notice, all we do is ever talk about cars?”

⁷ Thomas Spulak was staff director and general counsel for the House Rules Committee and served most of his tenure under Congressman Pepper. He is now the president of the Claude Pepper Foundation.

⁸ Thomas P. “Tip” O’Neill (1912-1994), a Democrat, represented Massachusetts’ Eleventh and, after redistricting, Eighth Congressional Districts in the United States House of Representatives from 1953 to 1987. He served as Speaker of the House of Representatives from 1977 to 1987.

⁹ Congressmen Ben Cardin, a Democrat from Maryland, and Bob Livingston, a Republican from Louisiana, co-chaired a House Ethics Committee task force that in 1997 investigated congressional ethics enforcement following dozens of ethics charges against then House Speaker Newt Gingrich, a Republican from Georgia.

He said, “If you put your mind to it, you’ll find you have something in common with everybody, and then you talk about that.” And that’s what he did.

He was able to find that common ground. It didn’t have to be politics. He mentioned to me that Carl Yastrzemski¹⁰—he had a good friendship with Carl Yastrzemski. He said, “What people don’t realize is that, you know, they think I’m friends of Carl Yastrzemski because I’m a baseball fan.” He says, “Carl Yastrzemski comes down here not to talk about baseball; he comes down here to talk about politics. And I’m the only guy who will sit and talk with him about politics. Everybody else is trying to get him to talk about baseball.” And so he was good about finding out what people wanted to talk about as well, so he was able to engage people.

KALARITES: I think that’s a wonderful skill. I was wondering if you could expand upon Joe Moakley’s ability—

CRAWFORD: One last thing—and I can’t remember where it was. I don’t know if it was in Bill Bulger’s¹¹ eulogy, but it was after he had died. And there was sort of a man in the street type of—I don’t know if it was on maybe a news show. But, some guy was saying, “Yeah, I was at some deli or restaurant in one of the smaller”—not in Southie but outside of Southie. And he said, “I turned around and there was Joe Moakley in line behind me. And I introduced myself.” And he said, “He had the ability to make you feel like you were his best friend, but you just hadn’t met him yet.” Just a nice way to put it. He could make everybody feel like they were just his best friend some how.

KALARITES: I found it just so interesting that he was able to connect and develop such a personal relationship with so many people. I was wondering if you could expand a little bit on his relationships with members of the Democratic Party, and also the Republican Party because I think Joe was also known for being bipartisan and being able to say, “I need your vote. This is

¹⁰ Carl Yastrzemski (1939-) played for the Boston Red Sox from 1961 to 1983.

¹¹ William M. Bulger (1934-), a Democrat, served in the Massachusetts House of Representatives from 1962 to 1970, in the Massachusetts State Senate from 1970 to 1996. He was Senate President from 1978 to 1996. He gave a eulogy at Congressman Moakley’s funeral on June 2, 2001.

why it's good for both of us regardless of party affiliation." I wonder if you could just expand on those kinds of issues.

CRAWFORD: Well, he was politically shrewd enough to know that to get anything done you needed a majority of the House. And a majority of the House doesn't have to be a majority comprised solely of Democrats. And he was willing and able, and you know, the place has changed obviously, but he was willing and able to work with Republicans. But, he was also smart enough to realize that the people who were with you on this fight, might not be with you on the next fight. And conversely and more importantly, the people who were against you on this fight you might need them on the next one.

I think that was really demonstrated to me when we were in the middle of the funding issue in Central America.¹² And Dave McCurdy,¹³ a congressman from Oklahoma, was the chairman of the Intelligence Committee at that point. And we had Mr. McCurdy down in the chairman's office at the Rules Committee.

Mr. Moakley made the pitch to him that we should—"You, Dave, and I should be the McCurdy-Moakley Amendment. David, you really should take the lead on this. You have standing on the issue. People respect you on it." You know, "We need to look at what's going on, on the ground there. We need to look at administration policy. And this is why it would be good for both of us. This is why I need you to help in this fight."

