



STATES' IMPACT ON FEDERAL EDUCATION POLICY
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

An Oral History Interview with

RICHARD RILEY



Interviewer: Anita Hecht, Life History Services

Recording Date: July 2015

Place: Greenville, SC

Interview Length: 3 hours

– Oral History Interview Transcript –

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Project Background

While U.S. education policy is widely discussed and well documented, the impact of our nation's states on that policy has received much less attention. Launched in 2003 and led by the New York State Archives, the States' Impact on Federal Education Policy Project has worked to create and foster the use of a comprehensive, accessible, nationwide historical record that documents the efforts of states to affect U.S. education policy since the mid-twentieth century.

The Project has connected leaders in state and national education with archivists to ensure the preservation of and access to the record of education policy, and supported sustainable connections between the two communities. The policymakers are themselves repositories of stories and wisdom not captured in the written record. The interviews presented here enrich the written record of education policy during this dynamic and critical period. Our narrators helped to shape the course of education policy in the United States over the past decades. We invite you to learn from their unique experiences and perspectives.

To the Reader

This printed transcript is a lightly edited record of the original oral history interview recorded in July 2015 between Richard Riley and Anita Hecht of Life History Services, LLC, on behalf of the States' Impact on Federal Education Policy Project of New York State Archives. This transcript is accompanied by a digitally audiotaped oral history interview, as well as a narrative biographical summary of the narrator, both housed at New York State Archives.

Oral history interviews contain first-person accounts of historical events, individual experiences and significant memories. In this spirit, let it be understood that these interviews do not attempt to recount "absolute truth." Instead, they intend to relate the stories that hold meaning for the particular narrator. Interviews are not always chronological or complete with regards to specific data. Accuracy is always the goal, though there may be corrections, and certainly additions, to any oral history.

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PROJECT NAME: THE STATES' IMPACT ON FEDERAL EDUCATION
POLICY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
Verbatim Interview Transcript

NARRATOR: Richard Riley

INTERVIEWER: Anita Hecht

INTERVIEW DATE: July 1, 2015

INTERVIEW LOCATION: Greenville, South Carolina

INTERVIEW LENGTH: Approximately 3 Hours

KEY:	EIA	Education Improvement Act
	SREB	Southern Regional Education Board
	SCEA	South Carolina Education Association
	NEA	National Education Association
	NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress
	CCSSO	Council of Chief State School Officers
	ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
	SCEA	South Carolina Education Association
	AFT	American Federation of Teachers
	NEA	National Education Association
	IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
	IEP	Individualized Education Program
	AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress
	DLI	Diversity Leadership Initiative
	GEAR UP	Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs

Editor's note

This document is a verbatim transcript of the oral history interview with Richard Riley conducted on behalf of the States' Impact on Federal Education Policy Oral History Project of New York State Archives. The transcript has been reviewed, edited for clarity, and in some cases, supplemented by the Narrator with additional materials or notes. Audiences listening to the recorded interviews alongside the transcripts will note slight differences between the print transcript and the recorded interview, due to this editing process. In all cases, these changes have been reviewed and approved by the Narrator.

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HOUR 1

Hour 1/00:00

Family History, Educational/Professional Background, Family Influences

The date is July 1st in the year 2015. My name is Anita Hecht, and I have the great pleasure and honor of interviewing Dick Riley on behalf of the States' Impact on Federal Education Oral History Project of New York State Archives. And we find ourselves in the law offices of Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough to conduct this interview. So thank you very much for letting me interview you today.

Well, it's my pleasure. It's good to have you in Greenville.

It's good to be here. I'd like to begin with a bit about you and your personal background and some of the influences that led you into the life that you've led. So maybe tell me when and where you were born and a bit about your family history.

Well, I was born January 2nd, 1933, in the middle of the Depression. I didn't know it at the time, but I was a Depression baby. My father was a young lawyer here in Greenville. He was with the district attorney's office a while, and he was family court judge, and then he was a lawyer. I grew up here in Greenville, South Carolina, and attended Greenville High School. I left here in the third grade and we moved to Miami. My father was an officer in the Navy, and he was a lawyer in the Navy, and he was stationed in Miami. So we lived in Miami from about the third grade to about the seventh grade. And then we came back to Greenville. He went overseas and we were here and have been here ever since. Then I finished Greenville High. I went to Furman University. During that time, I was in the Navy Reserve. I joined the Navy Reserve when I was eighteen to try to get a trip to Bermuda. There was no war going on at the time. I did get a trip,

but it was up to the New York area. And then Korea broke out. So I was really close to being called in to go to Korea. I was able to get into an Officers' Candidate Program at Furman and in the Navy Reserves. So then I went to the California coast two summers. I got a commission in the Navy as an ensign as soon as I got out of school at Furman. And then after two years in the Navy, I went to law school at the University of South Carolina. And then I was there two and a half years. Upon graduation, I went to Washington. I was married then, and I had an infant baby. I was the legal counsel for the Trading with the Enemy Act Subcommittee on the US Judiciary Committee. I actually worked under US Senator Olin Johnston, and I handled all the hearings and so forth about alien property that we took over during the war and what we were going to do with it and so forth—German property, Japanese property, and so forth. And that was an interesting year. I had a lot of opportunities to stay in Washington. I wrote some speeches for Olin Johnston and did that kind of thing. But I wanted to come home and get started. I came home and, with my father and my brother, we had a small family practice. And then I ran for the South Carolina House of Representatives. I got elected and served there for four years, all the while practicing law. Then I ran for the State Senate. We had reapportionment. I was very much involved in that issue. Then I was elected to the State Senate and served there for ten years. In the Senate and the House, I was very much into constitutional revision, and I chaired the commission on court reform, which redid our whole court system. I chaired the commission on Home Rule, which redid our whole local government constitutional laws, and so forth. And I was very much involved in education issues on the state level. I didn't run for re-election in the late '70s. I had no opposition, but I had decided I was either going all the way into government or all the way out of government and would probably run for governor. And, in 1976, I headed up Jimmy Carter's campaign in South Carolina. And he won. So then I was very much involved

with him. Then I announced for governor and ran for governor in 1978 and was elected and started serving as governor in 1979.

Before we get to the governorship, can I ask you a little bit more about your influences in terms of the values you picked up from your family regarding politics or education? Some of your beliefs, some of the ways in which you were shaped.

My father was the elected county attorney, we called it. As such, he represented the Greenville County school district, which was a large, very active school district and a rather progressive school district. So as a young lawyer, I did just about all of the groundwork for that school district, which provided a very good, basic understanding of the schools and so forth. And I had always been a big supporter of education. My wife was a teacher, and we were very supportive of the PTA [Parent Teacher Association] and very involved in the schools all the way through. And I was well known when I was in the State Senate to be a leader in the world of education. I did have that background, and my father was into politics, but he never did run much. County attorney—he never had opposition for that. He was then later a chairman of the South Carolina Democratic party, and he was also president of the state bar association. He was a very good trial lawyer. He was the state chairman of the Kennedy campaign in 1960, and that was a very close race. You're too young to remember that, but it was a close race. The word was that Kennedy was going to lose South Carolina but was going to carry Mississippi. And as the numbers came in, it turned out that he lost Mississippi. And then my father was happy to call and talk to Bobby Kennedy in Boston to tell him it looked like we were going to carry South Carolina. And we did by, I think, eleven thousand votes. It was right close. It turned out he didn't need that. He counted

another couple states, but it looked like that was going to be a very important state for him. And I always stood very well with Senator Ted Kennedy when I was the Secretary of Education because I had that family connection—that my father was a big Jack Kennedy person. And that was kind of a controversial issue back then, a largely Catholic issue and other things. So I was very close to the Kennedy family. In fact, President Bill Clinton had me represent him at Rose Kennedy's funeral. I was there with all the Kennedys. So I was very close to that whole family. So, then I was elected governor in '78 and started serving in '79 and served two four-year terms. *That's right. But during your time in state politics, that was when a lot of the Great Society programs were enacted—Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Can you share a little bit about South Carolina's experience with that? Were you involved in implementing or seeing how that went through here in the state?*

Well, I was very familiar with it and very supportive of it and have been all through the years. I think I have a clear record on that. And that wasn't all supported across the board in South Carolina. But I was very supportive of that and have always been an active, loyal Democrat—kind of a southern Democrat. And I was a veteran. I think I was the only veteran in the Clinton administration and was considered among my peers in Washington to be a conservative Democrat. I was a southern Democrat. But I was considered down here to be very progressive and somewhat liberal, especially on social issues.

Did you have any thoughts at the time about federalism and the appropriate role for states and the federal government with regards to education?

HOOR 1/10:00

State of Education in South Carolina During Governorship, Momentum Coming Into Second Term as Governor, Passage of EIA

Well, I wasn't as directly involved with those federal/state/local policy relations as I became later on, but I was very familiar with the role of the local government, the state government, and the federal government. I've always been a strong believer that our constitution and everything intends for the state to be responsible for quality public schools, and our state constitution says that also, that the state is responsible for public school education. And when I made speeches, I used to say, "It's not in the constitution, but in my mind, it means *quality* public education." I put the word quality in when it was not part of the constitution. (*laughter*) But anyhow, I always supported that and still do.

So what was the state of education in South Carolina when you took office as governor?

Well, in terms of where we were nationally, I will say we were probably pretty far down the line in terms of support, money support. We had a long way to go. That was a big issue with me, that South Carolina was not on par with most of the states at that time. Then the programs in the '60s really helped. Title I was a big help. We used it, I think, to good purpose.

And what were your goals when you started to work on education issues as governor?

Well, I was primarily—I studied a lot of the state's history and where we were. I was determined when I became governor that my focus was going to be on education and especially the

undereducated. The African-American population in our state largely had been denied education for centuries. And it was a real problem. And the further things moved along, the more of a problem it became. We had a very noticeable gap in terms of our poor, often African- American, often rural, South Carolinians, and others who were from urban areas and were getting a lot more advantage in developmental opportunities. So I was very much into that. Everybody knew that was my focus when I ran for governor. And that was certainly my chief interest. The big bill that I got passed was called the Education Improvement Act. That was really my second term. The first term I was very much into all kinds of education things but was really trying to prepare for a time when we could really do something major. I urged the people to change the constitution to permit me to run a second term. And, of course, they had to vote to do that. It was a large vote. Something like eighty percent voted for it. And then that gave me an opportunity to run again. I told people I was going to consider running if they changed the constitution. (*chuckles*) And I did, and then I got elected, a large vote, for a second term. So I had a lot of headway going in the second term, and it enabled me to really (*interruption*)—

So you had a lot of headway coming in.

Yeah. My inaugural address for my second term was an interesting thing. I decided that I would locate a baby born that morning of the speech—those are big things in the south—we had a big, inaugural thing—a thousand, fifteen hundred, two thousand people. I had a difficult time getting the right baby. I told them I didn't care if it was white or black or whatever it was. I wanted kind of an average baby. Well, the mayor of a small town in South Carolina came in with news of a baby that was born that morning. His father worked in a mill. His mother was a secretary. And

they both had had some education but not a whole lot. And this was kind of an ideal place—Cheraw—C-H-E-R-A-W— where he was born. It wasn't Greenville or Columbia. Anyhow, it seemed ideal. So it was John Christopher Hayes. And I made my whole speech about him, and him growing up in South Carolina and maybe having difficulty because of our poor comparison with other states in terms of education and health care and everything else. The speech was very well received. And that was kind of how I built the second term. I was really determined to have a major move in the second term and it was all about that. That's how I got into it, in my inaugural address. Then I really started with what ended up—we called it EIA here—the Education Improvement Act. It was really an effort that I came all out—tax increase and the whole thing. Everybody said, "You'll never get that done." We then went all over the state. We ran it like a political campaign all over the state. I made big speeches in six different areas. I was on statewide TV three or four times. We had road signs, bumper stickers, the whole deal. And it was the people's movement. We had bipartisan support—more and more Republicans being developed at that time.

