Before I say anything else, let me apologize—for coming here after all of you have just endured a lengthy political season to talk about—yes, politicians. For most people, the political season is a disruption in their lives, and when the season is over, they want to get on with other things. As the NY writer Pete Hamill once wrote "Politicians come and go; but they all get booed at the ball park." I once sat next to a Senator in Iowa and heard him booed when he was introduced at half time during a football game, so I can vouch for the wisdom of Hamill's "for-God's sake leave-us-alone" sentiment. Judging by nationwide newspaper and television commentary, the recent political season was an especially sour one, with public approval of our politicians and our Congress at an all time low. So it merits an extra apology when asking you to disrupt your happy transition from Thanksgiving to Christmas to return to the subject of our congressional politicians. But—as Tom Kazee just noted—it's my field. And you can blame him a little since it's his field, too. That is to say, we share a perverse fascination for politicians.

About a decade ago, I began studying the activities of some United States Senators—largely by watching them and talking with them as they went about their business. I followed them around both in their home states and in Washington. And I followed several of them throughout one complete electoral cycle—that is for six years, from one election to the next. I followed one group of four senators from 1978 to 1984 and another group of four senators from 1980 to 1986. I travelled around, too, with a
number of others who lost their elections and whom I then abandoned. One of those losers was Senator Robert Morgan of North Carolina, with whom I travelled from Charlotte to Ashville to Greenville to Raleigh during the campaign season of 1980. I went to Washington afterwards to talk with Senator Morgan about his defeat; after which he came back here and vanished from my angle of vision.

That angle of vision has given me a view of two very different political contexts—the constituency at home and the Senate in Washington. And the two contexts have provided a view of two distinctive political activities—campaigning and governing. At home the distinctive activity is campaigning; in Washington the distinctive activity is governing. These two activities—campaigning and governing, running for office and running the country—are the basic processes of congressional politics. Each engages a goal common to all our legislative politicians. In campaigning, their goal is to get elected and reelected. In governing, their goal is to get something done of a substantive, policy nature. Taken together, these two activities and the pursuit of the two goals consume most of their time for most United States Senators.

Without a doubt campaigning and governing are separable activities carried on in separate worlds, at separate points in time. And, often, involving different talents. As Republican House leader Bob Michel once put it: "It's one thing to be out there on the stump flapping your gums, and it's another thing to put something together. Some of the greatest talkers around here couldn't legislate their way out of a paper bag." (CQ 10/27/84)

After six months as Dan Quayle's Senate press secretary, the man who had previously been his campaign press secretary said to me.
This is my last day in the office. My fingers began to get itchy to do some campaigning. I love the politics side of things, but not the governing side. And the two have nothing to do with one another. What it takes to get elected has nothing to do with what it takes to govern once you get here. I'm fed up with all the governing bullshit...when it comes to figuring out where to get $16 billion more out of the budget, let someone else do it.

A little later, when I asked Quayle about this, he explained in similar terms.

Most members of campaign staffs can't stand being on the office staff. They're not compatible jobs. Campaign staffs live on the hype, the excitement, the emotion. Here, there's only detail, information, substance. In the office, you work under supervision. You have to fit into a group that works in close quarters...The campaign people...worrying about how to get through the next press conference. Their goal is to get ten seconds on the nightly news. It's not a style that fits with office work, with researching the issues and rehearsing the arguments...Some can do it, but not many.

He is certainly right that some can. But the fact that some politicians can do well at both activities doesn't change the fact that they are different.

At the time I discussed these matters in the Quayle office, the Senator himself had been spectacularly successful at campaigning. He had c:\Davidson-3
soundly defeated two solidly entrenched incumbents—one House Member and one Senator. But after 4 1/2 years in Congress he had accomplished absolutely nothing by way of governing. From my own experience hanging around with him in 1980, he certainly talked about campaigning more than he talked about governing. Subsequently, I followed him to Washington, and in 1982, I watched him push a major piece of legislation through the Senate. Afterward, travelling in his 1986 reelection campaign, I found his interest concentrated almost totally in the business of governing. The point is that these two dominating political activities are separable—both analytically and observationally. And I have treated them that way in my research.