And his response was that he was working with the administration, that he thought that what the boss wanted to do was a little bit farther than where he wanted to be on the issue. And he appreciated the offer from Mr. Moakley, but he was going to work with the administration and

¹² Mr. Crawford is referring to Moakley's efforts to reduce U.S. funding to the government of El Salvador. In December of 1989, Speaker of the House Thomas S. Foley appointed Moakley as chairman of a committee to investigate violence in El Salvador, specifically the November 16, 1989, murder of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter at the University of Central America in San Salvador. The committee is commonly referred to as the Speaker's Task Force on El Salvador or the Moakley Commission. The Moakley Commission investigation revealed that the Salvadoran military was responsible for the murders, and Moakley subsequently lobbied in Congress to reduce U.S. aid to the Salvadoran government.

¹³ David K. McCurdy (1950-), a Democrat, represented Oklahoma's Fourth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1981 to 1995. He was a member of the Moakley Commission.

try to work a deal with them. And as we walked out, he closed the door and I was just—I just can't believe that. I started going off on Dave McCurdy. And he said, "Don't; it's fine. You know, he's got to be where he's got to be." He said just that. He said, "You never know—I'm going to need him on some other issue next week, a month later, I'm not going to burn any bridges with him. He's going to do his." Then he says, "Get Jack Murtha¹⁴ on the phone."

"Okay, but why Jack Murtha?" And he says, "One thing you've got to realize is Jack Murtha he's either with you or against you, but he never sits one out." And so I got Mr. Murtha on the phone and it became the Murtha-Moakley amendment¹⁵ and it passed over Mr. McCurdy's opposition. And we were able to pass that amendment.

So, you know, he knew how to keep people from forming life long animosities. Again, he made people feel like well, you are where you are and that's fine. And always kept the relationships on both sides of the aisles open in case there was the need to work with people in the future. So he just—he joked about having Irish Alzheimer's and not forgetting everything except the grudge, but he just wasn't—that was a joke. He just never was that way himself when he was dealing with members.

KALARITES: How much involvement in the El Salvador issue did you, as a Rules Committee staff member—

CRAWFORD: Well, you know Jim McGovern,¹⁶ the principle staff person on all of the investigation and everything—and Jack Dooling. When Jack was still alive, Jack was involved on the Rules Committee aspect of that.

One of the high drama points was when Jack had Mr. Moakley introduce a resolution that got referred to the Rules Committee just by the way it was drawn up—the Rules Committee

¹⁴ John "Jack" Murtha, Jr. (1932-), a Democrat, has represented Pennsylvania's Twelfth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1974.

¹⁵ The Moakley-Murtha amendment was passed in 1990 and resulted in a 50 percent reduction in aid to El Salvador's government.

¹⁶ James P. McGovern (1959-), a Democrat, has represented Massachusetts' Third Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1997. He was a member of Moakley's congressional staff from 1982 to 1996.

exercised jurisdiction over it. And then we held a hearing and then Mr. Moakley threatened to issue subpoenas to administration folks based upon—you know, the Republicans went wild because the thought was a reach, a stretch of authority of the Rules Committee to try to issue subpoenas based upon a resolution like that.

I got involved when we tried to effectuate legislative changes, or working with him on the Murtha-Moakley amendment if it was—I think it was a Salvadorian extended volunteer departure status on the immigration bill,¹⁷ sort of waning hours of the session. And we got into a little bit of a standoff with Senator Simpson¹⁸ who was over on the Senate side, the Judiciary Committee. And we were able to come up with a legislative road map using the Rules Committee to free up what Mr. Simpson was objecting to. So, yeah, I got involved in that sort of stuff.

KALARITES: Besides the El Salvador issue, what other major issues were most important to Congressman Moakley?

CRAWFORD: I think he prided himself on the El Salvador issues. And there was a real passion about those issues for him. I think, though, that he really—it was really sort of those bread and butter, what makes people's lives better types issues which really drove him, and I think drove him into public service, and what sustained him in public service over all those decades. It was, "What can I do to help people?" And that went from the district office of constituent service and casework, which—you know, that was another thing which was overwhelming in the outpouring after he died. There were hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people, thousands of people who lined up and went past when he was lying in state in the state house.