At the beginning, there wasn't that kind of bipartisan support, was there? At the very beginning of—

There was some bipartisan support in the House, and that was the main thing. When I made my big speech in Charleston, we had, like, three thousand people. And we'd break out in little groups, and they would vote on what they wanted to do to improve education and how to pay for it. Then we computerized that. Computers were relatively new then. That was done all over the state. So then we'd come out the next morning and say the people in the low country met and

voted to do this, this, and this, and this is how they want to pay for it. And that's how we kind of got it going. When I did that speech in Charleston, one of the leaders in the House who was a good friend of mine, handed me an envelope. On the back of it, said he wrote, "I was impressed with your speech tonight in Charleston. Let me know how I can help." He was a big Republican leader. The Republicans were primarily against a tax increase kind of thing. But I had some real good Republican support and just about all of the Democrats. But some of the Democrats were fighting it, too. So anyhow, we debated it something like twelve weeks in the House, sometimes all weekend, sometimes all night. And then it went to the Senate. We debated it five or six weeks in the Senate. So it was a big deal. We ended up passing it almost just like we introduced it. And it was a tremendous help to education. It got everybody in the state involved in improving education, especially poor, especially African-American kids who had been left out. The whole EIA went in that direction.

Was it reflective of some kind of a sea change going on in the south in terms of education and the economy and what southern leaders were talking about?

I was one of the southern governors that was involved in reform of education early. And I was into it during my first term. But it really started picking up some interest in the second term. The EIA was in 1983, and I was re-elected in '82. Then you started having others. [Governor] Bill Winter was doing some things in Mississippi—and others. We were, I think, out front as far as a big, big, big movement. That's what I called ours—a "movement" instead of an act. And it was then beginning to take place elsewhere. Sometime after that, [NC Gov] Jim Hunt and [FL Gov]

Bob Graham and others, [VA Gov] Chuck Robb, [WV Gov] Jay Rockefeller, [TN Gov] Lamar Alexander, the Republican, he was part of it.

I'm curious about it in the context of the 1970s and all of Title I's categorical programs and then the shift to the Reagan years because you passed it after Reagan came into office. I'm just wondering if you can set the larger context. Was Title I being effective here and, if not, was that part of an impetus for the EIA? Tell me about the federal/state interaction.

Hour 1/20:30

Improving Education in Relation to Economic Development, Provisions of EIA

Well, of course I was all into what was happening in South Carolina, and that was important to me. I knew a lot about what was going on nationally. I was very involved in the Governors Association and so forth. I was probably more involved with SREB—Southern Regional Education Board—than anything else. They had the Education Commission of the States out of Denver. SREB was out of Atlanta and had a tremendous staff. I worked very closely them. Mark Musick, who became the head of SREB, really knew southern/southeastern politics more than anybody. Anyhow, I was very much involved in all of that.

I guess I'm curious about whether or not you think this activity of the southern governors, yourself especially, was a reaction to feeling like the federal government wasn't supportive

enough, or whether it was just a belief that the economy wasn't going to get better unless you had an educated population.

Well, the governors, especially the southern governors, the group that I mentioned—Lamar Alexander was in the middle of that—and Jim Hunt and I, we had a very close relationship. The south, especially in our area of the south, was very much into economic development. That was a hot thing. You know, they supported education, they supported health care, whatever, generally, but economic development was the way to get things done. And we really figured that out and realized—we did a lot of international travel to meet with industrialists in other countries. South Carolina was big into foreign investment here. And I was involved in a lot of that. That was our selling point. These people aren't coming in here unless they can see we're improving education. I understand you're trying to get to federal/state, and I'm going to get into that. But what I was convinced of, and people told me all over—a lot in Germany, Japan, wherever—we are more interested in your commitment to quality schools than we are your standing. In other words, you can talk about South Carolina's here, and another state's way above them. However, the commitment in South Carolina was bigger than any of them. And the people were behind it and so forth. Now, when you think about the federal government connection with all of that, we were very much involved with all those federal programs, but we really had to get the state to come along to kind of do our part. You know what I mean? I was always, as I said, big on state responsibility. I recognized, early on, I think that the state, then, probably affected federal policy more than federal policy affected the state because we were into state responsibility for education. Then we did a lot of work with the federal government to try to get federal programs to help our state move along the way we thought they should move along, in whatever direction,

whatever focus. The '70s was an interesting period. Of course, you had Jimmy Carter and then Reagan. All during that period, you had these categorical programs and all. But really the '60s is where the real movement was, especially for Title I kinds of things that you're focusing on. Those things were basically kept in place. You know, they weren't dismembered. But you didn't have any really new direction during the '70s, I don't think. Really, I think it came out of the southern governors group, connected to economic development, really getting people involved in it—not just the educators, not just the politicals. People saw that as a way to get a good job, as a way to get their children ahead, a way to whatever. So that took place in the early '80s, and I was very much involved in that.

And what were some of the provisions of the Education Improvement Act that were the cornerstone of how you felt that development was going to happen? What were the important pieces to that?

Well, the Education Improvement Act—I put together a statewide commission. I chaired it, and the superintendent of education co-chaired it. We had an elected superintendent. I was a very progressive guy into reform, into change, into doing things differently and better. He was not quite there, but he was a very good school person.

And who was this?

Charlie Williams. He's dead now, but he was a very good friend of mine and a good guy. We got together politically. He was very influential with the superintendents and education people. He

brought them in. So we ended up with everybody together. We wouldn't have gotten what we did without having everybody together. The committee, then, had these hearings all over the state on everything in the world, had all kind of input, all kind of openness, transparency of what we were doing. Meetings were going on all over the state all the time. It was really a movement. We came out, then, with sixty—fifty-eight, something like that—say around sixty projected programs—some of them big, some of them small, some of them connected with Title I, or whatever. But it was these very thoughtful people really looking at the history of the state—who really needed special help, what kind of help they needed, parents involved, and all that. We got the teachers together. The teachers told me one night in a big meeting how SCEA [South Carolina Education Association], the NEA [National Education Association] affiliate here, that they couldn't go along with such and such involving teachers. I told them, "That's fine. We've got a giant teachers' pay increase in there. You won't go along with that. We won't go along with that. And let me know tomorrow." And they let me know tomorrow and said they were all in.

You were a good politician.

Well, we were determined to get that done. Several times the legislature said they couldn't pass it and they were going to kill it. And I said, "Kill it, and I'll have it introduced again in the morning." You aren't going to get my . . . The political time came around after the EIA. I think everybody that supported the 'EIA Penny' tax got re-elected. It was that kind of a movement. I know you're interested in the federal connection with all that. It was definitely connected to it because it really got us into a lot of the programs that I mentioned involving early childhood help, developmental help, special help for first-year teachers, all kinds of things that were well

thought out. We weren't planning on doing all sixty of them, but these sixty were part of the program, and we ended up doing most of them. We had a citizens committee that followed it, measured it, what was happening, standards. I was always for standards so we could have a measurement. Anyhow, that was an exciting time.

In this case, it sounds like the state may really have impacted the federal programs later on as a model, because you all studied and implemented a lot of the programs that were then informing later programs.

Yeah, and that's the point that I would make. Instead of the federal impacting the states, I think the states had much more of an impact on the federal. I think that's true all across the country. Then all of a sudden, all of the governors got into this thing, and they were all connected up with economic development. Education was the subject, but economic development was a big part of the politics. And you saw that really happening, and then it showed up in Congress. You know what I mean? Because the states were pushing to do more and more and more. Education was changing.

Hour 1/30:00

Reagan's Push to Eliminate Department of Education, Positive Impact of EIA, SREB's Role in Developing Regional Goals

Tell me about, then, the impact of the Reagan years and the Nation at Risk report, because that was all happening at kind of the same time, right? Where there was a sort of a reduction of the federal role.

Yeah.

And a consolidation of the categorical programs.

Some of that was really a way to reduce the cost and not single out certain things—just lump everybody together, and then cut the whole number down, and then everybody fusses and fights over who's going to get what. A lot of that was going on during the Reagan years. [U.S. Secretary of Education] Ted Bell was a very good friend of mine. And I was really into real reform. And he appreciated it. He was an educator and the secretary of education.

In the newly formed Department of Education that came into being under Carter.

Yeah. Well, Carter started that. And then Reagan and his team wanted to do away with it. Then he put Ted Bell in there to kind of dismember it, and Ted Bell didn't do that. He was an educator, and he didn't believe in that. It's a wonder he got chosen. But he was a wonderful guy. He and I became great friends, and he promoted South Carolina all over the country as a state that was doing the most and making the progress. Our test scores were going up and so forth. When he died, by the way, his family came to me to do the eulogy at his funeral. And there were all kind of Republican secretaries [of education] out there, but I was the one that did the eulogy in Salt Lake City—he was a big Mormon. Anyhow, he was fighting to hold—he wrote a book, by the way—*The Eleventh Man* or *Thirteenth Man* or something. He talked about how his job as the secretary of education was at the tail end, and the President was really trying to do away with the

department. We had to try to keep that. And, of course, that was not easy all through those years, but it was catching on. As I say, this reform movement was moving right on while they were trying to do away with the Department of Education. And all that was a very confusing kind of time. But I think education won out in that. And, of course, when we were in the Clinton administration, the same effort was out there then with Newt Gingrich and his crowd.

How did you and others try to keep the funding up and keep the department open during those years?

Well, we were just big supporters of education, the governors were. The governors were sending the word back to Congress and to the President—we support education, and we want to get your support. I don't remember the numbers during those Reagan years in terms of Title I and things like that, but funding was maintained at a certain level. There was no big boost, I'm sure.

But here in South Carolina, the numbers were going up, test scores and all of that, because of your [EIA].

Certainly in the '80s, for five, six years, they went up, up. They really went up the year we had debate on the EIA. That's interesting. We hadn't done a thing, but everybody was talking education. I mean, as I said, it was a movement going on. So test scores came out because parents were all at these meetings, and everybody was talking about reading to children, and everything. So the year we had the EIA up, test scores went up, and they kept going up. After we got stuff passed, we were doing things. We were measuring it, and they liked that. And then

industries—the investments started pouring in here. People liked the fact that we were committed to education. Those years it's kind of hard to—of course, then Bush. I guess we'll get into the summit.

Yeah. Before we get there, can you tell me a little bit more about the history of the Southern Regional Education Board, how that came about and what [role you had].

Yeah. As I say, I was very involved in that. We had a program in the SREB called Challenge 2000 for Education. I chaired that. *(passes pamphlet to interviewer)*

This is a Goals for Education pamphlet put out by the SREB in 1981?

'87, I believe.

Okay, yeah.

Anyhow, it was before the [governors] summit. We worked diligently with SREB, and I was a leader in all that, to develop goals for the southern region, which was sixteen states—not national, but regional. So let's develop regional goals, and we can all help each other and work together, and so forth. And we got it passed, and it was very popular and very successful. That was in, like, '88. Then '89 was the summit. Anyhow, it was after that. And they picked up our goals—almost identical, most of them—for the national goals. *(chuckles)* But I make that point to say we were into that before—

This is real states' impact on national goals.

Yeah, yeah. That's exactly right.

Was there any money attached, that the governors attached to these goals? Or was this particularly a statement of aspiration? Was there a political—

It was aspiration, but you had to have—for example, if you're going to have all children ready to learn by the first grade. And we had debate after debate. You just can't possibly have all children there. Well, how is your goal going to be less than that? Who do you want not to be ready? You know, that kind of thing. So anyhow, we said, "We're going all the way with it. That's our goal." Have all children, even if they have to start at two years old, comply. And then, that became kind of the word. So whatever the cost was, it followed that. It wasn't tied to—there were estimates about costs, but whatever. All the states were a little different; some did more than others. And there were costs involved, and the federal government, of course, was a big piece of that. But still, it was a state responsibility.

Before we get into the summit and talking about that, can you tell me a little bit about any impact you felt from these education associations. How involved they were, like Gordon's (Ambach) CCSSO [Council of Chief State School Officers]. They were talking a lot about trying to get state-by-state NAEP assessments. There were other associations. Did they play a role in any of your goal setting or any of the conversation?