Having said that, it is also true that the two processes are related to one another. All of you, I know, have some elementary feeling for their connectedness. As citizens or as voters we sense that in a democracy, we ought to be able to use election campaigns to help us decide how and by whom the country should be governed and to help us have an effect on the governing process. And we have the feeling—judging by recent controversies—that things aren't working out that way, that from our perspective as voters, the relationship between campaigning and governing has gotten out of whack. Consider some of the worries that surfaced during this past political season.

First, there was much talk and concern about the 90%-plus reelection rate of incumbents in recent congressional elections. That worry triggered proposals to impose limits on the length of legislative terms, proposals which passed in several states. The argument is that campaigns in which incumbents always win, deprive voters of control, produce insensitive legislators and lead to extremely undesirable governing
performances.

Second, consider the public outrage over the activities of the "Keating Five" a drama playing daily on CSPAN. Here the complaint is that contributions made to influence the process of campaigning have intruded upon—indeed, corrupted—the process of governing. In this case our instinct is to want to further separate or insulate the two activities, whereas in the case of incumbency, our instinct is to bring the two activities closer so as to relate better to one another.

A third recent concern is the widespread public distaste for negative campaigning. Here, the complaint is that such campaigns drive out the kind of information that allows voters to assess the candidate's future governing behavior. Here, our instinct is to want to force campaigning candidates to talk more about how they would govern. As with each of the other concerns, the politicians seem not to be cooperating to alleviate them; and there is a growing popular sentiment to take back the campaigning governing relationship from the control of the politicians. I mention these worries—about long incumbencies, large campaign contributions and negative campaigns—to demonstrate the extent to which public interest does already center on the connections which link campaigning and governing and to suggest the importance of those connections to the workings of a democratic political system.

What I have to say may shed some light on these system-wide, system-level concerns. But that will not be the focus of the stories I have to tell. My focus will be entirely at the level of the individual politician. That perspective comes naturally, from my years of looking over the shoulders of politicians one at a time to see how they see their world, to understand how and why they campaign and govern as they do, and...
to seek this understanding over the course of a six year electoral cycle. From my viewpoint, therefore, campaigning and governing are connected because they occur in sequence. That is, for each senator the six year cycle begins with a campaign at home, followed by a period of governing in Washington, followed, in turn by another campaign at home. This patterned sequence—from campaigning to governing to campaigning is, I think, the controlling sequence of every senator's political life. And it has become the controlling conceptualization of my research.

This sequential perspective is also a developmental one—enabling me to watch individual politicians change over time, to watch them learn, grow, and adjust, to watch them build a set of accomplishments, a political persona, a reputation. In each case, what I am watching and tracing is the development of a political career—a career that gets shaped by the rhythms of campaigning and governing, and by an accumulation of campaigning and governing experiences.

Of course, for each Senator I have only studied one six year segment of a much longer career. When I take up with them, they are already on their political careers and I find them in various stages of learning and accomplishment. Some will have begun a long time ago—some fairly recently. And so I always need to scramble at the beginning to get in tune with their on-going career as best I can. In 1978, when I first met up with Claiborne Pell, for example, he had already represented Rhode Island in the Senate for 18 years and was running his fourth senate campaign. Of his first campaign, he recalled,

"It was the most difficult. I started out all alone...
I was so nervous that my arms shook. My arms twitched
so at night that I couldn't sleep. I had to lie on them
to keep them still."

Obviously he had come a long way since then; I had missed a lot of earlier political development; and there didn't seem to be much room for more. My study of Pell's next six-year career segment was not likely to register the amount of change I would see in Dan Quayle. In retrospect, Pell was well on his way to becoming a Rhode Island institution. Six years later he commented "Perhaps I have become institutionalized in Rhode Island. That happened to my predecessor Theodore Green. He served for 30 years and was 93 when he retired. I may be in the same position he was." When I went back for my third look last month, he allowed as how he was at last an institution—and, as such, impervious to attack. "I think it happened this year, don't you. I know I wished 12 years ago it would happen, and it didn't happen six years ago. It happened this year. I have been victorious after running warts and all, with all my imperfections on display." Early on, the oddsmakers had figured this race to be one of the two closest in the country. But his opponents shots, as he indicated, had just bounced harmlessly off. I had come in much nearer the end than the beginning of his political career.

