

Patrick J. Doyle Oral History Interview – 3/4/1968
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Biographical Note

Doyle, a pediatrician and Deputy Special Assistant to the President for Mental Retardation during 1963, discusses mental retardation policy during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, and inter-agency collaboration and conflict, among other issues.

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Patrick J. Doyle

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Oral History Interview

with

Patrick J. Doyle

Washington, D.C.

March 4, 1968

By John Stewart

For the John F. Kennedy Library

STEWART: Why don't we begin by my asking you what you were doing at the start of the Kennedy Administration and how you got involved in the mental retardation activities of the Kennedy Administration?

DOYLE: Yes. Fine. I was in private practice in California in pediatrics and pediatric neurology. And I came to Washington – let's see, it's 1968 now – I came to Washington in 1962. I was asked to come in to set up a neurological program with the Public Health Service. And, at that time, right at that time, which was roughly the summer of 1962, there was just developing within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare a Coordinating Committee on Mental Retardation, which was appointed by the then Secretary who, I believe, was Mr. Ribicoff [Abraham Alexander Ribicoff]. I was then placed as a representative from the Public Health Service on the Secretary's Committee for Mental Retardation.

[-1-]

We were just starting, and our task was to, obviously, to.... The appointment of the committee was a reaction to the knowledge that the President, President Kennedy [John F. Kennedy], had a very strong interest in the whole field of mental retardation. It was also a

reaction to the President's Panel on Mental Retardation, which had been appointed right about that time. I'm not quite sure of the chronology, but it was about that time. This was headed up, as you know, by Leonard Mayo [Leonard W. Mayo]. So the Secretary of HEW knew there would be these forces coming to bear on HEW so now they were trying to get staffed up to prepare for it.

About this time, or I guess the fall of 1962, or maybe late summer, Dr. Stafford Warren [Stafford L. Warren] was appointed President Kennedy's special assistant.

STEWART: It was December of 1962.

DOYLE: Was that when it was?

STEWART: Yes.

DOYLE: Yes, all right. December of 1962, Dr. Warren was appointed as a special assistant to President Kennedy. Dr. Warren, as you know, was a former chancellor of UCLA [University of California at Los Angeles]. He was more of an administrator-dean type.

I was then working in a neurological program and also, at that time, had a clinical appointment in pediatrics at Georgetown here working in mental retardation. So Mr. and Mrs. Shriver [Robert Sargent Shriver, Jr. and Eunice Kennedy Shriver] got to know me through various contacts. Then I was asked if I would mind coming up to work with Dr. Warren since, not being a pediatrician, he didn't know too much about the field, and his main concern was in bigger policy aspects, and so forth. So I got permission from the Surgeon General, who at that time was Dr. Luther Terry [Luther L. Terry], to be reassigned from Public Health Service – I was not a commissioned Corps officer; I was Civil Service – to be reassigned full time to the White House office, which was in the Executive Office Building.

[-2-]

So my title was Deputy Special Assistant to the President for Mental Retardation. I started off part-time. That was the early part of '63. Then I came on full-time. Now, at that moment, at the White House, one of our major tasks was to prepare for the legislation that we knew the President was interested in. A second task was to take the major recommendations of the President's Panel and see how they could be implemented. Among some of the recommendations were that we look into not only the HEW activities but also that we look into all the other federal activities. So one of the very first tasks that we had was to make contact with all of the federal agencies outside of HEW. We had good contact with HEW because the chairman of the Secretary's Committee was a friend of mine. So we had good contact.

Now we held a series of meetings with representatives from the Department of Defense. You might ask, "Well, what could they contribute to mental retardation?" Well, first of all, we were concerned with what was going on in military hospitals around the world in terms of early diagnosis and training of residents and interns who were going through military residency programs. We were interested in how the military screened for PKU

[phenylketonuria]. So we held a series of meetings with high-level people in the Department of Defense. I can't remember their names. The name Fisk [Shirley C. Fisk] rings a bell, but.... I can't remember their names. We had a series of meetings with them.

Then we identified that even, for example, the Department of Interior might have an interest. And indeed they had, with their land-grant college business and with their recreation in parks. We tried to work out some programs with them on recreation for the retarded. We had many meetings. And incidentally, with the Department of Defense we also had a lot of discussions concerning Defense contracts for workshops for the retarded. This was quite, quite good.

[-3-]

One of our biggest yields was the Department of Labor where we worked with – Pat Moynihan [Daniel Patrick Moynihan] in those days was the Assistant Secretary [for Policy Planning and Research], and Pat and I worked out a lot in different meetings together in terms of the Manpower Development and Training Act, training the retarded, the adult retarded, for meaningful jobs and so forth. And then Mr. Wirtz [William Willard Wirtz], after Mr. Goldberg [Arthur J. Goldberg] left, Mr. Wirtz was very, very interested in all of this activity, very sympathetic to the whole business. We then had contacts with some of the other departments – the Department of State.