Well, they played a role. Of course the big thing—when we came in in '93, the Clinton administration—Bill Clinton really liked what I was doing in South Carolina, and as I say, he copied us. He didn't quite admit that, but his program in Arkansas was very similar to ours, but it involved standards. And back then, not many were really tuned in to standards, but everybody wanted measurement. But there was nothing to measure if you didn't have standards. That was a big thing when Clinton—You know, I did transition for him—personnel and all the people in it. In that process, by the way, I was able to get the top people in the country to come in my Department of Education—you know, Tom Payzant and Mike Smith—those people were just—they were top level. And they saw that the Democrats hadn't really been in office for years, other than the four years of Jimmy Carter, and he had a lot of Georgia people in that deal. (*chuckles*) But we had a very strong department put together, with very good people really thinking things out in a very big way, looking at all fifty states and poor people and sick people, and disabled people, and whatever.

But I'm talking a little bit, still, in the late '80s. Were these big education associations playing any role in the southern governors and in the goal settings that you came up with, or not yet?

Hour 1/39:50

Positive Views of NAEP, Clinton's Influence on Governors' Summit, Impact of *A Nation at Risk* at State Level

Well, they were, but I got a whole lot more into that when I got to Washington.

Okay, right. I'm just curious.

I really looked at everything through state eyes up until that point.

And so the question, I guess, that I was leading to is there was some talk about doing NAEP [National Assessment of Educational Progress] testing state by state, and I'm wondering how the governors felt about that before that happened.

I was on the NAEP board. Jimmy Carter appointed me to be on that when I went out from being governor in January of '87. And I was on that. And I was involved through NAEP with looking at all that—are we going to have local measurements or just statewide? Or what are we going to measure? What grades?—and so forth. There was a lot of controversy. Checker Finn was—you know that crowd. You had pros and cons, and the federal government's getting too much into it, or whatever. But NAEP has always been pretty well respected. And I mentioned Mark Musick, who was a real leader in SREB. He's in Atlanta now. He retired, but he's still very active. I named him the chairman of NAEP when I was secretary. He was a very effective chairman, and I had a close relationship with him and kind of kept up with what NAEP was figuring out through their testing. NAEP's always been pretty well respected. And it was respected when I was coming along. It was about the only true measurement on a national level. So it was very positive, in my view, and I really worked closely with NAEP. I was on the NAEP board for something like four years.

And the switch from regional to state-by-state testing was something that you supported?

Yeah. I supported that.

My reading was that some of the governors didn't.

Didn't. Some of them refused to go along with it. So they wouldn't measure and give them state results. Why? Because they were afraid it would make them look bad and that kind of thing. I was in favor of having more information instead of less.

During that time after the governorship and before you became secretary, what were you involved in?

Well, like I said, I was on NAEP during that period of time. I was very much supportive of Jimmy Carter during those years. He sent me, by the way, to China with Mondale, and I spent, like, two weeks in China. I represented all the governors. He had me head up a nuclear waste national commission. So I mean, I did a lot of things during the Carter years.

But between Reagan and—

(chuckles) When Reagan came in—of course, I was still a governor then. But then when Bush came in, I was practicing law with this same firm. We opened up this Greenville office. Then we got in Atlanta, then we went to Charlotte, and then Washington. So we were a growing law firm, and I was very much involved with that.

How involved were you with the summit that happened in Charlottesville? Because that was during the time when you were here and not in state or federal government.

I had just gone out [as governor], but I was very much involved with SREB and doing the same kind of thing. And I was very close to Bill Clinton. The summit—you can call it whatever you want to—it was a Bill Clinton summit. Anybody will tell you that. He knew more about it than anybody there, and he wrote, basically, the goals and everything else. I talked to him frequently.

Which were pretty much a copy of the SREB—

Well, most of them were. There were a couple things that we didn't do here or we did a couple of things—but *very* similar. But the idea of having regional goals and national goals were very similar.

And why was the Congress and state legislatures not invited? Do you have a sense about that?

Well, that was a real—I didn't like that, but I thought a lot of things were happening along then that were very partisan. That's why I was interested in if they had Bill Clinton—[SC Gov] Carroll Campbell was the co-chair. But it was a Bill Clinton thing. Everybody knew that, and he's the one that did all the talking—Bill Clinton, Governor Clinton, whatever. It had an impact, no question about that. It was the first time we were talking about national goals. So we were

very much into that. And when Bill Clinton went in [as President], he was all into that. I was, too. We were into standards, and that was our big thrust.

But at that time, under Bush I, nothing was passed, right? The America 2000 fails.

I don't think so. There was a lot of talk about education. When you think back about—let's see . . . Ted Bell went out with Reagan, I guess. And then Bush—his secretary was who? That wasn't Lamar—he was later.

Cavazos?

Yeah. One of those guys. There were two of them during that period. They were not well known, or never did get too well known, that kind of thing—but decent people.

But Bush I presented himself as an education president.

He did. He was a person who didn't upset people. He was a comfortable kind of a leader. I liked him. He was a good friend of mine. Then he kind of moved it along. He was involved in setting up the summit. In the summit—you mentioned *A Nation at Risk*. When I figured big movements, as we came along, of course the mid-'60s was big. That was LBJ [Lyndon B. Johnson] and that was all those programs in there. You mentioned Title I, and big, national support of education, generally, even though the responsibility was still state. Now, that was a big deal. Then really, *A Nation at Risk*, to me, was about the next big deal. That's right when we were getting our EIA

passed. That's when Ted Bell came in. It helped me to get the EIA passed in '83, because *The Nation at Risk* was a national thing. The EIA was not national, but having the national support helped me get it passed. So there's a definite connection between people supporting something on the state level and feeling that it's important to the country. And that's what *A Nation at Risk* kind of did. It was interesting how that happened.

It spurred an activity at the state level, too, because all of a sudden, you had these numbers that were saying—we're not doing good.

Sure, yeah. Then you have these governors jumping up. Then the southern governors—that was very clear. I mean, they were really pushing. All of us were and with each other. That was kind of—we were working with each other and, of course, felt connected with each other. Then all of a sudden, all the governors—California and Missouri and Texas and everywhere else started the same kind of reform movement.

Tell me a little bit about your thoughts on standards at the time. Were people talking a lot about research and measurement? You mentioned it a little bit earlier. Was that part of the EIA, that you were measuring?

Oh, yeah. Um-hmm, yeah. That was part of it. I have always been for standards.

As a diagnostic tool.

Yeah, absolutely. That's a very important difference.

Not necessarily as a compliance based [tool].

Punishment (*chuckles*) or whatever. But I've always—what I've said in speeches a lot is—any test given to any child must be to help that child. In other words, you shouldn't use the children to prove some political point or whatever. People do that. But as far as I'm concerned, if a child's taking a test, it ought to be, indirectly or whatever, to help that child. I think that's important.

That's diagnostic.

Opportunity to Learn standards—do you want to say anything about that? That became part of the conversation in the early '90s, too.

I'm very much into that.

Tell me what they are, for the record, how you would define Opportunity to Learn standards.

Hour 1/49:50

Support of Opportunity to Learn Standards, Benefit of Working at State Level Prior to Federal Position, Professional Camaraderie with Bill Clinton

Well, primarily Democrats—not all, but primarily Democrats—felt like having standards—having testing and standard levels, whatever—was going to be unfair to kids who had come up in a situation where they were not properly developed, they are not properly prepared, or whatever.

And it was not fair to test them, it would show they were so much below the other kids who had had all those opportunities. And that that was simply not fair, and it was going to make them look bad, and people would turn against public education and not support it. I and Bill Clinton had just the opposite view. If rural blacks in your state are not doing well, you need to know about it, and you need to do something about it. And the idea of letting that rock on and knowing about it is bad—it is bad, and it shows a bad history. But we need to correct all that. I was very much into that, and so was Bill Clinton. That was an important part of all that. Opportunity to Learn standards then became a very popular thing. And the Democrats—one of the toughest meetings I ever had when I was secretary—Bill Goodling was the chairman of the [House] education committee. He's a Republican from Pennsylvania. He's a good guy. He was a good friend of mine. I think he was a right progressive Republican. But he thought we were on the right track with standards. The Republicans basically liked standards. It's a conservative view, kind of. And Democrats didn't. So they had a Democratic caucus within the education committee. I was invited to come in. It was about as tough a meeting as I had the whole time I was in Washington, and it was all Democrats, and they were all my friends.

What were they saying?

What they were saying is—this standards movement is unfair to our people. We're trying to help the kids who are not doing well, and we're trying to give them the opportunities to do better, and then you want to come in and show that they're not doing well or whatever. And it was just unfair. And yes, we're for standards, but we want Opportunity to Learn standards.

Meaning providing the resources—

Absolutely.

So that those kids had an opportunity to reach the standards.

Yeah. And I agreed, too. But the point is, we had to have standards and then find out what we needed and so forth. It turned out they were very respectful, but mean spirited because they really were upset. They thought that was a Republican-y kind of thing, and if we were big Democrats and we were pushing for it—I'll say this: I kept plugging and plugging and plugging. Bill Clinton did, too. In the end, they were the biggest supporters we had—the Democrats. They came around. I used to say to them, "If you really want to help kids that you're concerned about, and I know you are, this is the way to do it."

By having standards.

Having standards. And then come in with the opportunities to improve their level of standards, that kind of thing. And I still think that was the right thing to do. I think that was the only thing to do, really. But the interesting thing about it is, while they felt offended by the fact that we were pushing high-level standards, they just knew a lot of those kids—in urban areas and in rural areas—were not prepared for that. And they weren't. And you could make a good argument that, when you open up the testing to them, get prepared. Well, you know, that's ten years. Anyhow, that was a very interesting but legitimate argument. And I hear it right now. It's kind

of coming back out. I've heard it recently, people talking about so-and-so's test scores here and test scores there. But what we need to be talking about is opportunity to learn and not what the test scores are. That's a legitimate point.

So the Opportunity to Learn standards didn't actually go through.

No, no. It was just a debate going on. And really with Bill Clinton, we had the standards movement moving—no question. And the governors—you mentioned the chiefs and the governors association—all them were moving forward with standards. We had the states going in that direction, the federal government—part of them—said that was too high, too quick, we needed opportunities to get ready for it. That was a very legitimate point, but it was wrong as far as us moving forward, in my judgment.

Anything else you want to talk about just in the last few minutes of this first hour about that interim period before you become secretary? Anything else you see in terms of states' impact and how—it's hard to talk about states as a monolith. It's governors, it's local school districts, it's teachers, it's parents, it's grassroots movements.

Totally. You go into other countries, and you start telling about being the secretary of education or a governor, and you start talking about federal, state, school district, school, teacher, parent, you know. And they all say, "How in the hell do you make all that work?" They can't really understand it! It is a very complex system. There are certain basics in that system that I look to. One that I've mentioned several times is that the state is responsible for *quality*—my word—

public education for all children. That means preparation for school, all of that. And it means being prepared for college and careers, which is coming out of Gates and Hewlett [foundations] now and all that. And I have a great feeling that I understand that system pretty well, having been on all levels. As I mentioned, working with my father (*chuckles*) on hardcore stuff in the schools, and then coming on up in the state system, and I was a leader on constitutional changes in the state and whatever. And then I ended up being the secretary of education under a real education-minded former governor then President, Bill Clinton. I never did bother him because we were so close. But anytime I sent a memorandum over to him, or sent word that I needed to talk to him about something, he would come back and say, "Go for it." Never did he tell me, "That's a mistake," because we came up together, we dealt with the same kind of problems, we had the same goals and aspirations for the country, and we were state people in the federal government. He always supported—we were together on everything. We kind of bonded on education. That's the reason he wanted me to be secretary of education, too.

Clearly your state experience you brought to the federal level, and you kind of knew what would fly in states and what wouldn't.

I think a lot of that was a tremendous help to me and to Bill Clinton. Bill Clinton knew education *real* well. I mean, he was into it. You could talk to him about any subject about education, and he would be very knowledgeable about it. So he and I spent a lot of time together. I traveled with him a lot. Anytime—he spoke a lot in schools. We were talking about middle America. I told Bill Clinton, I said, "You want to find middle America? Go to the community colleges. They're growing up all over America. That's middle America. They're there. And they're interested in

what's going on. And they're interested in education. Some of them move on, some of them don't." He really picked up on that. He started making a lot of his speeches in community colleges all around. It was very effective. He would talk about economic development, he would talk about jobs, he would talk about education. You know, that kind of thing. That was a grand audience for him.