When I joined John Glenn on the campaign trail in Ohio in 1980 he had already had a spectacular non-political career—as a marine, an astronaut and as America's greatest peacetime hero. While he was clearly exploiting his past—and couldn't have ignored it if he'd wanted to—he was also trying to superimpose a political career upon it, with some success. As he recalled,

When I first ran for the Senate in 1970, whenever I would speak and then ask for questions, some kid would
invariably yell out and ask me how I liked drinking Tang. They thought of me as an astronaut. It took four years of steady campaigning in Ohio to change that to where it came up once in a while but not constantly.

On the other hand, it was clear that John Glenn still had a lot to learn, that he was by no means a finished politician. He didn't like campaigning very much and he wasn't very good at it. I figured that out pretty quickly at a rally the second day I spent with him.

He gave a let's-not-be-complacent pep talk at a political rally of Boilermakers Lodge 85 in Rossford. He got little reaction during the talk, received a routine round of applause at the end, got down off the podium and got halfway out of the union hall. The MC went to the mike, thanked him for coming and remarked that Glenn was once a plumber too. When Glenn heard that he shouted "That's right, I was a plumber." He turned, ran back to the podium, jumped up on it, and ran toward the mike. The MC said "You don't have to come back." Glenn grabbed the mike and said "My dad was a plumber in New Concord. I spent my summers digging holes for septic tanks and I hated every minute of it." The audience laughed. "I was the pipe threader and reamer and cutter; and I cut, threaded and reamed miles of pipe. And that was before you had machines. That was hard going."

The audience cheered. Glenn waved, jumped down off the podium and left in a heightened mood of good feeling. A natural, instinctive politician would have made that obvious connection at the very beginning of his talk and built a sense of identification with his listeners—the more so since Ohio's unions had never been strong supporters of his.

Nevertheless, Glenn's enormously favorable non-political reputation,
which he assiduously protected, carried him to a record breaking victory margin in 1980—and had a huge effect on his political career. As he interpreted this overwhelming electoral victory, it turned him into a legitimate presidential candidate and, with this stimulus of legitimacy, he decided to try for the Democratic presidential nomination. As he said,

I did not think about the presidency until after the 1980 election...There had been talk before but I never took it seriously. The first time I thought seriously enough about it so that I wouldn't make a Shermanesque statement was after my 1980 victory in Ohio.

So in this way, his election victory certainly altered his Senate governing activity in the short run—and in the long run, too. As we know, he lost his bid for the Democratic nomination—mostly I think because his non-political reputation was not as successful nationally as it had been in Ohio. I travelled with him in his presidential campaign; and I found him pretty much in a state of arrested development as a political campaigner.

Glenn's decision to run following his reelection campaign in Ohio leads me to a generalization about the connection between campaigning and governing, a generalization which grows out of my particular focus on the campaigning-governing-campaigning sequence. It is this: that the winning campaigner will interpret the results of his or her campaign and that interpretation will shape his or her future governing activity. From the standpoint of the individual politician, his or her interpretation of the election results is the crucial link between campaigning and governing. As political scientists, we know that campaigns affect election outcomes and we study senatorial campaigns to understand the results. From an
individual, sequential, developmental point of view, we should study campaigns in order to understand the governing behavior that follows for the senator involved. John Glenn's, the interpretation was that his election made him a presidential candidate, which decision, in turn, affected his governing activity in the Senate. And to extend Glenn's case one step further, his subsequent presidential campaign defeat also affected his governing activity by causing a change in his Senate committees. Well aware that failed presidential ambitions often led to electoral defeats at home—with the fate George McGovern, Birch Bayh, Frank Church, Charles Percy as evidence—Glenn interpreted his defeat as a sign that he'd better start paying attention to Ohio. So he moved off of the big-think, nationally-oriented Foreign Relations Committee and onto the bread and butter, constituency-oriented Armed Services Committee, the better to show his interest in the home folks.

To apply this notion to last month's elections, we would say simply that every senator who was victorious last month will develop an interpretation of his or her campaign and its results, and that interpretation will affect what he or she does in Washington beginning in January. Some of these electoral interpretations—that of Bill Bradley, for example, who must explain for himself his unexpectedly close election—could have consequences for the rest of us. The point is that it is his interpretation that matters, not the press's or the pundits' interpretation—because he will act on the basis of his interpretation when he takes his next career step—governing in the Senate, running for the Presidency or whatever.

