



SUFFOLK
UNIVERSITY

Oral History Interview of Charles Johnson (OH-033)

Moakley Archive and Institute

www.suffolk.edu/moakley

archives@suffolk.edu

Oral History Interview of Charles W. Johnson

Interview Date: September 30, 2004

Interviewed by: Joseph McEttrick, Suffolk University Law School Professor.

Citation: Johnson, Charles. Interviewed by Joseph McEttrick. John Joseph Moakley Oral History Project OH-033. 30 September 2004. Transcript and audio available. John Joseph Moakley Archive and Institute, Suffolk University, Boston, MA.

Copyright Information: Copyright ©2004, Suffolk University.

Interview Summary

Charles Johnson, who worked for the House Parliamentarian Office from 1964 through 2004, reflects on his career serving as assistant parliamentarian, deputy parliamentarian and House parliamentarian. He discusses the role of the parliamentarian office; his relationship with Congressman John Joseph Moakley; Congressman Moakley's relationships with his colleagues; the Clinton impeachment process; and how Congressman Moakley's career is a legacy of public service.

Subject Headings

Gingrich, Newt

United States. Congress. House. Committee on Rules

United States. Congress. House. Office of the Parliamentarian

Johnson, Charles W.

Moakley, John Joseph, 1927-2001

O'Neill, Tip

Table of Contents

Mr. Johnson's career background	p. 3 (00:02)
Meeting Congressman Moakley	p. 6 (08:23)
Political issues	p. 9 (14:09)
Moakley as a model public servant	p. 13 (25:07)
Clinton impeachment process	p. 14 (28:46)

Interview transcript begins on next page

This interview took place on September 30, 2004 in the United States Capitol Building,
Room HC-9, Washington, DC.

Interview Transcript

PROFESSOR JOSEPH McETTRICK: Well, I'm talking with Charles Johnson. Charles will be called Charlie, we'll say that. And Charlie you were for a number of years the House parliamentarian, and before that I guess you worked in the parliamentarian's office. If you could tell us a little bit about yourself and what you've done on Capitol Hill over the years.

CHARLES JOHNSON: Well, I retired on May 20, 2004, forty years to the day from the time I was hired on May 20, 1964, by John McCormack¹ as Speaker. I was hired as an assistant parliamentarian, and so I spent forty years in the parliamentarian's office as assistant parliamentarian and then as deputy beginning in '74 and through the middle of '94 when I was appointed by Speaker Foley,² the last Democratic Speaker, as parliamentarian when my predecessor, William Brown, retired.

So I've worked for seven Speakers, the first five of whom the first thirty years were Democratic Speakers: McCormack, Carl Albert,³ Tip O'Neill, Jim Wright,⁴ and Tom Foley. And then my services were retained having just been appointed parliamentarian by Tom Foley in September of '94, and the Republicans then surprisingly taking the majority of the House in November of '94, my services and those of my deputies were retained by Speaker Gingrich.⁵ And so I served as parliamentarian then through May of this year.

¹ John W. McCormack (1891-1990), a Democrat, represented Massachusetts' Twelfth and, after redistricting, Ninth Congressional Districts in the United States House of Representatives from 1928 to 1971. He served as Speaker of the House from 1962 to 1971.

² Thomas S. Foley (1929-), a Democrat, represented Washington State's Fifth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1969 to 1995. He served as Speaker of the House from 1989 to 1995.

³ Carl Albert (1908-2000), a Democrat, represented Oklahoma's Third Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1947 to 1977. He served as Speaker of the House from 1971 to 1977.

⁴ James Claude Wright, Jr. (1922-), a Democrat, represented Texas's Twelfth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1955 to 1989. He served as Speaker of the House from 1987 to 1989.

⁵ Newt Gingrich (1943-), a Republican, represented Georgia's Sixth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1979 to 1999. He served as Speaker of the House from 1995 to 1999.

McETTRICK: What does the parliamentarian do on a daily basis? And is there a relationship between the parliamentarian and say the chairman of the Rules Committee?⁶

JOHNSON: Very close. We, as parliamentarians, are the interpreters of the rules of the House for all the members. The law requires that the Speaker appoint a parliamentarian and his staff as attorneys—I am an attorney—on a non-partisan basis, so we have no active political affiliation. I do vote in general elections, but not in any primary elections. And I’ve never been affiliated, even before my service here, with a political party. And it’s unique in that respect among offices of the House. Our office and the legislative counsel’s office are the non-partisan shops. So we are expected not only to advise the Speaker, but all members on the rules, practices, precedence, procedures of the House.