Let's end this hour here and start talking a little bit more about your time as secretary.

HOOR 2

Hour 2/00:00

Building Staff as Secretary of Education, Establishment of National Goals Under Clinton, Goals 2000

The date is still July 1st, 2015. This is hour—

Still.

Number two of our interview together. Anita Hecht with Dick Riley. And you become US Secretary of Education in 1993, correct?

Um-hmm. *(affirmatively)*

Named.

I told you I was head of transition for personnel for him, for the President, when he was just elected. Then he asked me to go in the Cabinet.

And one thing I found interesting that you said, when you went into the cabinet, you brought all these people who you knew were at the top of their game with you.

Um-hmm. *(affirmatively)*

So you were already very connected in the world of education.

I was, and I knew people who were well known and had great reputations. But doing the transition for the President and personnel, I was involved in all the different departments, bringing in top people. So I really had kind of first call on that (*chuckles*)—you know what I mean? I had already dealt with who we wanted to bring into the Department of Education before I was even asked to be the secretary. I mean, we really did have top people come in. For example, Mike Smith, and I know you interviewed him. He is pretty well given credit for starting the standards process. He did a paper when he was at Harvard, I think, with somebody else, a woman [Sandra O'Day]. I was so lucky because that's the way we were going when I came to Washington, and to bring in—here's a guy that really started it. He had this wonderful reputation knowing education. He had worked there before there was a department, really, and before there was a secretary, with the commissioner.

Your first order of business when you became secretary was Goals 2000. Is that accurate?

Yeah.

After getting your staff in place.

The Goals had been adopted by the governors in, like, '89. And see, here was President Clinton, a big education guy, so that was really called for. Those were theoretically national goals established by the governors.

So he wanted and you wanted to bring them into the national—

Into the national government itself and to make them part of the federal government law, really. That was a real interesting period and doing very much what you're talking about, and that is state impact on the federal government. And of course, I was involved, as I said, from the region—SREB—and then very much in tune with what Clinton and the governors were doing in Charlottesville. And then when he got elected, and I very strongly supported him all around—headed up his South Carolina campaign—then that was one of the first orders of business.

Can you dig into the detail of it a little bit how the goals developed, because you added a few.

And what were the—

Well, we had a lot of discussion and debate on all of that. By the way, you're interested in my family. You don't need that kind of detail, but that's—

Oh here we have some family history information. That's great.

(laughter) That's something I had from my wife's estate. But those are my children and grandchildren and my wife.

Okay.

These are notes I made from a speech, I think, and I got you a copy of that. We can probably kind of go through some of that because it really goes through the history somewhat. And then about half way down, you'll see the SREB and then the summit. Then we got into Goals 2000. And I've got that we added those two things.

You added foreign language.

And arts.

And arts.

Arts and music, I think we called it.

And then the Congress added two more.

Safe and drug-free schools and parent involvement, both of which we supported. So that's where we were then. You pointed out that they were left out of the summit (*chuckles*), which was a little strange.

The Congress.

Yeah. The House and Senate—that's talking about the US House and Senate—were left out of the summit. But they were included later on the [National Education] Goals Panel. That was a

decision to include state and local and federal. So we had national goals under Goals 2000, and we had the Goals Panel that did include federal people.

And the panel was intended to do what?

They were watching standards and goals, seeing if the goals were met, which ones were met, which ones weren't.

In terms of the actual nuts and bolts of that legislation, it was a grant program, Goals 2000, to help states develop their own standards? Do I understand that correctly?

Um-hmm (*affirmatively*). Yeah. And it wasn't giant grants at that time. When we got into the standards movement, that was shortly thereafter, then that was a grants program, and they could use that money to set up their state standards because every state was different.

So the Goals 2000 was a smaller grants program, or was that just to set out what the national goals were?

It was to set out what the national goals were, but I don't know of—that book would probably tell you some right interesting stuff. You'll see here in the back, in terms of funding, we've got what the funds were in the beginning and what they were in the ending, and what they were in the middle, kind of. So you'll find those right interesting. Now I haven't checked all that out, but that's right interesting. First year—

Here are the appropriations.

And then second—that's the difference, and then this is kind of the last year. So you can really look and see—

How it increased.

Um-hmm. *(affirmatively)*

And this was under the Goals 2000. Okay.

This is everything.

Well, this book is everything. Okay. So it was state-oriented for the states to develop their own standards.

Yeah, um-hmm, um-hmm, *(affirmatively)* oh, yeah.

You mentioned it was aspirational and not a mandate.

Um-hmm. *(affirmatively)* We were big into that, by the way. Clinton and I both were governors, and that's what we thought the role should be. It should be a leadership role, and it should be incentives, you know, to focus on things, but not a mandate. And then, of course, there's all kind

of argument back and forth—well, this was more of a mandate, or was not, or whatever. But that was where we were. When you look at all of our programs, that's what it said. And if you look, then, at Bush number II, he came right in and did the very thing that conservatives were worried about us doing (*chuckles*) because they made these compliance programs really federal government driven. That was a total change from the Clinton/Riley philosophy. And now, interestingly enough, they're getting back into that. In the new ESEA [Elementary and Secondary Education Act] that the Senate will begin debating on the [July] 7th, next Tuesday, [Senators] Lamar Alexander and Patty Murray are really trying to make everything totally state, totally flexible. And I've got a call this afternoon with Senator Bennett, who's a very good education guy from Colorado, and a couple other people, trying to get them to put in there the “f” word for *flexibility*, for a state to have flexibility. But they should, under the law, be able to show *continuous improvement*—that's the term. So that is federal/state flexibility, but they've got to show in the process that they're moving forward.

That it would be less compliance oriented.

Yeah. No compliance—unless they're not making progress. And that kind of a thing. But isn't that interesting, how you look at that? I mean, here we were. We had what we called Ed Flex that was passed in our administration.

Describe that a little bit.

Hour 2/09:55

Ed Flex, Implementation of Standards in all Fifty States, Education as a State Responsibility, Setting up Standards for Business Industries

Ed Flex was—well, we had standards in place. Of course they were state standards—like Texas had low standards, South Carolina had high standards. It's hard to compare the two, but we could compare what we were doing from state to state. Ed Flex was if you have your state involvement and you are making progress, then federal regulations would be reduced or limited or eliminated, the whole deal. In other words, if you were making progress . . . Then a lot of charter schools did the same thing at the local level. If you were making progress, you kept your charter. If you didn't, you'd lose your charter. It's less interesting to look at those combinations of different groups. But Ed Flex was the federal government saying—you've got these requirements, but if you're making progress with your own innovation, with your own special deal, the way you're handling it, then you can relieve yourself of the federal regulations. During that period, the very thing you're studying is very interesting, I think, to see the state/federal–federal/state connections.

And where did that idea of Ed Flex come from? Was that from the states, or was that something you and Bill Clinton [thought of]

I would say that came from the states. We were very supportive of it, from the very word go. We might have initiated it. I don't remember. That [the book] would probably tell you. But we were very much supportive. I testified for it and so forth in the Congress. It made sense, you know, that you've got federal regulations, but the state had an option if they were doing well. A lot of

them had innovative things that are different from the federal things. But if it's working, leave it as is.

In terms of the standards that were developed after Goals 2000, were there certain states that you remember modeled best practices or paved the way? I don't know whether South Carolina was one of those. Were you aware of standards and assessments coming out of states that—

Well, when we ended up at the end of the eight years, all fifty states had state standards except one, and that was Iowa. And the reason they didn't have state standards is because their constitution disallowed it. They had standards, but they were kind of local standards. So all fifty states, really, had standards. So we were successful in that. We felt very good about that, and we talked a lot about it. As far as what states had—some states were quicker to come with standards, some were somewhat more thoughtful. But I don't remember specifically because there are fifty states and they were all moving in that direction. But they wanted the federal dollars to help them set up the standards. That was a very strong federal incentive on state action. And that's what you're dealing with.

And it was to write standards, to develop standards. Were there federal dollars also there to implement standards or to build capacity at the state? I hear that talked about.

Um-hmm. *(affirmatively)* I think so, but I don't remember the exact specifics of that. But it was all connected. It was all part of reaching your standards, the state reaching its standards. And of

course, you are well aware of Common Core now. That's another big deal. And that's to try to get everybody together. You're not going all into that, right?

No. You can comment on that at the end.

Okay. But that's the next stage—to try to get all the states to have comparable standards.

Because at this point, it's all—

Different; totally different.

And that was due to pretty much the flexibility of the program, as well, right? That you weren't mandating. You were allowing states to develop—

Well, it was our thinking that education was a state responsibility so the state would set its own standards.

But one thing that was talked about was systemic reform. I think that's what Mike Smith was talking about. Maybe they were different in each state, but each state was supposed to develop something called a systemic approach, aligning all these different—

Um-hmm. *(affirmatively)* That's so important. Yeah, you have standards, and then you have mathematics and whatever, and all the different things that make it up.

So the curriculum and the teacher training and the testing and all of that had to have something to do with each other.

That's very complicated! That was part of what we were trying to do. No question about that, yeah.

Do you remember what happened with the idea of NESIC, or the National Education Standards and Improvement Council? Because my understanding was that that was going to be a council that would compare what happened between the states and standards, that didn't go through.

Oh, it didn't go through.

Or it went through and then it got—

Killed or dismembered. Well, NESIC?

That was another one of those acronyms—the National Education Standards and Improvement Council—which was going to look at—

What year was that, did you say?

I think that was part of what was talked about under Goals 2000.

Well, Goals 2000 had a lot of discussion about what we were going to do with the goals, and that was one of them, I'm sure. But we ended up, the Goals Panel was kind of a state/federal analysis of what was happening. That was part of that. I don't exactly remember the connection, but it was part of that same thing. You had these various ideologues that get injected into education all the time. And they were very effective at killing things, not passing things (*chuckles*), but killing things. I mean, we had a real effort to set up standards for other than academic subjects, standards for, like, banking, health care, and whatever—and really strong business support. Labor liked it. I mean, everybody was—to get really—people could come in with a certificate that they had certain skills and get a job and that kind of thing. The Eagle Forum—you don't remember that, but [Phyllis] Schlafly was her name. She came out against that. I mean, we had all kinds of things going on. We had big people in the construction industry, in the banking industry. And all these different industries were developing these standards, and she got the word out that that was the federal government saying that your child had to go into banking or had to go into—a federal government takeover! And it was all part of the big octopus takeover. And, I mean, I went over there and testified, and I couldn't believe that the people were just, you know, “We can't have this!” I said, “Ma'am, the Chamber of Commerce is for it. I mean, c'mon!” And it got defeated, finally, got defeated. We had standards in several of those areas. That was later than what you're talking about, but just to show you how those things happen. It didn't take much to kill something like that, you know what I mean? Because we were contemplating federal/state connections all through there. And that's interesting, too. And the people who were really concerned about the growth of government and a federal government takeover, they were very effective at killing things. They could do it without a whole lot of people, but they would get a whole lot of noise. Yet the standards movement itself was a conservative movement.

Well, that's what's so interesting.

It's so interesting. I mean, yes, they thought that was the federal government getting involved. They weren't as big on that. Standards were not popular with everybody at all, but they really were state driven. You know what I mean? In everything we said, everything we did. Now, of course, the Common Core is different. It's states, but it's everybody having the same thing, and then the federal government is supportive. So now you've got all this enormous opposition to the Common Core standards because they say it's a federal government takeover. Again, looking at federal/state—federal/state. They say that's too much federal. And we say—well, it was created by the governors. You don't have to go into it.

It's voluntary.

Hour 2/19:55

Importance of State Government in Education, States' Reactions to Goals 2000, Support for Parochial Schools, '94 Reauthorization

Yeah, it's voluntary. Then it's the federal government's giving money incentives to get into it—that kind of thing. That's a constant debate.

It is a constant debate. But you've always felt very strongly that government has an important role.