One of the very positive things that we were able to do prior to the assassination was work out a major grant that the National Institute of Mental Health gave to the George Washington Research Law Center for studying codification of the laws for the retarded under Dr. Richard Allen. And that project is now finished but has been a very successful project. And the White House office, actually, we were the ones that did this.

Those were some of the federal agencies. I've only mentioned a few of them. Obviously, we were meeting almost daily with agencies within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare – the Children's Bureau, the [Office of] Vocational Rehabilitation, the Public Health Service, the Office of Education – almost daily meetings with them.

Dr. Warren had appointed a high-level advisory group to his office, and my task was to keep working with them and so forth. We then began to build up our staff. We brought on a public relations director; we brought on several secretaries. We did a lot of borrowing of people from other agencies – it didn't cost us much – because we had a low operating budget which, I think, came out of the President's emergency fund in those days. My salary was paid for by the Public Health Service. But Dr. Warren's salary, his secretary's salary, and so forth, was out of the emergency fund, and this was very inadequate.

[-4-]

We had great difficulties in scrounging for space because, in spite of the fact that President Kennedy, you know, had this interest, he was so busy that really the big thrust came from Mrs. Shriver and Mr. Shriver. We had no contact, practically no contact, with President Kennedy. We had contact with his top aides, Mr. O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell], who didn't help us in the least....

STEWART: Didn't help you in the least?

DOYLE: Didn't help us in the least. As a matter of fact, I recall an incident which was quite interesting to me. Dr. Warren was a real scholar and a true gentleman, a very gentle person. And we invited Catherine May [Catherine Dean May], Congressman May – she was a Republican from Oregon or Washington; I forget which state – who had done great work for the retarded because she either owned or managed a television station. And we were quite impressed by the work that she had done for the retarded. Dr. Warren invited her to the White House dining room for lunch one day. I was with him and Mrs. May and a few other people. And Ken O'Donnell was sitting at the next table with some other people.

The very next morning Dr. Warren got a very curt telephone call from O'Donnell. He said didn't Dr. Warren realize that Catherine May had voted against a lot of Kennedy Administration things? And Dr. Warren said, "Well, I didn't know that, but she's done a lot for mental retardation. We think she can do more, and so we invited her to lunch." And Mr. O'Donnell – very, very nasty.

I had to compose the memo back to him. I wrote a lot of the memos, and I did a lot of the speechmaking for Kennedy. Anything that he was going to insert on mental retardation, I usually had the responsibility of writing it. But I thought this was pretty.... It didn't look good. Of course, Dr. Warren had come from an academic community; he wasn't used to this.

[-5 -]

We had very little help actually from the people there. Now if it hadn't been for Mrs. Shriver – she would go to the President to present, intercede, and so forth. She was very helpful. She just couldn't have done more for us.

STEWART: Had you been associated at all with the President's Panel?

DOYLE: No, I had no association with the Panel.

STEWART: You said you were involved in mental retardation....

DOYLE: In California, I was involved to a degree. I was an associate clinical professor at USC [University of Southern California] and Children's Hospital in Los Angeles and in private practice. I was on many boards of directors of mental retardation institutes. And I did a lot of private practice in mental retardation. You see, because I did what, in those days we called neuropsychiatry, I dealt a lot with the children with cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and all those others.

STEWART: Were there any – I assume you followed the work of the President's Panel rather closely.

DOYLE: Do you mean before I came to Washington?

STEWART: Yes.

DOYLE: Oh, yes.

STEWART: Are there any criticisms that you would want to make as far as the operations or basic approach of the President's Panel?

[-6-]

DOYLE: That's a good question. I'm not sure I could be in a position to criticize it constructively. I got an awful lot out of their task force reports, even the unpublished ones. For example, they sent a number of task force people to the Scandinavian countries, and to Russia, the United Kingdom. And some of this was published, but I dug into the raw data and came up with an awful lot of material. As you recall, they had assigned a number of task forces, and they had very competent people.

I think, probably, their difficulty again was that they probably had a relatively low budget and, as all of these commissions that are this way – you know, I'm on President Johnson's [Lyndon Baines Johnson] Committee now, too – the people are scattered all over the country. What happens is that the staff winds up doing a lot of the work and making decisions. So that, if there were any criticism – this is a general criticism I've had even of the President's present committee, that the staff winds up doing most of the work and that you spend an awful lot of time dragging these people in from different parts of the country and the yield you get out of it is relatively low.

Now I think that the technique that the President's Panel used in going out and making field trips like to the University of Washington and places like that, that was very helpful. As a matter of fact, they brought back some interesting materials from there.

All in all, I would say that the President's Committee Report on Mental Retardation was very well developed. Now I'm contrasting it with, for example, the White House Conference on Health Proceedings that just came out – I attended that; I was invited to that – a couple of years ago. And the proceedings that have come out of that are worthless. There's no index; there's no recommendations that are spelled out. It's a completely amorphous kind of a text. It's dull. Of course, it was only a one- or a two-day meeting, a two-day meeting. All the other reports, the Heart Disease, Cancer and Strokes Report that I had a little bit to do with, I don't think was nearly as good as the President's Panel on Mental Retardation. So I may be

[-7-]

prejudiced, but comparing the different reports – Smoking and Health – I'd say it's a good report. I don't know what the total cost of the President's Panel was or, you know, whether it was worth what you got out of it or not.