And in that regard, we are very closely connected with the Rules Committee. As you may know, the Rules Committee uniquely among parliaments in the world has the authority under the House rules to bring to the House, on a daily basis, special orders of business which, the most important of which, govern the consideration, the procedural consideration of every major bill that comes before the House. And the Rules Committee, as you may know also, has a disproportionate number of majority members to minority members. The current ratio is nine to four. It was that when the Republicans were in the minority. Now they have the nine and the Democrats have the four.

And Joe Moakley had the unique, I suppose, distinction of having served both as chairman of the Rules Committee—having served on the Rules Committee for a number of years—I would guess he came on the Rules Committee initially in the late seventies, probably named by Tip O’Neill. Then when Claude Pepper⁷ died, my recollection is he became chairman around 1989 or so and

⁶ 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/>) Congressman Moakley was a member of the House Rules Committee from 1975 to 2001 and served as its chairman from 1989 to 1995.

⁷ 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.

served through 1994 as chairman. Then, of course, was reelected and served until he died as the ranking minority member.

I, as parliamentarian, we are the procedural advisors to the Rules Committee. We do the drafting of all the resolutions that emerge from the Rules Committee. We advise the Rules Committee on the need, if any, for waivers of points of order that govern the consideration of the underlying measure. We don't make the political decisions, or give any political advice to the Rules Committee, but we do suggest that a bill that's under consideration may need certain protections, waivers of points of order based on deficiencies in the accompanying report, based on failure to meet certain layover requirements.

We look at any and all amendments that the Rules Committee is going to consider to be made in order to give advice. Again, it's an advisory role as to whether those amendments need waivers of certain points of order, whether or not they're germane to the underlying bill, or if they have budget act or other procedural problems.

And so on a very close, intimate basis we are now connected electronically with the Rules Committee, but we are physically directly one floor below the Rules Committee, we the parliamentarian's office, which we share in the Speaker's formal office with the Speaker's legislative floor staff. So on virtually a daily basis when I was an assistant and then deputy parliamentarian, I was very intimately involved drafting rules for the Rules Committee. Of course, the Rules Committee would then have to decide how many hours of debate to make an order. Those were the political decisions, and whether or not certain amendments would be made in order.

But during those many years I knew virtually all the members of the Rules Committee. And Chairman Moakley's predecessors, as I mentioned Claude Pepper, Claude Pepper was the first politician I ever met. When I was in high school in 1955 on a trip to Washington, he was between the House—the Senate and the House. He had been a senator from Florida and later elected to the House. And he introduced himself to my high school class in a hotel here in town. And that was, as I say, in 1955.

Beginning in 1964 I was brought in right fresh out of law school, the University of Virginia Law School, and began a pretty close immediate association with the staff of the Rules Committee. The Rules Committee then was very different. It was only twelve members, eight of whom were nominally Republicans, but in fact—were Democrats [correcting himself]. But two of them were very conservative and voted very often with the four Republicans. So it was more or less a six-six spread right after President Kennedy had died, and LBJ [Lyndon Baines Johnson] was trying to get the House to consider his Great Society legislation. He needed a Rules Committee that was more politically attuned to this program.

The first year, 1964, Judge Smith⁸ from Virginia was the chairman of the Rules Committee, a very, very conservative Democrat who often tried to block administration proposals then. He was defeated in '64. Bill Colmer⁹ from Mississippi was then chairman for one Congress, equally conservative.

But gradually the Rules Committee began to moderate its democratic membership, and then was served by chairmen Ray Madden,¹⁰ Jim Delaney,¹¹ Dick Bolling,¹² and then Claude Pepper prior to Joe Moakley.

McETTRICK: When did you first meet Joe Moakley? What was your—

JOHNSON: Well, it was probably when he was a rank and file member and during the Tip O'Neill¹³ speakership. As I say, we were in the Speaker's formal office, the Speaker's rooms,

⁸ Howard W. Smith (1883-1976), a Democrat from Virginia, was chairman of the House Rules Committee from 1955 to 1967.