Let me give a couple more examples from my own experience. In 1978, Senate Pete Domenici campaigned for reelection against a crusading,
flamboyant, mediagenic, publicity conscious Attorney General of New Mexico. Two weeks before election, Domenici was leading by 26 points in the polls. He expected a large winning margin. On election day, he won by 6 points. He was disappointed and unhappy at the size of his victory—indeed he interpreted it more as a defeat than a victory. His interpretation of the results was that his opponent had overwhelmed him in the media, that his own campaign had been insufficiently aggressive in winning media attention and he returned to Washington determined to change that.

"The number one concern of this office" he told his staff "is press."

And they began preparing feature articles, news releases, legislative schedules for the press. In the next six years, he went through five press secretaries—who called him variously "fanatical," "obsessed" or "paranoid" about press coverage. When we talked in Washington in 1979, he complained that "I'm doing a good job. Why does that reporter stick it to me all the time? He never writes anything good about me. The best I ever get is a news story and then it usually has a little editorial zinger in there." On the campaign trail in New Mexico in 1980, he spoke sarcastically about "the great New Mexico press," and complained that, "It's frustrating. I want the people of New Mexico to know what I'm doing...(that) I'm a player now...I have a problem with the state's biggest newspaper...They don't think I've got any good ideas, or that I'm smart or that I think about national problems. It's like pulling teeth."

Domenici's media-based interpretation of his reelection campaign shaped one part of his governing behavior for several years. And it reminds us how large a role the media can play in shaping political
careers. It is not just that they affect senatorial campaigns; but both directly and indirectly, they fix expectations and render judgments on how the Senators are doing in the business of governing as well.

Another example of media influence on electoral interpretation and governing is that of Bill Cohen of Maine. Unlike Domenici, he began his first campaign for the Senate on a giant wave of favorable national publicity which came to him as a Republican member of the House Judiciary Committee considering the impeachment of Richard Nixon. Cohen's thoughtful, articulate commentary, his personal attractiveness and his non-party vote in favor of impeachment made him a darling of the media in 1974, and propelled him into the Senate race—against an incumbent—four years later.

Once in that race, however, Democrats attacked him as a lot of name recognition but no accomplishments—"all style and no substance." And the media, having given him such accolades during Watergate, now joined the attack. As Cohen recalled a conversation with one top reporter, "He asked me if I liked Robert Redford movies." I said "Yes, I like Robert Redford." He said "Did you see 'The Candidate'?" I said "Yes, I thought it was a great movie." He said "I hear you are patterning your campaign after Robert Redford in 'The Candidate.'" I said, "Come on now. I was campaigning long before that movie came out." He said, "Can I take a picture of your car?" I said, "Sure, but why do you want a picture of my car? You're the one who's always complaining that politics is all style and no substance, and you want to take a picture of my car? Why don't you write about the differences between us on the issues?"

The suggestion of the reporter's inquiry was clear, however, that Cohen might just be the blow dry candidate in the movie who asked "Now
what do I do" after he won—that is, who knew how to get elected but had no idea how to govern. Sure enough, in the Sunday magazine section, there was the picture of Cohen's car—a Porsche!

Cohen interpreted his election victory as a chance to put that suggestion to rest. "I want to get a reputation as a substantive senator" he said in March. "Ninety percent of my time has been taken up in my committee. I'm learning all the technical terms—studying a great deal." In May he said, "My committee dominates my time...I'm keeping a low profile in the state...I've been studying hard, doing my homework. During the campaign I had to confront the show horse-work horse comparison. I've been trying to be a work horse." His interpretation of the campaign was shaping his governing activity. Back on the campaign trail last month, I found Cohen still fretting about this love-hate behavior of the media.

Just how long these interpretive effects last is a matter for investigation—longer in the case of Bill Cohen, I think, than in the case of Pete Domenici. But at some point the time and energy needed to make public policy—that is, to govern—will erode the force of the electoral interpretation. Campaigning will give way to governing, and the early impact of the campaign and the electoral interpretation are bound to diminish. At the end of six years, Bill Cohen had become an expert in military matters; and Pete Domenici had become a highly publicized chairman of the Budget Committee. Still and all, what you learn by following them around at home will continue to help you to understand their behavior during their subsequent years in Washington.

Among my senators one of the most interesting—and difficult—transitions from campaigning to governing was made by Arlen Specter a Republican from Pennsylvania. When I met him in 1980 he was running for
his first Senate term, but he already had a past election record—of two early wins and four recent defeats. That he would have been running at all after four successive losses was an early key to one of his dominant political attributes—his persistence. "I've had a lifelong ambition to be a Senator," he said. "I don't discourage easily. In fact I don't discourage at all."