The government has an important role. And state government has the most important role in terms of education, and that impacts the federal government's role. When you see states supporting something like that, I'm very much in favor of the federal government's support. It's a national goal. You have a state goal. You have a national goal, and that's how *A Nation at Risk* made a national thing out of state goals, which was interesting. You and I have talked about that. It took place after that.

You're talking about Goals 2000, not A Nation at Risk, or what do you mean by A Nation at Risk took state goals?

A Nation at Risk was the report, wasn't it, in '83?

Right, right.

Well, that's when we first looked at the country's education.

Okay. I misunderstood. Right.

And we were all into it down here. And what I said is that impacted us. But that was really—I saw it as one of our points where the federal government, not—*A Nation at Risk* was created by the federal government. It really wasn't a federal thing. It was looking at all the education and it was saying what bad shape we were in. And it came across. It just hit at the right moment, and all of a sudden it was a big deal. And what was the big deal? Well, the country's in trouble, you

know. We've got to do something as a country. That moved more to the federal government, kind of, more than before.

You also spoke about in one of the speeches I read about the 'baby boom echo,' that there were a lot of kids of the early baby boomers, who were entering the public schools in the mid '80s. So there was a lot of need to respond.

Oh, yeah. Things were changing a lot. The numbers were really dramatic. It increased the numbers into the elementary school years and so forth.

In terms of Goals 2000, the states' reactions were mostly positive?

Yeah, I think so. I think so. Not a hundred percent, but basically once we got over the hurdle of Opportunity to Learn standards, there was a force that said that was the right thing to do. Well, once we got them supporting Goals 2000 goals and standards, if you help us with it—I'm sure that was part of it. One interesting thing about Title I is parochial schools. In the present, I've talked a lot about that. If you had schools—Cardinal Bernardin was a great friend of mine in Chicago. He was conceived in holy Rome and was born in Columbia, South Carolina. *(laughter)* And everybody said he sitteth at the right hand of the Pope. And he was supposed to be the first American Pope. And, of course, he died early. But I used to visit him every time I went to Chicago. He was a great friend of mine and from South Carolina. We were concerned about parochial schools that were really like public schools, like in Chicago. Downtown Chicago and the west side, or whatever, south side, lots of Catholic schools—poor kids, mostly black, a lot of

Hispanic now, but back then, it was mostly black. The fact is how could we help them? Well, we were against vouchers and all that kind of thing. That's another long story I could tell you. But we have stuck by that, that vouchers for private schools and parochial schools was not the way to go. That was anti-public schools. But we wanted to find ways to support these parochial schools that were really doing a public service. We had a constitutional decision, a Supreme Court decision, that disallowed use of Title I funds, unless the school is on the outside, or whatever—so they would come in with a trailer and put it (*chuckles*) outside the school property or whatever and then have kids go over there and do a class and come back. It was totally unusable. President Clinton and I looked at Title I as how we could get more money into all poor public schools, but also into these poor parochial schools. So we brought an action to permit Title I funds to be in the school itself, if they had no religious things in the classroom—objects and so forth. And the Supreme Court passed it. That was kind of a surprise for everybody. We pushed for that and then we pushed for more money for Title I and, through that, helped these schools. I mean, it was a tremendous help. It was big bucks because there are lots of them in New York and all these big cities.

Was this part of the reauthorization in '94, or do you remember what particular time we're talking about?

It was over a period of years. We had to focus in on the problem, and then we had to get the law straightened out, and then we had to get more money. I don't remember exactly what year, but it was during our time there.

Yeah. How interesting. So that really was a big accomplishment, too.

It was a big accomplishment, and in terms of what you're interested in, it was right interesting that that's how the federal government dealt with helping the local schools that were parochial schools. And to do that, we had to change the law. We couldn't change it, obviously. We had to bring a lawsuit, and then we got that changed, and then we had to get it funded. And that was a tremendous help, I think, to the parochial schools.

Well, also interesting in terms of the impact theme here, that sometimes it's a personal relationship that has an impact. I mean, you and the Cardinal talking about it.

Um-hmm, yeah.

Sometimes that's how it happens, too.

It does. It does. And of course, I couldn't tell you or anybody else some of the things we talked about. He was very interested in all children. He was a wonderful, wonderful guy. He really was kind of a saint. But he wasn't directly involved in what I just told you. Clinton and I were very much trying to figure out how to get more federal dollars into those very poor areas. I mean, it was a real strain on the Catholic Church doing a public service.

One of the things I've also read about is you had a—is it true that there was a specific strategy to separate Goals 2000 from the next reauthorization? To have those be two separate pieces of legislation?

Well, they were. And really the reauthorization was the big one that really put standards in motion.

Let's talk about that a little bit. That was in 1994, so you had some run up time.

They were running about the same time. I know I was in Ireland with the President and we were coming back. I was with the Vice President and Senator Mitchell, who was a wonderful guy. We had long talks about he was going to try to get Goals passed, ESEA (*laughter*), and the session was ending. You know, the pressure was on us. The numbers in Congress were changing. We were worried about all that. He did a marvelous job. He got two or three of our big things passed right in the last period. And we were so proud. ESEA was what I meant. It could have been a lot more controversial than it was. Things were kind of moving at that time. And that was '94, I guess. The reauthorization—we call it something American Education Act—

Improving America's Schools Act.

Improving America's Schools Act. It had an awful lot of important aspects to it, but I guess that's when we set up the standards and provided money to bring about standards and whatever. And of

course, we had all the other normal things—Title I, Title IX, and so forth. But I guess the main thing was standards, wasn't it?

Hour 2/30:20

Equal Standards for Title I and Non-Title I Kids, Support From Teachers and Educational Associations, Introduction of Technology and Internet Into Schools

Well, one of the things that I read is that also it kept or made the standards the same for Title I and non-Title I kids.

Ahhh . . . that was a big deal. See, that's that, again, Opportunity to Learn. The Opportunity to Learn crowd said the Title I kids ought not to have those same standards. We said yes, they should. *(interruption)*

Talking about Title I and non-Title I kids.

Oh yeah, yeah. That was part of the issue when that came back up again, and we pushed to have standards be the same for everybody.

And what was the thinking behind it? You described it a little bit. You wanted all children to be held to the same standard.

That was the goal. So we're talking about goals, and we were talking about the goal was to have all kids—the way it later got it interpreted—to be ready for college and ready for careers, but to all have quality education.

Was there any states' impact on that formulation? Meaning, did that idea come from the states or more from you and Bill Clinton, who were also from states, clearly, that that idea to shift it to being—Title I funds could be sort of school wide—all kids would be held to the same standards.

Well, it really came probably from Bill Clinton and me, but we were constantly meeting, talking with governors, with chiefs, and the whole deal. I mean it was—anything we thought was as a result of what we thought was going on all over the country. We had a lot of very high-quality people that were very interested in education. I mean good people, like Mike Smith. He is a great guy. And he was a tremendous help to me. He knew the real highly-educated educators well, and he was one of them. And yet we had people on the ground floor, really, that were very much into parents and grandparents and senior citizens helping kids learn to read.

Did you have a lot of input from state education agencies, too?

Yeah, we did. And we met with all those groups, and the President or I would speak with them, with the teachers. We had very good support from teachers. People used to ask me—our teachers here, the SCEA [South Carolina Education Association], can't strike, they can't contract, or whatever. It's a 'Right to Work' state. So when I went as the Department of Education, the unions wondered where are teachers going to be with this guy coming in? The teachers were

very supportive of everything I ever did. What I used to tell people when I was campaigning is that I'm for teachers. I'm for quality teachers. It doesn't matter to me if they belong to a union, an organization, or whatever. If they're quality teachers, I'm for them. Period! *(laughter)* That was kind of a southern way of responding. Then amazingly, Al Shanker was one of the big supporters of me. When the President was deciding who to appoint to the Department of Education, a lot of people wanted to be the secretary, obviously. I didn't. I was not a candidate. But people like that, and the teachers unions, surprising as it was, were very supportive of me having that position. And all the way through, I had a wonderful relationship with the AFT [American Federation of Teachers], the NEA [National Education Association], and all of those groups and met with them frequently and involved them in all kinds of things. And they knew it, and they appreciated it, too. So we were very much into teachers—and principals. I was really involved in all those principal associations and organizations.

Well it sounds like again, with any passage of a large piece of legislation, if that's going to work, you have to have bipartisanship, you have to have a lot of buy in from many different associations and special interest groups.

Yeah.

And you coordinate a lot of different ideas and come to consensus.

It's complicated.

That's how politics works.

All those different things you mentioned take work and take effort and take understanding.

Relationship building.

And appreciation, and listening to each other. That's why I say, you go to the UK or wherever, and they have national standards. All this stuff comes right down—

From the top.

Right down from the top. And then they have all kind of ways to check schools. And they can't believe we can manage our system. It's so complex like this.

It goes back and forth. It seems like there's been these pendulum swings. And one of the things that happened was that these Opportunity to Learn standards, the availability of resources, wasn't part of the legislation.

You're talking about ESEA?

Yeah.

ESEA's largely money—what goes to what—that kind of thing. But the debate was not about— as I recall it—how you're going to pay for whatever. Then you'd have a program—say one of the goals was dealing with poor kids. So then how are you going to meet that goal? All that became part of the debate. That's what we wanted the standards out there for. Really, they didn't cause things to be required, but they caused debate to take place.

But it was primarily the responsibility of the states, then, to meet the standards.

Um-hmm. *(affirmatively)* It was absolutely the responsibility of the state. However, there was federal incentive for them to do that and do it well. Then, of course, No Child Left Behind was totally into compliance.

We'll get there. Other parts of the reauthorization? You mentioned Ed Flex. You mentioned the standards movement. Other things that you want to mention here in terms of important pieces, and whether or not there were states that modeled those pieces?

Let me talk about the E-rate for a moment because during that period of time, technology was very important. All of a sudden, we had the internet. I mean, that was big. And then how is that going to affect schools? Are we going to have one teacher in Columbia, and she'll teach everybody in the state *(chuckles)*? All the teachers were all upset. How far are we going with this technology business? It started to take shape, but it was very expensive for poor schools. Our history of having education be supported locally by local property tax—that was a mistake from the beginning. You can deal with that and have a statewide property tax rate, or something like

that. But you had terrible differences of support from wealthy areas to poor areas. And that was—you're talking about Title I or whatever—that was the big Title I schools and that kind of thing. So we wanted to try our best to figure out how we were going to get the internet into every school in South Carolina and in the country. I was secretary then. And no taxes were politically possible. The whole move in Congress was zero taxes. North—whatever his name is—(*chuckles*) had come into the Congress—everybody was signing the petition. And how were we going to get money—the states didn't have the money, the federal government didn't—to start getting technology into the schools? Because that was very important—nationally and statewide. Then we came up with the E-rate, which was a fee put on the communication system with all the different companies that were handling the communication, and under the FCC [Federal Communications Commission], had to propose it. And I testified before the FCC. Then it went to the committee in the Senate first that dealt with those issues. That was controversial—whatever. Is it a tax? No. It's a fee for whatever. You know, that kind of thing. And we got it approved, and boy was I happy with that. And then all of a sudden, we had funds. And the way we set up the E-rate, a poor school got a larger percentage of the funds than a wealthy school because they really needed it more. And that kind of thing.

Hour 2/40:40

Use of Taxes to Finance Technology in Schools, Success of Gear Up, Mott Foundation's Funding of After School Programs

And that was to bring in—

Technology.

Communication lines, hard lines.

Internet—Our goal to start with was to get every school in the country connected to the internet and every public library because a lot of people out of school are using the public library to get the technology advantages of education. So we had every public library and every school, but it was geared to the wealth of the district.

Ability to pay.

And passed, and it wasn't too many months after that that we really started seeing that happen. Then the next time we were able to say every school in America was connected to the internet. That's big. It was big to have some connected and some not, because technology was just moving. I think that's a very important thing, and it goes down to local taxes. It's what Southern Bell was collecting—not a tax, but a fee for technology, or whatever. We got through that without having the horrible tax crowd jump all over us. And I was so proud of that. Frankly, that's going on right now. Once they got the schools wired, they had funds to connect into the classrooms. That was next.