⁹ William M. Colmer (1890-1980), a Democrat from Mississippi, was chairman of the House Rules Committee from 1967 to 1963.

¹⁰ Ray J. Madden (1898-1987), a Democrat from Indiana, was chairman of the House Rules Committee from 1973 to 1977.

¹¹ James J. Delaney (1901-1987), a Democrat from New York, was chairman of the House Rules Committee from 1977 to 1979.

¹² 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.

¹³ 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 from 1977 to 1987.

and Mr. Moakley had befriended—or Tip O’Neill had befriended him, and they were very close personal friends right from the beginning, Moakley having been the successor of John McCormack from the same district. But, they were very, not only politically in tune, but very much the same, as I recall, personality. Great senses of humor, the Irish sense of humor. And Tip was so good to me personally. I loved Tip O’Neill. And Moakley would spend a lot of time in the office, not just as member of the Rules Committee, but just to be with Tip whenever—not only on the floor of the House, but in the Speaker’s office. So I observed more than—I wasn’t an intimate part of their friendship, but I was observing, as I had the privilege to do. That’s where I first met him.

McETTRICK: So, of course, what we’re trying to do is develop a sort of a story, a legacy of Joe Moakley. Having watched them in action, O’Neill and Moakley, were there moments or vignettes or little intervals at which things happened that have stuck in your mind as kind of an indication of what sort of the men they were?

JOHNSON: Well, with Tip O’Neill, he loved to use his friends as foils, as objects of, I won’t say derision, but object of humor and he would always there was a lot of banter between Tip and Moakley, with Moakley normally, more often than not, on the receiving end. That’s my recollection. (laughter) Just as I was as an employee on the receiving end of a lot of Tip O’Neill’s diabolical sense of humor. In the Farrell biography of Tip O’Neill¹⁴ I was given a paragraph to talk about his diabolical treatment of staff whom he liked. He’d always try to put you down in public in a funny way. And I was honored because that’s the way Tip treated me. And to a sense, he would give Moakley, and all the members who were his friends, he’d give them a hard time.

I was on Cape Cod one time; it was the day that Congress had passed the Gramm-Latta spending reduction bill and the Reagan tax reduction bill.¹⁵ And Tip, as Speaker of the House, had to sign the bill before it could be delivered to the president. And back in those days the Speaker didn’t have the ability to appoint a Speaker *pro tem* [*pro tempore*] for a signature. So we had to get—

¹⁴ *Tip O’Neill and the Democratic Century* was written by John A. Farrell and published in 2001.

¹⁵ Mr. Johnson is referring to the Gramm-Latta Omnibus Reconciliation Bill and the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981.

at the White House's request, I had to fly up to Cape Cod in an Air Force jet (laughter) and deliver it to the Eastward Ho! golf course where Tip and, as it turned out, Joe Moakley and one or two others, were playing golf.

So I was taken out in this golf cart, and they were out on the course. And I'll never forget, I saw in the distance, I saw Moakley. And there's a picture of it that's gotten into the O'Neill book. The picture with Moakley looking over Tip's shoulder, and I was holding the bill as he was signing it. A bill, which they both hated, the spending and tax reduction bill of Ronald Reagan.

But as I approached, Moakley sank I think about an eighty foot putt—unbelievable. I don't know—he had these plaid shorts on and there he was, a little trimmer in those days. And then Tip had a one foot putt and he missed it. And then we went on into the nineteenth hole and spent a few minutes before I had to go back. That was my first kind of encounter socially. I also attended the—

McETTRICK: And you were right back on the plane to D.C.? (laughs)

JOHNSON: Right back. Moakley, I think, would go out of his way to arrange to be with Tip on casual moments such as that. I couldn't prove that. Joe knew and loved Tip, but knew that it was to his political advantage, I think, to be around him and with him, as I'm sure it was.

So I would just observe the banter between members. Being the parliamentarian or an assistant, you have immediate access to members. You're sitting right next to them when the Speaker is on the rostrum and you hear the private conversations. You can't repeat them, but you hear them. And my mind kind of draws a blank. If you're looking for specific conversations that I might have overheard between the two of them from the chair,¹⁶ I don't have that direct recollection only that they were frequent, [and] they were normally humorous. But when Tip as Speaker wanted something out of Moakley, a member of the Rules Committee, he could make his point very forcefully. And Moakley would normally respond to those requests.