His two victories had been as Philadelphia's District Attorney—in itself a remarkable feat for a Republican in a Democratic city. As he campaigned for the Senate, he talked constantly about his experience as DA. He talked about how he jailed common crooks, unethical reporters, sleazy politicians, corrupt judges. He talked about how "The record I'm running on now is the record I made as DA; and about How "my strongest supporters are people who know the work I did as DA." He presented himself everywhere in terms of his prosecutors credentials, hard working, hard charging, aggressive, independent. Everywhere, he contrasted these prosecutor's qualities with the lack of same in his opponent.

Just as his DA successes had molded his political persona, so too had his four political defeats. Two of them had been defeats for Governor and Senator—in the Republican primary. In those cases, Specter had not been the candidate of the party establishment. When I took up with him in 1980, he had had to run for the third straight time, in a primary against his own party's anointed candidate. "I felt I had been given short shrift by the Republican party" he said..."When it came to the choice plums, they reserved them for others. I was as good as they were, but I never got the nod of the party establishment...I'm not one to shrink from a battle or a fight. So I entered the primary again this year and won."

Persistence and independent effort had triumphed over the Republican c:\Davidson-14
establishment. My point is that all his previous statewide campaign experience reenforced his District Attorney’s experience in confirming the value of persistence and independence. It was important for me to know these things, for I found a very close connection between campaigning and governing in his case. That is, his campaigning was diagnostic for his governing--both stylistically and substantively.

His interpretation of his election to the Senate emphasized his district attorney qualities. As he put it

He cares, he's energetic, he works hard—that's the issue I beat Flaherty with. It was the only issue between us. I visited all 67 counties. He didn't. There was not any difference between us on other issues. He had a beautiful wife; I had a beautiful wife. I drove a foreign car; he drove a foreign car. I hadn't won anything in 1000 years; he hadn't won anything in 1000 years.

Another part of his electoral interpretation centered on the matter of party loyalty and prospective relations with the new President. "I didn't come in on Ronald Reagan's coattails," he said, "Our election patterns were completely different. I carried Philadelphia; he lost Philadelphia. He carried Pittsburgh; I lost Pittsburgh...It's interesting how that affects your idea of the team. I don't feel I owe Reagan anything." Predictably, there was going to be a lot of the hand charging, independent, persistent prosecutor left in the new U.S. Senator, when he took up the business of governing. And I would argue that anyone who wished to understand his governing activity would need to know about his prior campaign experience and these electoral interpretations.
Equally predictably, Specter joined the Senate Judiciary Committee, where he introduced his first important piece of legislation—a bill providing for life imprisonment for career criminals. It was a new idea, and it was his brainchild, derived straight from his experience as District Attorney. The saga of the bill is so lengthy and tortuous that I am writing a book about it. Exactly three years after he introduced it, after having once been vetoed, it was signed into law as a very small and drastically watered down part of a very large omnibus anti-crime package. Its passage can be called a triumph for the persistent prosecutor; but its form and its fates were equally attributable to the limitations of Specter's notions about governing. In a word they were notions—all born of his previous experience—that governing was more an individualistic enterprise than a collective one. He stressed individual effort and individual expertise rather than negotiating with others or building coalitions. His experiences as DA and with his party left him very reluctant to incur obligations to others or to put his fate in the hands of others. "What Arlen doesn't like" said his top aide the day before he introduced his bill, "is the clubby part of the Senate. He's not a hail fellow well met type...He won't get into a room with someone he doesn't like. That's fine but it's not the clubby old boy style that predominates around here. The trouble is, he doesn't know who he can trust."

The only strategy Arlen Specter ever devised for passing his cherished career criminal bill was the loner's strategy of bulling the legislation through by sheer determination, buttressed only by his expertise and by the conviction that it was the right public policy. He never did develop a set of strategic decisions about how he was going to maximize support, cope with disagreement, identify allies, count swing voters, control
procedure or superintend the matter of timing.