¹⁷ Starting in 1983, Congressman Moakley introduced legislation to protect Salvadorans in the U.S. using the "Extended Voluntary Departure" provision that allowed a temporary stay of deportation and work authorization. Moakley was finally able to pass legislation that granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Salvadorans in the Immigration Act of 1990 (PL. 101-649). TPS grants temporary legal residency and work authorization to immigrants fleeing civil wars, natural disasters or other conditions in their home country for a set period of time. In El Salvador's case, TPS has been extended several times since 1990. The TPS designation has been used by other countries experiencing civil unrest and is administered by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). (See <http://www.uscis.gov>.)

¹⁸ Alan K. Simpson (1931-), a Republican, represented Wyoming in the U.S. Senate from 1979 to 1997.

And people would come up to the Moakley staffers over there, and they would just say, I remember when Joe helped me, I remember when—and sort of fill in the blank. “I remember when Joe helped me out on”—How many people he touched I think was a reflection on where he really placed a lot of his what was important to him.

KALARITES: Now, as chairman of the Rules and obviously in '94 the House changed and he became ranking member. But, after talking with some of the members of the Mass delegation, they all say obviously he was the dean after Tip left. How did he advance the Massachusetts delegation? Because they all seem to credit him as, “I got something done in my district because Joe Moakley picked up the phone and made it happen.” And all thank him.

CRAWFORD: Well, in a lot of ways that was a residual from all of the years of building relationships in the majority. In the majority you got the ability—you can be helpful to people, and you can be helpful to people on both sides. Or, you can be a real jerk about it and say, “I’m not going to help you.” He thought power was the power to say yes; it wasn’t power to say no. So, if he could say yes to people, that’s what he tried to do.

So I think he was able to call upon that reservoir of—I remember when Joe did this for me. For instance, after we had lost the House, when we were in the majority and John Kasich¹⁹ was the ranking member of the Budget Committee, and it was one of these bare knuckle things where they’re trying to embarrass us, we’re trying to embarrass them and everything. And the Republican staff had either—they made a mistake, they gave us the wrong paper.

And they came to us after our deadline and said, You know, we gave you the wrong paper. Can we give you the right—substitute them. And you know, so you go to the boss and say, “We’ve got a chance here to really stick it to them. Maybe we can embarrass them that they gave us the wrong substitute, the numbers don’t add up. It’s a political disaster.” And he said, “No, let them do what they want to do. Let them offer what version they want to offer.” And so we didn’t

¹⁹ John Kasich (1952-), a Republican, represented Ohio’s Twelfth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1983 to 2001.

make a big deal of it. We didn't say, Oh, you guys gave us the wrong one. We just called them up quietly and said, Yeah, send it over and we'll just substitute it in.

The year we lose the House, we're in the middle of a budget fight, and I see now-chairman Kasich. And he says, "Listen, if you guys need any help on procedural stuff, let me know. I'll never forget what Joe did for me that time." Those sort of things that he was able to call upon.

The other thing, from a—I don't know if it's tactical or strategic—he was a master at placing members of the delegation on committees. And the understanding was you're on this committee not because you're a great guy. You're on this committee to help Massachusetts. So, Richie Neal²⁰ on Ways and Means, John Olver²¹ on Appropriations, Eddie Markey²² on Energy and Commerce. You know, the committees that can deliver on—getting Jim McGovern on Transportation. You know, you got on a committee not because of your smarts and your good looks. You got on committees because you were there for all the members of the Mass delegation.

And he was sort of the principle traffic cop of, if you need something—and, "Let's all go to Joe and let's sit down and talk about what we need out of the transportation bill." Or, "Let's go see what we need out of the appropriations process." And then it was up to the members on those committees to execute those deals.

KALARITES: Did you ever spend any time with his constituents in South Boston? I know everyone says, "I traveled with him to South Boston and someone in a deli, someone always comes in—"

CRAWFORD: I didn't travel extensively with him up in Southie, but I would go to the district. Yeah, he was like a rock star. You go to Castle Island and get an ice cream cone or something

²⁰ Richard E. Neal (1949-), a Democrat, has represented Massachusetts' Second Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1989.