¹⁶ Mr. Johnson uses the term "the chair" to refer to both the actual chair where the Speaker of the House sits at the head of the House chambers and the position of chairman of a committee.

McETTRICK: I think we had been told of an incident, and I guess this would be in the public record, I guess a story about Moakley presiding in the chamber and Tip and Newt Gingrich I guess crossing swords?

JOHNSON: That was probably—I'm glad you reminded me of that—the most difficult day of the—well, I've had a few, but that would be right at the top of my list of the most difficult times procedurally. Because here you had the Speaker, O'Neill, becoming very frustrated at the use of the cameras by this conservative group lead by Gingrich, Bob Walker¹⁷ and a few others, for these after hour speeches when they were lambasting—this culminated in 1984, I believe, is when this actually happened, the occasion you're remembering, the after-hour speeches when the camera angles always just showed the member speaking. There was no crawl, as there is now, to show that the House has completed its legislative business.

And Gingrich and others had been for weeks attacking the Speaker and his leadership, Jim Wright, who was Majority Leader at the time. And also Eddie Boland, Tip's very closest friend among the members and roommate for many years, who had sponsored the Boland Amendment on the Nicaragua situation.¹⁸ And Gingrich would use this rhetorical speech making and gesturing. And he would make it appear to the average viewer that a live debate was underway, whereas in fact it was usually just two or three people in the chamber.

But the viewer would see Gingrich say, "Well, I'm willing to yield to Mr. Boland who doesn't appear to be willing to participate in this debate to defend himself." But of course Boland was five hundred miles away. But the camera only showed Gingrich the gesture, and didn't show the chamber, didn't show an empty chamber. So, Tip had seen this himself, had complained to Bob Michel,¹⁹ the Republican leader, that these rhetorical kinds of speechmaking were not appropriate for the House.

¹⁷ Robert S. Walker (1942-), a Republican, represented Pennsylvania's Sixteenth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1977 to 1997.

¹⁸ The Boland Amendment refers to three amendments that were passed between 1982 and 1984 to limit U.S. funding to the rebel Contras in Nicaragua.

¹⁹ Robert H. Michel (1923-), a Republican, represented Illinois' Eighteenth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1957 to 1995.

But then he asked me one day whether he had the authority as Speaker to order the cameras to pan the chamber. And I said, “Yes, you have that power, Mr. Speaker, but if you do it, you should at least consult. You don’t need the concurrence of the minority leader,” as I say, then Bob Michel, “but you should consult to put them on notice.”

Well, he was so perturbed at the use of this rhetorical type of speechmaking that one night during such a special order, he ordered the clerk to direct the cameras to pan the chamber to show this starkly empty chamber. And he wasn’t in the chair, it was someone else. But the Republicans were so outraged, as they had a right to be because they were not put on notice, henceforth the camera was always going to show an empty—was going to pan the chamber just during these special order speeches. Not during the normal business day, but just during these speeches.

So that led to a series of recriminations on and off the floor with Gingrich and Walker and some of the conservative members of the Republican side accusing the Speaker of heavy handedness, of virtual corruption in the running of the House. And the debate escalated to questions of privilege. Gingrich would stand up and defend the way he had been speaking as the truth. And he was calling the speakership corrupt. Yet the Speaker’s response was that it misstated the procedural situation on the floor not to show that no one was there. So he defended himself.

And this culminated on a day when the Speaker had heard enough of these charges being leveled during the debate against him. One day he was sitting in the chair here listening once again to Gingrich explaining how unfair the Speaker had been. And Joe Moakley was sitting in the first row, and I think Tip probably asked him to be there in case he needed a substitute, because he knew what he was about to say could not be said from the chair as Speaker, but rather he would need to leave the chair, assign a Democrat, a trusted Democrat, to take the chair knowing that what he was about to say was going to be very close to being out of order, if not in fact out of order.

And what he had then said, as he left the chair, went into the well of the House and gestured directly over to Gingrich who was sitting, in fact, right next to Trent Lott²⁰ who was then the whip of the House, “The reason I ordered those cameras to pan the chamber was because, in my opinion, what you and your colleagues have done, what *you*”—he pointed to Gingrich—“have done, was,” quote, “the lowest thing I have ever seen in thirty-five years of politics.” Those are his exact words: “The lowest thing I have ever seen. What you have done was the lowest thing.”