On the day he introduced the bill, he had not yet consulted with any member of the Judiciary Committee. He had no co-sponsors. When asked at his press conference whether he had any support, he nonetheless mentioned Chairman Strom Thurmond and Ted Kennedy. They turned out to be anything but supporters...Thurmond delayed the bill's progress, Kennedy diluted its substance and the two of them eventually combined three years later to pass the Thurmond-Kennedy amendment which in Specter's words "gutted and emasculated (my) bill." From start to finish the Pennsylvania Senator displayed the same deficiencies and miscalculations as a coalition builder. Said one staffer, "I don't know how many times he has slowed up what we were trying to do by not really listening to what people were telling him. He hears what he wants to hear and then charges ahead."

One day in March when we talked, the Senator reported flatly that, "Denton's for it; Hatch is for it." But when we went over the roster in July he said "Hatch may be a problem." "Denton may go south on me." One day he exclaimed "I had a terrific meeting with the President...I had a great meeting. Reagan's for it. We're going to get it passed." A year later Reagan vetoed it. Maybe Specter had sold Reagan on the bill like he was selling it to his committee colleagues. "We've been telling them what a great bill it is," he said. "We haven't told them the opposing arguments."

When the National District Attorney's Association--his own former professional colleagues--expressed reservations, he went to their annual meeting and said to them in a speech, "I don't know whether we can get career criminal passed with your attitude as it is. But we're going to try to steamroller you anyway." About the same time, a top staffer
commented about the bill's slow progress. "I'm beginning to think we're on a Pickett's charge. Arlen won't make any face-saving maneuvers on the side. He's determined to go straight ahead and all the way." At a point where he needed the help of Judiciary Committee Chairman Thurmond to move his bill along through committee, another staffer said

Career criminal is going nowhere fast...I'm not sure Arlen is willing to do the amount of quid pro quo that you need to move the bill along. He thinks it ought to carry on its own merits and do his work for him...If he wants that bill, he's got to swallow his pride, go to Strom Thurmond and say, "Strom, I want that bill more than anything else. My pants are down."

For the Senator from Pennsylvania, however, it was an unnatural act to reach for his belt buckle. His reluctance to engage in the give and take essential to success in governing, his go it alone, independent posture, was I believe, a lasting derivative of his early experience—as DA, as Republican party outlier and of the interpretation of his electoral victory. It left him with a lot to learn about governing in the Senate.

He regarded his criminal bill as the most important domestic policy initiative of his first term; and a goodly proportion of his governing energies were devoted to it. One of his staffers who worked on the bill called it "a success story without a happy ending." When I asked the Senator what he had learned from the experience, about his new career, he said, "The legal system and the political system are alike in a lot of ways...But the difference is that you have to do so much consultation and persuasion with your colleagues. So it takes a lot of time to get
anything done. With the career criminal bill, as you know, we had to be absolutely relentless about it." He had come to the Senate, I thought to myself, equipped with all the relentlessness he would ever need. It was "consultation and persuasion" that he had to learn. His experience had taught him something about those things. But not yet enough, I thought, that they were a matter of second nature to him.

On the campaign trail in 1986, Specter indicated that a lot remained of his lopsidedly individualistic view of the governing process in the Senate. "Jesus Christ," he exclaimed, "there are a lot of sharp elbows in there...It's not a snake pit. It's a rhinoceros pit." And he went on expansively. "You have to work like hell to make your case. I've done it by sheer dint of persistence. It's like digging into the side of a granite mountain with your fingernails." I could not have summed up any better than that his political career as it had been shaped to that point by successive sequences of campaigning and governing.

To reflect on this case, we might say that every person who comes to the Senate knows how to win an election. Some of them know how to govern. The rest have to learn. For some it is more difficult and takes longer than it is for others. These are people, we might speculate, whose previous experience has least sensitized them to the collective aspects of governing. Getting elected is an individualistic process, so all senators will understand that side of the governing business. But governing—or making public policy—is much more of a cooperative, collegial process than campaigning; and so fewer new senators will have had that kind of experience. They are the ones with the most to learn and they are the ones who will find it most different to adjust to governing. If we want to predict which newcomers will have the longest and most difficult
adjustment to governing, those coming to the Senate with the least
collegial experience are the best bet. Arlen Specter was one of those.