²¹ John Olver (1936-), a Democrat, has represented Massachusetts' First Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1991.

²² Edward Markey (1946-), a Democrat, has represented Massachusetts' Seventh Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1976.

like that and people would flock to him. Just driving through the town, I mean driving, he'd be sitting in the car, window down, and people would just be on the streets as you were driving by, "Hey, Joe, Joe, Joe."

Walked with him one year in the Saint Patrick's Day Parade. My gosh—that was phenomenal. He always—and it was true and I think it was reflected in the way people felt about him, he never forgot where he came from. He was always sort of in awe of where he was. And he knew how he got there. And it was from the people in Southie.

KALARITES: How much did you learn from working for him? Because a few staff members have said, he always wanted people to work for him to kind of view it as an internship in some instances. Learn what you can and then move on.

CRAWFORD: He always would say—like [about] Jimmy O'Leary²³ or somebody like that—he [Moakley] goes, "Geez, if only one day I could be half as successful as all my former interns." Yeah, he was—He always wanted people to not punch the ticket, but yeah, if people wanted to move on, he was always helping people advance their careers. You know, one of the things about the Hill, when you're a staff person, you are somebody's person. You're Pepper's guy or your Moakley's guy, or you're [Nancy] Pelosi's guy, or something like that. And when you leave the Hill, you're still that person's guy. So all those Moakley people who would go through his office and then go out into the world, they might be working for a law firm, or they might be working for some government relations. They might be doing something totally unrelated to politics. But, they're always Moakley—"That's a Moakley guy, she's a Moakley woman."

There's a practical aspect to it as well. Having your folks everywhere because that's good in terms of just keeping you informed and having your fingers in a lot of things. He was always trying to get people to do bigger and better things.

²³ James O'Leary was a volunteer on Moakley's early congressional campaigns and then was a member of the congressman's district staff from 1974 to 1978,

KALARITES: How will you personally remember Congressman Moakley?

CRAWFORD: Well, he was absolutely a wonderful guy to work for. More concerned about you as a person than you as a staff person. Very much interested and involved in what was going on in your life, with your family. Took genuine pleasure and interest in you as a person. Never took himself too seriously; you know, never took himself like do you know who I am sort of thing.

He was a great teacher. I've had the good fortune of working for three fabulous folks on the Hill, all of them different. Claude Pepper sort of really brought up his staff in an old school sort of way. Everybody was Mr. or Ms., Mr. Chairman. You never called a member by their first name. You never talked to—

If somebody had said, "Oh yeah, I was talking to Joe," and he would look at you, "Who you talking about?" "Mr. Moakley." So anyway, I sort of learned that from him. From Mr. Moakley it was the enduring nature of these relationships that we build up here. And how you don't burn anybody, and you don't burn your bridges with people. And there were people where we would be doing some business with a member, and he was just Joe Moakley and doing the Joe Moakley thing. And the person would walk out of the room, and he goes, "God, I hate that son of a bitch." You certainly didn't show it.

But, for him there was no need to show it. He was able to just sort of maintain that this is a profession; I find that common ground with everybody regardless of how he felt about the person, their stands on the issues or anything like that. So it never became personal to him dealing with those members.

KALARITES: That's interesting because it seems today, in today's political climate, that that's changed. It's much more divided down the middle. One half sticks with only one half and the other—

CRAWFORD: Well, you know back when we had the majority, we had the luxury of having sort of this huge majority, so we could afford to lose a big chunk of Democrats on any vote. But, I think what's happened is that the mentality now is how do you get two-hundred-eighteen votes out of your own side? And we've seen it time and time again. And it's some sort of acceleration of trends over several decades. But, if there's a piece of legislation that could get a bipartisan majority and get two-hundred-eighty votes, three-hundred votes and pass, the Republicans, the mentality is there must be something wrong with it if that many Democrats are supporting it. So, let's figure out how we get two-hundred-eighteen of our own folks on it and drive all the Democrats away.