And immediately Trent Lott jumped up and asked that the Speaker’s words be ruled out of order. As a personality you can’t personally accuse other members of wrong-doing on the floor of the House, even though it may or may not be true. That kind of debate is not permitted if someone makes a point of order, which Lott did. And there was Moakley in the chair, just having been called up, only there for a minute or so.

So all the proceedings had to stop while the words were transcribed and read back. And Moakley turned to me—I was deputy at the time; my predecessor Bill Brown and I were both out there, we knew it was a very difficult moment, because at no time in history had any Speaker--himself been ruled out of order. The Speaker normally is the one who rules others out of order for improper language. And Moakley said, “I’m not going to rule him out of order because what he said was true.” And we both said to Joe Moakley, which he finally understood, I mean he understood but he didn’t want to understand, that number one, you can’t have a double standard for the Speaker. But more basically you can’t set a precedent which would allow any member of the House to jump up at any time and accuse another member of, quote, The lowest thing he’d ever seen. That we felt was a personal attack on Gingrich by the Speaker. And Moakley said, “Well, I’m not going to rule that way because what he said was true.”

And then we said, Mr. Moakley, look, if truth were a defense and the chair had to discern that, it would be a huge problem for the chair. You can’t sit in the chair and say you’re not going to rule him out of order because what he said was true. That would call into question the veracity of

²⁰ Trent Lott (1941-), a Republican, represented Mississippi’s Fifth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1973 to 1989, the represented Mississippi in the U.S. Senate from 1989 to 2007.

everything that was said, It's just the use of the words, "the lowest thing." And so he reluctantly, but clearly, ruled Tip out of order.

(pause to change tape)

JOHNSON: Then the situation was whether Tip would be allowed to proceed in order. And magnanimously Trent Lott, who had been the one to make the point of order, asked unanimous consent that he, Tip O'Neill, the Speaker, be permitted to proceed in order, which was granted. But there was a great quiet that came over the House, the first time in history a Speaker had been ruled out of order.

And the recriminations after that—that wasn't the end of it, because Tip could have said that off the floor about Gingrich; he chose to say it—he said it on and off the floor. He later said, "Well, what I really felt was a lot worse than what I said." But Tip finally and reluctantly did say publicly, and Joe Moakley also reluctantly conceded publicly, that this was an example of the chair relying upon the parliamentarian for advice, that had we given advice that you have to be more relaxed, a double standard for the Speaker, that would not have been the right precedent for debate in the House.

And, in fact, I believe to this day, Gingrich never told me this, that when he became Speaker, one of the reasons—and he was under some pressure to clean House with any and all former employees, that we would have been dismissed, but for that ruling. Not that it necessarily benefited him, but that it showed a level of fairness.

And Joe Moakley himself, to his credit, in subsequent interviews—I think he did a lengthy C-SPAN interview when he was chairman about the O'Neill speakership and about his own chairmanship—commented on that incident as an example of the chair as political as Tip might have been, and was, whoever is in the chair is fair, and relies on the advice of the parliamentarian. Probably the person who least liked the advice was Mrs. O'Neill; she wasn't too happy about it. But Moakley was wonderful in subsequent interviews over the years, not just in immediate interviews, but over the years, in defending the office of the parliamentarian and

the role of the presiding officer under those circumstances. But you can just—I hope I gave some impression of the tension that was involved at the time.

McETTRICK: I think you did. I think the anecdote really does tell us a lot. I did want to mention to you the Moakley Archives and Institute is trying to collect stories of that sort to get an impression of Joe Moakley, the man and public servant. And we are going to wrap up because we're conscious of time. But would you be able to say something about—in light of the nature of Joe Moakley's service and his impact on the legislators? And are there lessons there for people who are coming along today who are contemplating public service or Congress? You have a unique perspective on this because you've done this for a long time. What would you be telling them if you had the opportunity?