If we think, now, of each newly elected senator's electoral
interpretation as an important link between the campaigning and governing
at the beginning of the six year cycle, and if we think of the policy-
making part of the governing process as following in time, then we might
ask, finally, whether there is not, also, a link between governing and
campaigning at the end of the cycle—a link that is at the point when
governing activity gives way to a campaign for reelection. The answer is,
I think, yes, there is. And the link at this point in the sequence is the
incumbent senator's explanation to his constituents at home of what he or
she has been doing in Washington. While they are engaged in governing
activity—making policy, voting on policy or whatever—all senators
anticipate and worry about what they will say back home when the time
comes to explain a vote, defend a record, embellish a reputation, or
present an achievement. (They will want—as I would guess most people do
—to be consistent in their behavior, to make what they do in one place
fit reasonably well with what they do in other places.) Once on the
campaign trail at home, their explanations of their governing activity
will, of course, be as self-serving as possible, since their goal at that
point in time is to get reelected.

Arlen Specter had a campaign commercial in which law enforcement
officers in Pennsylvania extolled the virtues of the career criminal bill.
It did not, however, play a large part in his reelection. Dan Quayle on
the other hand, was able to explain his six years of governing activity to
his Indiana constituents in 1986, almost wholly in terms of his leadership
role in the passage of one bill—the Joint Training Partnership Act.
Quayle's campaign manager explained

JTPA is the whole campaign. It's everything. It's the first thing he talks about everywhere he goes. All our opinion polls tell us that jobs is still the number one issue in the state. He can talk jobs like nobody else can, because he did something about it. It's pure gold. It sews everything together. He brings home the bacon and he is a national leader. JTPA is his suit of armor.

Quayle's exploitation of the explanatory process did, I believe affect the election outcome. It was an excellent example of a strong governing performance in Washington that allowed the incumbent to control and to dominate the campaign dialogue with his constituents at home.

But a commendable Washington performance is only part of the explanatory equation. Another part is the severity with which the incumbent's governing behavior is put under challenge in the campaign. On the road with Claiborne Pell in Rhode Island last month, we campaigned almost entirely in senior citizen centers where Pell, aged 71, could call himself "not just a senior senator but a senior citizen as well." And where he could explain his vote against the recent budget package as an effort to prevent increases in medicare contributions. In New Mexico, on the other hand, Pete Domenici, with a reputation as a dominant player in all national budget negotiations, defended his vote for the same budget package as "giving us the real deficit reduction the nation desperately needs." I found both senators in total control of their explanations. Neither Senator, to my knowledge, ever had to say more. For one thing each senator's position was perfectly consistent with a well established
reputation. But more important was the absence of challenge. Pell faced a strong challenger, but one who agreed with him on the budget. Domenici faced a challenger who disagreed with him but was woefully weak. Strong, disagreeing challengers take the campaign out of the hands of the incumbent by forcing difficult explanations about governing behavior. Indeed, in a democracy that is what they are supposed to do.

That is exactly what the challenger did in 1986 to the only senator of mine who lost at the end of my six year watch—Mark Andrews, Republican of North Dakota. With the farm economy in very bad shape and getting worse, and with the 1985 farm bill as the most recent unsuccessful legislative effort to change things, challenger Kent Conrad attacked Andrews for his vote in favor of the 1985 farm bill. Everywhere we went, in that campaign, the incumbent spent most of his time explaining that vote, explaining his performance in shaping the bill and explaining the relationship of the farm bill to the farm economy. Andrews, who is himself a farmer, explained that throughout his long career—17 years in the House and six in the Senate—he had worked, above all else for the welfare of the farmer, that he understood the farmer's interests, that he was the architect of all those provisions in the 1985 bill that protected the special interests of North Dakota's farmers and that in his experienced judgment as a prominent player in all agricultural decisions, the 1985 bill was the best that could be achieved and that it was an improvement over the previous bill. To an outsider, it was an impressive explanatory performance—technically informed and politically sensitive. But it depended in the end on a plea and a defense that amounted to "you know me, trust me." His challenger, anticipating this appeal to Andrews' established reputation, was also attacking Andrews, on TV, as out of touch.
with North Dakota and suggesting that, just perhaps, he was not as trustworthy as he had once been.

Unlike the Quayle, Pell and Domenici cases, it was the challenger who controlled the campaign dialogue, keeping the incumbent on the defensive throughout and eventually defeating him—for these and other reasons—in what became the closest senate election of 1986. It is probably true that successful explanation does require a good deal of voter trust, but trust can also be eroded, during the campaign itself, if the incumbent loses control of the explanatory process.