And right after 9/11 three years ago, there was a tremendous crisis of terrorism reinsurance. People were not issuing insurance. So we sat down with—we had a bunch of business folks come in and say, This is a proposal that we hope that you can agree with, and we said, Yeah, it sounds good to us. And they went back, took it to the Republican leadership, and said, Great news. The bill that you put forward, the democratic leadership says they'll support. And they said, We'll show you how important you are to them. And they put in some tort reform stuff that, of course, was not related at all to the terrorism reinsurance, but sort of drove the trial lawyers nuts. And everybody said, Why did you do this? And sure enough, they were able to take a bill that could have gotten four-hundred votes, and put provisions in there that we couldn't accept, and they whittled it down to where it passed with two-hundred-twenty-five votes. And so they could go to the business community and say, We're your real friends. That sort of thing. After awhile you just say, "Well, okay, I guess that's the type of game you play." There's not a lot of goodwill that builds up in that type of politics.

KALARITES: I just think that adds to the kind of politician that Joe Moakley was, because he really was a professional politician. He really understood the rules and how to really work the system within the system.

CRAWFORD: Don't get me wrong, I mean he was as partisan as they get. But, he wasn't mean spirited about it. It was there will be times when, of course, we would have to do things in an extraordinarily partisan fashion. But, he was able to do it in such a way that people didn't

take it personally. It was like, “I hate to do this, but this is my job” sort of thing. And he had, as you know, just a remarkable sense of humor. He had a story for every situation. Had a one liner for every—Any time anything ever got sort of tense on the floor, or in the committee, he would just sort of throw out a one liner and just bring the place down.

There was one time we were on the floor and Gerry Solomon was the ranking member. And we had done something. And I think it was right after there was a *Roll Call*²⁴ article that came out, and it was profiling the boss about what a nice guy and fair guy he was. And Gerry Solomon was reading it. He was almost taking off his shoe and pounding it on the table sort of thing. Just sort of one of his fake rages.

And he took a picture of the boss and he ripped it up on the floor and threw the pieces of the picture up in the air. Sort of stunning. And just in a screaming rage. So the boss says, “I’m not going to be getting a Christmas card from you this year, am I?” (laughter) Oh, it was hilarious. Yeah, he was able to work his way through most every situation.

KALARITES: I know you’ve got other things to get to today, but as we’re winding down here, I was wondering, how would you like to see Joe’s colleagues and future members of Congress kind of remember Congressman Moakley?

CRAWFORD: Boy, that’s tough, I don’t have an answer to that.

KALARITES: Well, I’ll ask it in a different way. And this is—because the mission of the Archive and Institute is to preserve the legacy of Joe Moakley. And the other aspect is to encourage young people to pursue a life in public service. So what kind of advice, and what kind of lessons can they learn from Joe Moakley?

CRAWFORD: Well, you know, I think in a lot of ways that the people who come here are in large part motivated by the same things that motivated the boss to enter public service. They’re

²⁴ *Roll Call* is a newspaper that publishes congressional news and information.

concerned about their community, concerned about their country, concerned about what they can do to make things better for folks.

To be honest with you, I think the days of the seventies and the eighties where there was a lot of give and take, there was a minority that was interested in governing as opposed to just being a pure opposition party—sort of the two-year politics by each and every means available—I think that genie is out of the bottle; I don't think we ever get that back.

Are there members now who sort of follow in the Joe Moakley's type tradition? Yeah, but they're very small, very small number. In a lot of ways he was just a unique individual. And came out of a tradition of a certain type of politics that is—yeah, it's a dying breed. The Bob Michel,²⁵ Tip O'Neill, Joe Moakley, you can name—whenever you name people like that, you're talking about people who started public service in the fifties and the sixties and seventies. It's just a different institution now.

I think what the Foundation [Moakley Charitable Foundation] does, and what you guys do at the Archives, it reminds people what the best traditions of public service are, and why people get involved in public service. So, I don't know that there's any magic formula to try to inspire people. I think people feel the spark or the desire of getting into public service. They look for role models, and the boss is a great role model to try to follow.

KALARITES: Well, unless there's anything else you'd like to add, I think that's an appropriate place to end.

CRAWFORD: No. Thank you for coming down here.

KALARITES: Well thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

²⁵ Robert H. Michel (1923-), a Republican, represented Illinois' Eighteenth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1957 to 1995.