Getting the actual hardware, to computers.

Yeah. In the classrooms. You can go as far as you want to go with that. Then you have computers. The money is still going into the schools, and it's still a source of improving every

year technology in the schools, every school, especially poor schools. I was trying to think about the state/federal/local—that's really kind of an almost local tax that's put on nationally, but it's kind of a local fee, not tax, fee. And it was done because we just didn't have the option to put on any taxes. And it compensated somewhat for the fact that we had a tax system dependent on property tax, which was certainly way down in poor districts.

That still remains the elephant in the room, isn't it? That that's how the system is set up?

Yeah. It's there. We have new proposals. We had them in South Carolina. A couple of years ago, somebody put in to have some form of state property tax—a portion of the property tax was covered by the state or something.

To equalize?

Yes. Not really equal, but help with it. So that's still an issue, I think.

The other things on my list were adding a hundred thousand teachers, Pell Grants, after school programs, charter schools. Anything there that you want to talk about in the reauthorization of '94?

Well, things that have stuck—and that's important when you look at that—GEAR UP.

Tell me about that a little bit.

GEAR UP is a wonderful program. We strongly supported it. It came up as an idea, it seems like in California, and then we picked it up and really ran with it. Then we got the federal government to support it, and the federal government still supports it. What it is, is you go into an area—for example, I think one of the first areas was Berkeley. Berkeley had these very bright students there who really wanted to do something worthwhile—and you had very poor children in Oakland and other schools. The idea was to get some of these very bright college students, who had public service on their mind, to connect up with middle school children, who either were likely to drop out or going into high school lacking in reading, math, everything else—and have these bright, young people be compensated somewhat to help them through college. They come in and act as supplemental teachers with these students. And they develop relationships with them. It is a wonderful thing. They see college, and they take them to the college. Frankly, I've had more good stories about GEAR UP. It really is a good idea. Young people like it. A large percentage of these people go into teaching. They weren't planning to be teachers, but they see the connection and the impact they have with a child. Middle school is an interesting age, too. But that's GEAR UP. We think it's been very successful.

And it connects the elementary, secondary educational experience with higher education.

Absolutely. And that's very effective with these poor kids. Others are already connected, really. It's a real interesting thing in terms of where those Title I kids, those kids, go.

And that, again, sounds like it was the states' impact on the federal program in that it came out of California?

And I'm not positive about that, but I think that's probably right. It came to us from somewhere. For some reason, Berkeley hits me as one of the first ones that was successful. Then you mentioned after-school programs—The 21st Century Community Learning Centers—when we were getting computers and all into the schools, and we had people who were out of school or had dropped out of school or whatever, and had no opportunity to have experiences with computers and that kind of education—now I'm talking about two different things. This was the community technology learning centers. But the after-school program was the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, again looking heavily at poor districts, poor schools, to make those after-school programs meaningful. And we had the community technology learning centers, which were there, and all the major cities had them. The federal government funded a good part of that. It was matching funds, as I recall, a good part of that. And people coming in used computers all day long, or whatever. We were just shifting into technology worldwide, everybody. But after-school programs, we had one, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program. The Mott Foundation out of Michigan came to us. We were talking to them about getting into our after-school program. There was really a clear need, not only for education but for security—kids who didn't have any parents, you know, in the afternoon. These again, were poor kids, generally, who needed real meaningful after-school programs. I'm not talking about just sitting and watching movies or whatever but real academic enrichment programs to help them with their education. And Mott came in. Bill White, either his wife was a Mott or his family was, but he's the head guy in Flint, Michigan. And we were working with him. Terry Peterson in my office was my counselor, they called it. Every cabinet member has a counselor. He's not a lawyer. It sounds like he is. But a counselor is a generalist, a person who's involved

with everything. Terry Peterson served that role for me as governor in South Carolina and is my great friend. He then went to Washington with me, and he was my counselor in the department. He got really into after-school programs. Mott came in, then, and said they were going to make a major contribution to public education for after-school programs. We were pushing it to Congress—had started programs, the funding source, I guess, through ESEA. This is an interesting story.

Hour 2/50:20

Gingrich's Push for Elimination of Department of Education, States' Senior Partnership with Federal Government

So he said he wanted to make the announcement in the White House. How much? Well, something like forty million, or whatever. We finally got him up to fifty million, I think finally sixty million, to make a real statement. This is a private foundation going to contribute to the public schools, and the focus is going to be after-school programs, especially for poor kids. He bought into it, and they bought into it. We came in there. He wanted to have it in the White House. We said, "Okay." That was the weekend that Bill Clinton testified and got into all his problems.

Lewinsky.

Yeah. And that was a bad weekend. It was terrible. This was scheduled for Monday. I was at home, and my wife and I were having breakfast early Monday morning. The phone rang. I said, "This is probably Stephanopoulos, or one of them [White House spokespeople]" "Well, the

President's coming to your press conference this morning." I said, "Well, is he going to talk about IT?" And he said, "He's just going to make a very brief statement. Your press conference is going on just like it is. Hillary's going to be there, you're going to be, Gore's going to be there." It's a big deal. Mott was coming in with all this money. Mott—again off the record—is primarily Republican. *(chuckles)*

I'm sorry. What did you say? Off the record, he was a Republican?

Oh yeah. The family were Republican. Flint, Michigan's a Democratic area, but they were kind of Republican. And we said, "How's that going to hit him, all his analysis thrown into the Clinton deal?" So we got in there. You couldn't get a seat it was so packed. I mean, there were loads of people. And they had Bill, Hillary, me, Gore—all of us lined up. And we all spoke. Bill White was there. I had to call him up and say, "Bill, the President's coming in." "Oh! You know me. They tell me that we—our announcement would have three or four million people watch it. This one, we'll have sixty million watching it, *(laughter)* so don't knock it!" So that's what happened. We announced that morning about after-school programs. And of course, Bill—[Sam] Donaldson was the first one to charge in there, you know, "So-and-so, do you deny this?" And then Bill Clinton cut it off. We gave our program. Everybody spoke. And that was it. But they still are supporting big time after-school programs, and Terry Peterson is their main guy.

Oh really? Wow.

He works for Mott now doing those same programs. That was a real good move, and it stayed. We started it and it has stayed. GEAR UP and several others—our technology learning centers, I think—have kind of dwindled some, but the after-school program is still there.

You had to deal with, then, the Contract for America, though, after the reauthorization and Gingrich and his crew come in and start trying to dismantle everything. Is that correct?

Yeah. And really our job then was to survive. Of course, we had a lot going on. We had a lot of support. And all of a sudden, this thing was there that just took over everything. And Gingrich—the Contract for America had ten things. Number One was to eliminate the Department of Education.

Your job.

My job. That's what I used to say. They're trying to take my job! That was the big thing then—no question about that. That just kind of took over things.

Now did the states weigh in, either way?

Well, they started weighing in and, of course, then they turned it around. You know what I mean? The country turned it around after that. But it was, no question, about for a year, a couple of years, that was the movement then, what with the Contract for America and all that. Then

people started realizing—you know, the public's just not supporting all that. It was hot during that campaign.

The public did support what you were doing for education.

They supported what we were doing. And we had people in the PTAs [Parent Teacher Associations] and everywhere else saying, "Wait a minute. What are we doing?" Really, the Department of Education—I think we had made the case while we dealt an awful lot with states and federal, back and forth, local—most of the money is pass-through money. But we try to watch it, like we're talking now about continuous improvement. We want to make sure it's not thrown away or whatever. We had this relationship, and I've talked about it a lot, and you would want to record that, too, that the states had a partnership with the federal government. But the federal government was a junior partner. That says it like they did. And that's kind of my philosophy. And all the different things that you talk about, it kind of fits now. But we had a partnership. We were very friendly and wanted to help each other. But the states were the senior partner.

Meaning the feds would be a resource and a support.

Um-hmm. (*affirmatively*) However, they could develop aspirations, they could develop national goals, as they did, they could develop national focus. I mean, every time the President—a lot of his State of the State speeches were about education. He was very much into that. He was a governor talking as a President. But there was a partnership there.

Let's pause this hour.

HOUR 3

Hour 3/00:00

Effects of Standards, Attempt at Implementing National Test, Disabled Students and IEPs

This is hour number three of my interview with Secretary Riley on July 1st, 2015. So we're still in the '90s. And the 1994 reauthorization has passed. Tell me, as standards started getting developed, did you see them having an effect already early on? You mentioned when EIA passed, for example, in South Carolina, there was a surge of higher test scores. How did the standards movement take hold?

Well, it was not individually felt by people all around the country, like they were part of something that was happening. But educators, teachers, parents, were all very much tuned in to it. Policy people really were tuned in to it, and I was one of those. I mean, I was a policy person. The '94 reauthorization was big. That's when we got all of that put in place. Then, of course, right after that, when Gingrich took over in the House with the Contract for America, that, then, commanded most of the discussion or whatever, and kind of downplayed somewhat where we could have gone with the '94 reauthorization. However, things were happening. They were happening around in all the different states. There was interest everywhere. Then all of a sudden, we got into a number of other problems. I won't go into that. But things were happening around. *(chuckles)*

You're referring to the impeachment attempts.

Yeah, that and a lot of other things. One thing we tried to do that I really felt fit into the standards movement was to have some form of a national test that we could then look at how everybody was doing in the whole country, because the standards were different from state to state. I felt like we really did need something to move in the direction of having national measures. What we proposed, then—I had gotten big into reading. Reading was a real emphasis and still is the right emphasis, and this idea of being able to read independently by the end of the third grade, and then having some introduction to algebra in the sixth and seventh grade and then algebra in the seventh and eighth or whatever. What we proposed, then—Bill Clinton and I talked about it for hours—I again had a super staff and top superintendents and all that were into all this—was to have a *voluntary* national test, reading at the end of the third grade, paid for fully by the federal government—cost not one dollar to the state or the school district, purely voluntary because you couldn't require it. All those numbers, then, would be known by everybody. And then hopefully there would be a lot of preparation to make sure kids were reading well by the end of the third grade, and if they weren't, then to have something the next year, then, to follow through with that. But anyway, that was kind of the direction we went. Following that, then, was in the sixth or seventh grade, then a math test with some pre-algebra in it. Same thing—voluntary, paid for by the federal government, and then we could have a national test. So we would go then into high school knowing about reading and basic math, with some algebra. Education people thought algebra was critical. I proposed that to the President and the Cabinet. We had a lengthy discussion. A lot of controversy was going on with a lot of things. And the President looked over and said, "Go for it." So we did, and we got it introduced. We had a lot of discussions with committees and so forth. I was over there, in and out. We had discussion going all over the country. Again, this idea of the federal government taking over education was

a negative part of it. All I'd say back is, "It's voluntary. You don't have to do it." (*chuckles*) We never could get it passed. But again, we had all the Gingrich stuff and all that. It was very hard to get stuff done during that four or five years. Then things picked back up toward the end of the '90s. But that was a real move that we had—to follow through with the standards movement—that was not passed. We can't identify many things that we didn't get done that we set out to do, but that was one of them. I really wanted to see that done. It made a whole lot of sense to me. And if we would have done that, I believe that would have then moved things forward a lot on the Common Core debate and dispute. If we had these national voluntary tests, that would be a pretty good Common Core kind of thing.

It wasn't the same kind of testing as a NAEP test, for example.

Yeah.

Where you sample. This was for every student—

Um-hmm. (*affirmatively*)

At different levels in their education?

NAEP has no direct benefit to the student, but is a measure for the state and for the school district of where it stands. That was important. It gave us a good idea of what was happening in

the country, and what states were doing well, which ones weren't, that kind of thing. But it was not a help to the student and to the particular classroom.

And it wasn't used as a way to judge a school?

It was used as a way to support certain things in education, to fund certain things, or whatever. But it was not helpful to teachers in working with individual students, and that kind of thing.

Were there other things that you would have wanted to do in a reauthorization in 1999? I know a reauthorization didn't happen then, but what were you hearing from the states in terms of the standards movement or anything else, other than the voluntary national tests, that you can remember wanting to rework?