In concept, but not in detail, that is what happened to Robert Morgan in NC in 1980. It was a campaign that mattered; and it mattered because the incumbent failed to explain his governing activity to the satisfaction of the voters. He was put on the defensive by an attack on his voting record—particularly votes to "give away" the Panama Canal Treaty, to aid "Marxist Nicaragua" and to weaken our defense by opposing the B-1 bomber. His challenger's literature featured Morgan votes that matched perfectly with those of George McGovern and Ted Kennedy and were exactly opposite to those of Jesse Helms. The idea was to paint Morgan as his challenger's literature called him, "a big-spending liberal who supports the irresponsible schemes of the big union bosses and special interest groups" or simply "Robert Morgan is the best senator New York ever had." The fury of the attack surprised Morgan; and all the time I was with him, he was scrambling to explain himself and fretting about his inability to do so.

He had produced a white paper explaining nineteen of the Senate votes his opponent had attacked. It is doubtful, however, that this 35 page document carried much weight with the voters. And he was very reluctant to do more. When I arrived one week before the election he said "You
heard me do something last night I've never done before--criticize my opponent. I've always run a positive campaign. I felt I had to do something." But what he did was both mild and limited to those within hearing range. And he held back from escalating or broadening his defense. "I'd like to come out swinging, fly around the state and let 'em have it," he said. "But I don't know that you do yourself any good."

In retrospect, 1980 was the beginning of a time of negative campaigning, and few traditional campaigners knew how to react. Morgan was campaigning on the "unity theme" of his party, travelling to traditional-style party rallies in a large group of Democratic officials headed by Governor Jim Hunt. Typically Morgan spoke near the end of the rally and in Hunt's shadow. "The Governor gave the main speech," he said, "When I got my time I always felt crowded. I never had enough time to say what I thought needed to be said...I don't think all of us needed to troop into every district rally to speak for 3 minutes each." It was altogether a self-effacing, stay with the party performance when aggressiveness and individualism was called for. In the three days I was there, he was freshly accused of voting to raise the gas tax 350%, of voting against the tobacco farmers of North Carolina, and of voting to appease the liberal establishment," and "the fanatic environmentalists." And for good measure, Republican spokesmen appeared on nightly TV saying, "we need a real Christian in the Senate." Morgan struck back in a talk to a few tobacco farmers in Greenville calling these new charges "distortions, misrepresentations, fabrications" and finally, at the peak of his outrage saying "Let me get down to the hard facts. It's an outright lie." But it was too little and too late. Symbolically, too, perhaps, his voice was nearly gone and was barely audible in a small room in the Greenville
Holiday Inn.

When the election was over, he remarked that "I never went statewide." And he said to me, "I don't know what we could have done. Maybe we could have hit back every time he lied and exposed him. Maybe we could have put on a negative statewide TV campaign attacking him in the last few days. If I had done that my friends would have said that I got right down to his level. I'm glad I didn't do that. All the newspapers agreed that this was the dirtiest, most unfair campaign in the history of the state. All of them praised my campaign. I feel good about that." He was caught, perhaps, on the cusp of change. Today, when negative campaigning is better understood, a candidate in Morgan's position would have hit back—hard and early. Maybe not. Mark Andrews did not "go negative" when he came under negative attack six years later.

From the Morgan case, it appears that an extremely negative campaign can smother an incumbent's explanatory activity thus weakening the explanatory link between governing and campaigning, depriving the voters of certain information and, of course, affecting the outcome of the election. But it must also be said that the explanatory process can also be stifled by an incumbent who distorts his or her governing record or who also launches a negative campaign. That is, the absence of dialogue can result from the choice of the incumbent as well as from the choice of the challenger.

To sum up, my subject has been the career path of United States Senators—as I have seen it from personal observation—at home in Washington, and over time. From that angle, the idea of a political career is perfectly neutral—neither a good idea nor a bad idea—but a patterned sequence of individual aspirations and activities that can be
described—some of which the individual politician controls, some of which the individual politician does not control. The desire to get reelected or the desire to help govern the country which propel politicians along this career path are also neutral—in my view—neither good nor bad but simply present in all of them. From that angle, one can describe a normal career path—which takes each politician from campaigning to interpreting the results to governing and then to explaining those governing activities while campaigning again. There is, of course, plenty of room left for making judgments about how well this all works for them and for us. My hope is that my angle and my stories may help to inform those judgments when they are made.