JOHNSON: I would say that especially these days where collegiality is at an all-time low in the House, where members don't get to know each other well, there's less chance of mutual respect and friendship emerging where the turnover in members is so great. But Joe Moakley was a prime example of someone who cultivated friendships across the aisle and was a very friendly person by nature. And especially his relationship with Gerry Solomon,²¹ who first was his ranking member when Joe was the chairman and then when Solomon himself became a chairman, a very different person politically, ideologically—very different, and Jerry Solomon a pretty aggressive, very aggressive, sometimes very stubborn man. And Joe would revel in little quips on the floor.

My favorite one personally, they would always divide—on a major rule they would divide the time, Solomon would call it up as chairman and he'd have a half hour, yield Moakley a half hour. And on a particularly contentious rule, they had gotten down yielding to other members and there was a very contentious debate. Got right down near the end, and Solomon had the right to close as chairman.

²¹ Gerald Brooks Hunt Solomon (1930-2001), a Republican, represented New York's Twenty-ninth, Twenty-fifth and Twenty-second Congressional Districts in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1979 to 1999. (The area he represented was redistricted twice during his tenure.) He was chairman of the Rules Committee from 1995 to 1998.

And so Moakley had one speaker, himself, to finish up, and he asked the chairman—he used to like to call him Jerry; you weren't supposed to call him that on the debates—but he said, “How many speakers do you have left?” And Solomon made a huge mistake. He said, “I have two and a half speakers left,” thinking he had two and a half minutes left. He said, “I have two and a half speakers left.” And Moakley said to him, “Oh, is that right? Who are the other two?” (laughter) It was devastating; it was devastating. But it was also—it brought the House to laughter—the House down. And Solomon was embarrassed but he saw the humor in it.

But it was that sense of humor that endeared Moakley. In his last years in the minority he had as many friends on the minority side as he had on the majority side. You don't see that anymore. But he took the time and by nature was willing to cultivate friendships, both within the Rules Committee, and on the floor of the House since he had to be on the floor of the House as the chairman and ranking member of the Rules Committee. He had a lot of time, and he took the time to develop those relationships with other members on both sides of the aisle. Sadly, you don't see much of that anymore.

McETRICK: Well, Charlie, thank you very much for sharing those anecdotes. I think that's just exactly the sort of thing that we've been looking for. So I appreciate your sharing that. Very happy to meet you, I enjoyed it.

JOHNSON: Well, the only other—if I had time I'd talk about his handling of the impeachment, when he got involved. Are we off camera now?

McETRICK: No, go ahead. Why don't you take a couple minutes?

JOHNSON: He was the proponent of the motion to censure President [William J.] Clinton just before the vote on impeachment came on December 19, 1998. And he and his staff, his beloved staff, George Crawford,²² David Pomerantz,²³ the Moakley staff to this day—and I was at

²² George Crawford was a member of Moakley's congressional committee staff from 1989 though 2001. OH-034 in the Moakley Oral History Project is an interview with Mr. Crawford.

²³ David Pomerantz was also a member of Moakley's congressional committee staff from 1989 through 2001. OH-028 in the Moakley Oral History Project is an interview with Mr. Pomerantz.

George Crawford's fiftieth birthday yesterday—is living testimony to how a member by the power of his personality and loyalty to the member, remains intact as a staff, now many of them for Nancy Pelosi²⁴ even today. It was a real testament to that, to Moakley's—the way Moakley would put his staff together. But we had worked for some months on whether the issue of censure was going to be germane to impeachment.

And Moakley developed a very compelling, but we thought not a proper argument, that you could censure the President rather than impeach him. And it was ruled non-germane by the chair, and they respected, and Moakley particularly, which is a reason why I was so fond of him while he—while we dealt—I was the advisor to the chair; he ostensibly didn't agree with the chair's ruling. But he respected the work that went into it. He had a lot of input into the ruling himself. And then when it was over there was no recrimination, there were no hard feelings. It was clearly one of the major political issues of the day, whether you could censure a President of the United States.

But just the way he handled himself there, and I'm sure the archives will document the arguments that he did make on the floor, it took about thirty, forty minutes just to handle the point of order. But he handled himself very professionally, and that should be emphasized, I would say, as you develop the archives.

McETTRICK: We'll ask somebody to pursue that. Well, thanks very much.

JOHNSON: Okay.

McETTRICK: I appreciate it.

JOHNSON: Honored to be here.

END OF INTERVIEW

²⁴ Nancy Pelosi (1940-), a Democrat, has represented California's Eighth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1987. She has been Speaker of the House since 2007.