Well, we made a shot for that, and it got defeated. I don't remember specifically a whole lot of focus during that time.

Talk to me a little bit about the IDEA [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act] reauthorization. That was a few years after the '94 reauthorization, was the disability education [reauthorization].

And that was rather smooth, as I recall. We didn't have a lot of controversy on that. One thing, you know, we had the IEP [Individualized Education Program].

The individualized educational plan.

That's right. I have always favored every student having an IEP, because it works well for disabled children, obviously. And frankly it would work well for all students. I used to, in speeches, talk about how supportive I was of disability issues—or IDEA. A lot of great things were happening, and the support of that was very important because it's expensive. We had very strong Washington support—the states, local schools, pleading for support. But now, the thinkers of education today, what are they talking about? Making education more personalized. You can do so much more of that with technology than before you had technology. And so we are moving toward every student having an IEP. Anyhow, that worked well, and I had lots of visits to schools, visiting with disabled students. The question of whether they would stay in the normal classroom or go out and come back in—all those were very heavy, legitimate issues. I always favored as much as possible keeping them in the normal classroom. Usually students were supportive of disabled children. You'd see a lot of wonderful things happening that helped them as much as the disabled children. Those issues were always out there, but it was always a cost item because it was very expensive, and the federal government support of that made it possible.

Hour 3/11:00

Importance of Building Relationships at Executive Level, Standards Under Bush Administration

You also had probably a lot of parental involvement and advocacy and different groups from states lobbying. Is that correct?

Um-hmm. (*affirmatively*) It was very effective, too. Everybody listens when you have the parent of disabled children testify, like in Congress, they all tune in. You know what I mean? They're sympathetic to the problems, the special problems that those parents have. I've been very big with parents all along. You've probably seen in a couple of my speeches, I always refer to programs we have getting parents involved in different education things. I'm getting back into that right now. I co-chair NCTAF, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. The co-chair with me is Ted Sanders.

I interviewed him for this, too.

Oh, yeah?

Ted Sanders?

Yeah. You did what?

I interviewed him for this project as well.

Oh this one, uh-huh. Well he's, of course, a Republican, and I insisted of having a Republican if I agreed to chair NCTAF, and he was one that was suggested. And I really like him. He's a good guy. Now, at NCTAF, we're looking at coming out with a report next year on teaching, quality teaching, excellent teaching, how to bring it about, what we need to do to support bringing it about and that kind of thing. And I'm thinking again about personalizing education. I think that's

probably the way to go. So we'll be filing and doing that report next year, 2016. When you talk to Ted, he's a good guy.

When you think back on the years, you were secretary until the end of the Clinton administration.

Um-hmm. *(affirmatively)*

Are there any other thoughts you have on the legacy of that time? You've talked well about what still continues from those years till today. Any thoughts on what you wish you would have done differently or things that might have turned out differently if you had had your druthers?

Well, it's awful easy to talk about what we could have done, but we did a lot. I think during all the complications of any term of any President, with the country, with our national problems, with all the other economic issues floating around, I think we did probably about as much as we could have done. I will say this. It's really important for the Secretary of Education to have a good relationship with the President. That's good now. Arne Duncan has a great relationship with Barack Obama. That's good. I met with Arne for two or three hours in a hotel room in New York before he was chosen. He and I went over all the different things we had done and what we hoped they would do and whatever. I was very impressed with him and still am. I think he does a good job. But he has that close relationship with the President, as I did. As I told you earlier—

Not so much like Ted Bell and Ronald Reagan?

(laughter) Yes, very different! But that's a very big help. As well, it is a big help to health care if the health secretary—

Well, the relationship building seems to be [important].

Really important, because if the President is sitting there deciding what to do, and if there's somebody that he or she really respects, then you get into that subject matter. But education was so easy to talk to Clinton about because he knew exactly what you were talking about. He's really knowledgeable about that.

If you're thinking, sort of fast forward to today. I have a lot of questions about today that I want to ask you. But what lessons do you think states can learn, for example, on how they can best have an impact on federal policy? Is it through governors? Is it through advocacy groups? How is it that the federal government can be best influenced, since there is this funny system.

Well, I think it's really important for local members of Congress and the Senate to be advised frequently, involved in PTA meetings and discussions on the local and state level. You see a lot of that. That's good politics for them, and it's good politics for education. That happens a lot. And I'll tell you this. If you have a member of Congress go to a PTA meeting, and it's full with two hundred, three hundred people and there are people they know and respect up talking about some measure that's before Congress—that is really impressive to that congressman. And so he or she goes back to Washington and usually, then, is supportive. So I think to make that contact personally with parents and grandparents, teachers, principals, with the individual members of

Congress and the administration and the governor and the members of the state legislature or whatever, but to really involve some of the federal crowd in there when it involves an issue that they would be dealing with, that, to me, is more effective than anything else. You can have all the letters and you can have everything else. But if you have—

Face-to-face.

Face-to-face contact with them and a lot of their friends in the neighborhood, it really adds up.

Tell me about what happened with the standards movement after you left office because I'm wondering if you felt that these programs had enough time to achieve their intended outcomes, or did the whole next wave of federal legislation derail what you had in mind? Because Bush II comes in.

Bush comes in. And, of course, he had really a bipartisan effort to come in with some real compliance-driven work on the part of the federal government because the general feeling was enough wasn't happening. I think, in all fairness, that was a general feeling.

Did you have that feeling, or did you just think it takes time?

I think it takes time, but you had frustrations. No question about that. Some things were working well, some not, and whatever. This was really to take the standards movement and have real analysis of how well it was doing through testing. Then a measure that really could look at what

was working, what wasn't, and what we ought to do about it. And of course, as I say, it was bipartisan. It really came out of George Bush's White House, and they were doing a lot of bipartisan stuff and meeting with Democrats just like Republicans. I know George Miller in the House and Ted Kennedy in the Senate both impacted No Child Left Behind a lot. Of course, others did, too. But they really put in some of the tough stuff, some of the real heavy compliance stuff.

Did any of that come out of the states? Were states already doing that, or do you think that was a top-down effort?

Hour 3/20:05

Misplaced Emphasis on Testing Requirements, Current Shift to State Flexibility, Return to Private Practice, Law Firm's Representation of Poor School Districts

I think they had heard a lot from states that people were frustrated, and then it came top down. But obviously there was a reason for them to be concerned and want to do something important.

And the frustration was about what?

Frustration was to move education forward for everybody and especially poor kids. And George [Miller] was chairman of the House Education Committee, and Ted Kennedy was in the Senate. They were both into education, and they were both into poor kids, Title I, or whatever, and IDEA, and all the other education measures. So you see them really putting in place all of these requirements—measuring, and then if you didn't comply properly, then punished.

Sanctions.

Sanctions, whatever. You know, that was not a dumb thing. I felt like there was not enough flexibility in the state, that there was just too much top down. However, I supported it, along with most everybody else supporting education. But I raised that question time and time again. Then the issue of—it became such a big thing, that the test, test, test, test controlled the system. Well, that's kind of how they had it set up. You know, there's all these testing requirements for AYP [adequate yearly progress] or whatever. Then if you made it, you got all kind of benefits. If you didn't, then you got punished, kind of. That kind of thing—typical way the federal government solves problems. The one thing that it did, is it got everybody involved in thinking about education. The standards movement was big, but to other people, little people, it was a policy thing. This was your child. You know what I mean?

And your school.

And that was a good thing that happened on it. To do that, then, you ended up causing a lot of problems—teachers teaching to the test. It wasn't a question of teaching kids to learn and to study and to think and problem solve. It was how to do well on these tests. One right after the other, right after the other. And parents—frustrated children got where they hated to go to school. You know, it really has turned out that that's not the way to end up with tremendous improvement in education. So it's going to be significantly changed now, but now—

Well, it hasn't been changed in fourteen years, so what do you think is going to happen now, or should happen now?

What's happening in the Senate, is Patty Murray and Lamar Alexander are really recommending total flexibility—move it back down to the states, and the states put in the innovation, put in the improvements, or whatever. Not told what to do, basically. Some of that's in place.

Do you think that's the right direction to go?

I think it's the right direction to go, as the federal government is a junior partner. It's the right direction to go if you have some requirement for 'continuous improvement.'

Your term.

Yeah. Well, that's not just mine. That's discussed in Washington.

What does continuous improvement mean, or how do you measure that?

All that's saying is that the federal government's going to let you do your thing. You can have innovation. You can have all kinds of things. But your system has to be doing better. How do you measure that? Well, NAEP. You know, there are a lot of ways to measure what's going on. If basically things are improving, you might be doing—you know, Vermont's probably doing something totally different from South Carolina, you know, or New York City, or wherever.

However, they put in all their urban whatever—Vermont, mountain whatever—and if they're making progress, they do their own thing. Just like Ed Flex. That's what it is. Like Ed Flex, except the flexibility is there. For Ed Flex you had to prove flexibility— I mean, prove you were doing better before you got the flexibility. This gives you flexibility. Now, if you put continuous improvement language in there, then you do have to show some improvements being made. And I think that's absolutely important. That's what I'm going to be talking to these senators about this afternoon.

After you came out of the federal government, what was next for you? You went back into private practice?

Yeah. I came back with Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough. I have an arrangement with them that they pay me probably on a basis of, like, thirty percent of my time, and I have the freedom to do whatever I want to do all the time. It's a very good arrangement, and they're very good to me. And I appreciate that. This thing like I mentioned in the poor schools down in the 'Corridor of Shame.'

You didn't tell me on tape, so tell me again.

I didn't?

Not on tape.

Well, my law firm really likes the fact that I'm very much into education. They completely support all of my work in education. So the poor school districts of the state—the poorest, all rural, mostly black—came to our law firm to ask for representation against the state—because the state's constitution says the state is to provide public education for all children. Again, I put the word 'quality' in there, but it's not in the constitution, but it should be. Then that was a big decision. They had no money. The law firm was a growing law firm. We took the case, and we've represented them for more than twenty years, *pro bono*, and gone to the Supreme Court two or three different times, gotten into several big cases, and we finally had, a couple of years ago, an enormous trial. It went on for, like, three weeks. We represented all of that. We brought all the computers and moved into the little town of Manning, and had three or four lawyers working on it for several months. Steve Morrison was our lead lawyer. He was probably the best lawyer in our firm and he died here a year or so ago and it broke my heart. What a wonderful guy. We were all involved. Law firm-wise, we probably have spent eight or nine million dollars, and that comes right out of the pockets of the partners. And not one person has ever complained about that. So that's probably the biggest *pro bono* case I know in South Carolina—maybe in America. I mean, it's big.

It's huge.

We used to be a little small firm, a growing firm. You know, we could afford it. They couldn't. So we represented something like thirty-four school districts. It's called the *Abbeville* case—*Abbeville vs. South Carolina*. And it went up to the Supreme Court. The judge ruled, after all the hearings, that the state was not doing what it should be doing up through the third grade. But

from the third grade on, it was. Kind of split the baby. That's kind of the way he resolved it. But he was a thoughtful guy, and he really was trying to do whatever. He was making the point that kids came into school behind and stayed behind. And the state was really doing all they could do from the third grade on. So we appealed that. They appealed it. Both sides appealed. And the [State] Supreme Court then, last year, ruled with us—five to four—and said that the state was not doing what it should do from early childhood all the way through and called on the state to improve this, improve that, improve the other—especially for poor kids or whatever. So we won the case and got a wonderful verdict from the Chief Justice who wrote the verdict—Jean Toal, who's a very good friend of mine, who was a big supporter of the EIA, that kind of thing.

Hour 3/30:00

Keynote Speaker to House on Supreme Court Decision, Parent Involvement in Early Childhood Development, Successes of Title I

Since then, the Speaker of the House, who's a big Republican—they're all Republicans in charge of the House and Senate—called for a large, important commission to study what the Supreme Court said and to come back and make a recommendation to the House as to what they ought to do about it. I was called to be the first witness, and they asked me to really lay out what I thought they ought to do. And I did. And I thought about it a lot and made a very comprehensive proposal. I mean, I touched about everything that I thought should be done, and that was very well received. The commission had, like, fifteen, sixteen people on it. Terry Peterson is on it. You know he worked for me. And a Republican, a member of the House—is chairman of the committee, chairs it.

So it's a school improvement—not act, but policy paper?

Well, it's really a study right now. They're studying—

But all of your points that you suggested?

Oh, what I did? Yeah, they're very similar. That's right. That's a good point. It really gave me a chance to But I was honored that the Republican House and Senate asked me to be the lead keynote presenter. It was a big deal, and the press covered it big, and whatever. And a lot of people said I came out with too much. You know, it's hard—and I said, "Well, other people can come in with other stuff. They want me to give the whole deal," so that's what I did.

I don't know if you can summarize the whole thing, but if you're talking to the future or the current parties who are interested in this archive, what do you think the future direction should be by the states, in terms of improving education? It's probably a lot of the things you've already talked about: teacher preparation—

The whole deal, the whole deal. I emphasized several things. One was early childhood. That's very clear to me that we've got to do a lot more with real poor families, and it's very difficult, because it crosses over into the parent's responsibility and people, especially in the south, the conservatives, don't want the state telling the parent what to do. But, you know, you have to do something. And I'm looking at that with NCTAF. We're looking at what to come back with next year. But I do think we need to do something different with parents. I don't know exactly what it

is. Somehow to get these parents—when you have no father, the mother's working part-time, you know, going from day to day, barely. And then they have two children, you know, under four. And it's a real, real problem. But how do you do that? Well, obviously to get that parent knowledgeable about what she should do, usually it's a woman only in a real poor family. And then how do you get them mature enough to do that? You know, they might be fourteen to fifteen years old, that kind of thing. So anyhow, that's one big thing that I talked to them about, that we all need to be spending some time thinking about how to get these children ready for school, and then make sure they have quality schooling all the way through. That's dealing with how to attract the right people into teaching and principals and leadership and the communities and parents that we mentioned. But I talked about the whole thing, and I got into everything that we've mentioned. I've talked a little bit about everything—reading, math, whatever. And the funding, local funding—we need to end up figuring that out, how to make it more fair. But you can't continue to go just purely by property value, that kind of thing.

And I suppose you can't also just mandate that the state provide something if it's unfunded. I mean, they have to come up with the money somewhere.

Yeah. The budget is where those things are answered. If it's not in the budget, (*chuckles*) you can have all the mandates you want to, but it doesn't happen. The state, I think, is interested. I was very pleased. I spoke for an hour, and I was very pleased with the warmth of the response and the press and editorials and all.

Well, and I think from the 1984 EIA, you showed that with a one penny increase, you can do a lot. So where there's a will, there's a way.

That's right. No question about that. I didn't go into specifics about how to get the funding changed, but I think I did mention the statewide property tax, that if we had, instead of the local property tax, a statewide property tax, and it all went out to people equally, people would benefit more. And, you know, we have a lot of good programs, like Title I, and the state does some things that are good, but not near enough.

So these programs, Title I and a lot of the federal programs, they've had some effect, but not enough.

Oh yeah, oh yeah! Imagine where we would have been if we didn't have Title I. We got really interested in Title I when I was there in Washington. The Department's Title I office always held an annual conference of Title I people all over the country. It was kind of a wasted time. People would come there and have a big party and whatever, and everybody, "Yeah, yeah," about how well they were doing—nothing substantive, no real analysis of poor kids, and that kind of thing. We changed all that around. Everybody in Title I who were thinking about things came to us and said, "Listen. We go to these conferences now, and it might be three or four days, and I learn so much in there that I go back and take it back to my school and all the teachers." And the Title I people all of a sudden raised the respect for them, and they were bringing back all kinds of interesting ideas. I was real proud of what we did with Title I. That was really good. My elementary and secondary people—Tom Payzant was my original guy. Then Gerry Tirozzi, who

had been a chief in Connecticut, came with me. He's retired now. And I had Ramon Cortines, a Hispanic guy who's head of LA Unified now—he was with us. Anyhow, we had these top people that helped us. They all said, "You know, the answer to so many of these problems is right there in Title I. That's already there. It was passed in '65. What we need to do is make it meaningful. Work it and work it and work it." They spent a lot of time, a lot of thought. And I am very proud of all that. That was policy on the top level. But boy, it came on down, and those Title I people, workers who administered those programs, they were very much involved in advising our people what to do and vice versa. They worked closely together to make Title I work better. The same way with IDEA. Same way with Title IX, whatever. We had very good up-and-down relationships. Partnership is my favorite word.

It sounds like the appropriate role in your mind for the federal government is to create opportunities for people to collaborate with each other, to fund research, and to partner.

Listen to each other.

But not so much around compliance and sanctioning.

Yeah. But interested in innovation, doing things differently. I always favored taking a look at some different view. Are you—well, I don't want to get into that, on religion in the schools. I mean, you don't want to get into that.

No, but I am curious about is there anything you think we can learn from other countries in the systems that you've seen, having traveled around the world?

Hour 3/39:45

Diversity Leadership Initiatives, Common Core Support, Arguments Against Voucher Program, Support for Public Schools

Oh yeah. I went to a lot of the other so-called great school places.

Denmark.

I've been to all—I went to Singapore. Of course, in Shanghai, in China, [they] have good schools. The things we would bring out of there, a lot of them were things that you could do there, but you couldn't do in the south side of Chicago. You know what I mean? It's different. America is so different. It's so diverse. And that's my big word—diversity. If I've contributed anything to the state in the future, it is to make diversity work well. All the laws are there, but it's not working well. We're really—I've told you—the Riley Institute at Furman, we've got fifteen hundred people, all of whom have leadership capacity. The CEOs of the major companies here, Michelin, all the major companies' CEOs, all their top people, all the non-profits—you get a lot of African Americans, a lot of Hispanic people—leaders, all of them involved in this DLI—Diversity Leadership Initiative. It is wonderful. This guy, Juan Johnson, heads it up. He was with Coca Cola Company in Atlanta. They started these diversity programs and have a dozen or so all across the country. Furman, at the Riley Institute, was the best one that really caught on. They had two in Atlanta. They were good programs, but we really got after it. And one reason was

because I wanted to direct the Riley Institute into learning—for people to learn to live together and to listen to each other and work together. Juan Johnson was so fascinated by it. He's left Coca Cola Company, where he was a vice-president. He now leads the Riley Institute DLI programs. We now have him on the Furman board, by the way. And he's an African-American guy on the Furman board—we have three or four. But we now have these DLI programs. They last, like, four months. They go for a full day once a month for, like, three months. And then they fold up into groups of five or six, and they develop and implement special capstone projects dealing with diversity in their community. And you aren't aware of what all is happening all over the state. But you get fifteen hundred, all these leadership people, all of them have had this training. I've sat in on a number of those trainings. When Juan gets up to lecture, he puts people not in political parties, but you might be a giraffe. I might be a kangaroo. You see what I mean? And then we work out things together. But anyhow, people come out of there—everybody that has ever done that training says it's changed their life. And South Carolina needs that. I mean, that's the thing—we need to prevent like what happened in Charleston. That DLI is going on now, and I'm very proud of that. I'm probably more into that than anything else. But that, to me, is part of how I operate. I think you described it well. You get people working together and try to provide some leadership, but let them be the ones to kind of move it. That's the way we did the EIA, and that's the way Clinton and I did all of our stuff, and that's fun.

Do you have any closing thoughts on the state of education today, either in terms of what you see happening with the Common Core movement or with the voucher movement? Those are two very different things.

Well, there seems to be a lot of interest in early childhood. And I'm pleased with that. But again, you have to be real careful. I think that's really a parents' issue more than anything else. And I'm pondering about how to deal with that. The Common Core—of course, they've given it a bad name, a lot of these ideologues. And now, legitimate thinkers think there's something wrong with it. I mean, you start asking them what's wrong with it. (*laughter*). They say, "Well, the federal government's taking over my child's brain." I say, "C'mon." Anyhow, comparable standards—you don't have to call it Common Core, but similar.

Across states.

Yeah. That are comparable.

Good idea.

You know what I mean? Like, in South Carolina now, we adopted the Common Core, and I was all for it. I'm still involved in education and have stayed all the way. So then this other crowd comes in, and they killed it, you know. We're out of that. So they're out of the Common Core. We don't have a state test. You know the state's going to do it—reading and math, whatever. So now the state has passed a state test. We've got a Republican just elected to the superintendent of education and a very good friend of mine and a good person, and she's going to be fine. The one before that was a disaster for public education. He was a former general or something in the Army, who seemed to hate the public schools. I mean, weird! It's like people voting against their best interests. All these people totally dependent on public schools vote for this guy—and he was

against them! Anyhow, we've got a good person now. She's a Republican. She really acts like a Democrat, but she calls herself a Republican. So that's going to work well, I think, in the future. But the idea that standards are out there. We have new standards and Molly, the superintendent, she said, "They're so similar to the Common Core, it'd take a genius to figure the difference." *(laughter)* I said, "You know, a standard's a standard." You know, it's not like some crazy deal going on. These standards—Common Core—are higher standards and a lot more into teaching kids how to think and how to solve problems than the old standards. And that's good. I'm for that. That's hard. It's hard for teachers to teach, you know what I mean? Teachers have to teach—

You've got to teach the teachers, too. Train the teachers.

Teachers are a very important part. Of course, we're dealing with that with NCTAF. Teachers have to be prepared to teach kids to think, that kind of thing. And that's frustrating, because it's not giving a test and grading the papers and moving on, you know, that kind of thing. But anyhow, she said it is not the Common Core. Now we're happily free from all of that. *(laughter)* It's almost identical, and I love that.

What do you say to people who want to privatize education? This whole voucher movement has gained some momentum. That's also a states' impact.

Well, they think that's what vouchers are all about. I'm dead against it, and everybody knows it. I speak against it just about every time I make a speech because I think we ought to really be out there on that, because I really think that's the turning deal. If you start voucherizing the system,

then you end up with nothing but the very poorest of the poor in public schools. That's what they think is a good thing. It is not a good thing. It is totally against democracy, and it's against the whole idea of a public school. I think we ought to have brilliant kids in public school. We ought to have a great mixture of kids. And it's fine with me to have black kids or whatever in private schools. I don't oppose private schools. I support quality private schools that are open to different kinds of people. But this idea of having vouchers for people that don't then go to public schools—they go to private schools paid for by the government—it's just a dead-end street. You're left with nothing but the dregs there and it just goes down, down, down. Anyhow, I'm dead against that, and I hope that doesn't come about. But there's a lot of movement out there now. I think your [Wisconsin's] governor's kind of moving in that direction, isn't he?

Scott Walker? Yep.

Yeah. And people think that. They say, "The private school over here, all white, all suburban people, upper income, is working well. Why don't we do that for all the children?" That's a simplistic look at what's out there. That's not there. Anyhow, I'm strong for public education.

Thank you, sir—

All of my children were in public school. And I mean we had a lot of pressure on us. We had all the integration stuff. My son was in the sixth grade when we totally integrated schools here. I was on a local integration committee chaired by my friend, Max Heller. My son was in the sixth grade at one of the finest public elementary schools in the country, right in our neighborhood. He

was taken out of there and put in an all-black school because they put the sixth grades of everything in this school. And so he'd have to walk all through the black neighborhood to get to school in the sixth grade. But I was committed to the integration. And now it's working wonderfully well. [*narrator insert*: They made a video about our Greenville Schools integration committee. It was entitled "Integration with Grace and Style" and was shown all over the country.] But a lot of good stuff happens and a lot of not so good.

Right. And when you're in politics, you have to somehow deal with both.

Well, politics is part of it, but belief in public schools is the main part. And my father believed in them, as did my mother. You know what I mean? We were public school people.

Thank you. Is there anything I haven't asked you about states' impact?

I think you've asked me about everything I know! I don't know another thing.

Thank you, sir, for letting me interview you. It's been a great pleasure.

Well, it's been great, and I have enjoyed chatting with you, and I'm glad that we have bonded.

But if you need one of these [pamphlets].

I'm going to close the recording right here. Just let me turn it off.