STEWART: Did you ever feel that there was a danger that too much would be expected of such a major undertaking as the President's Panel; that is, that it would build

up too much of a head of steam and it would create impressions that could never be fulfilled, or couldn't be fulfilled immediately?

DOYLE: Of course, that's always a good question, isn't it? This latest commission on riots in the city has come out with a fair number of rather grandiose kinds of objectives which, from a practical standpoint, probably won't be able to be financed. I would say the answer is probably yes. For example, one of the major recommendations of the original President's Panel on Mental Retardation was that an Institute of Learning be developed. Nothing has ever come out of that. I've tried to revive it a couple of times, and nothing's ever come out. And yet, that could have been, really, one of the most far-reaching things – it cut across all of human learning, not just mental retardation. Secondly, we were supposed to have set up a lifetime surveillance system of the retarded. Nothing's been done about that. They were supposed to set up regional genetic counseling laboratories and services. Nothing has been done about that. So the main impact of the Panel was to get moving on the construction moneys in the planning, the state planning. So from that standpoint, it did get the legislation moving.

[-8-]

I would like to say that, during all this time, one of the people who I found the most, one of the most helpful in government from a pragmatic standpoint was Wilbur Cohen [Wilbur Joseph Cohen]. Now Wilbur in those days was Assistant Secretary for Legislation. He had the main task of mental retardation, not only from the legislative standpoint. Anything that had to be done in mental retardation went to him; it didn't go to the Secretary. Through his efforts – tremendous efforts, and I don't think the man got enough credit, he didn't get enough credit. A prophet is never appreciated in his own country. Wilbur probably had been too long a public servant. I worked with this man week after week, and he took a lot of beating on this and did a tremendous job.

Of course, we have other people that should be mentioned for the record – John Fogarty [John Edward Fogarty]. John was a great help in the field of mental retardation. Years before the Panel was set up, he was very much concerned with it in his own state of Rhode Island. He was a great strength during all of this period, and everyone turned to him.

STEWART: Let me ask you. As far as he was concerned, is there anyone who worked with him on his staff whom we might talk to?

DOYLE: Sure, Grace Beirne. I helped to get her a job. She's working with the American Association of Medical College in Washington. We can give you her telephone number.

STEWART: Okay.

DOYLE: Grace would be able to fill you in on some of this material. I helped him quite a bit in a lot of activities. I was a personal friend; he used to call on me for a

lot of things. I was very fond of him. His closest friend was Arthur Trudeau, who died a little bit before John died. Arthur had a retarded child of his own, and he was the one, I suppose, mainly instrumental in getting Mr. Fogarty interested in this field. So he was a great strength.

[-9-]

Another organization that deserves a lot of credit during these White House days would be the National Association for Retarded Children. They put people on loan to us for many, many tasks. If we hadn't had them, we would have had to go asking for supplementary budgets.

It was interesting, the Shivers and Dr. Warren were interested in getting clergy of all faiths more concerned with pastoral counseling on mental retardation, mental illness. Again, one of the things that we did get out of the White House office was get money for the Academy of Religion and Mental Health to hold series of meetings across the country on pastoral counseling on mental retardation.

So these were some of the things that we were able to do. Now the big thing, of course, was the legislation. And those of us who worked at the White House office spent a lot of time just on legislation.

STEWART: Before we get into that, you mentioned three, at least three, of the recommendations of the Panel that were not adopted and which I assume ran into quite a bit of opposition, the first being the Institute of Learning. Specifically, where did the opposition to this come from, and was it immediate, and was it so strong that no real effort was made during the Kennedy years to put this across?

DOYLE: I don't think it was opposition as much as it was apathy. We held a series of about three meetings with Dr. Aldrich [Robert A. Aldrich], who was then the Director of National Institute of Child Health [and Human Development] – he's now the vice chairman of President Johnson's Committee – and with Frank Keppel [Francis Keppel], who was Commissioner of Education. We had several meetings where we tried to figure out a mechanism where we could think about an Institute of Learning. But, if you recall, in those days the Office of Education was having a lot of difficulty; Keppel was struggling. He kind of lost interest. Then the President's Panel was disbanded. So we didn't... I must admit that part of the apathy was mine, probably, because I was the one that was supposed to keep moving the

[-10-]

recommendations, and I just probably got a little discouraged. Oh, another thing that had happened was Dr. Aldrich left, you see. So that left quite a void. But these aren't excuses, because we really should have pushed on that.

You know, one of the criticisms that we had to face up to all the time was that you'd travel across the country, and a lot of deans of medical schools, presidents of universities would say, "Okay, we'll play the game with you, but we don't think that mental retardation's

that important. We know it has political significance at the moment, just as polio had under Franklin [Franklin Delano Roosevelt]. We don't think it's quite this important, but we'll play the game." But we, later on, were able to show some of the spin-off. The spin-off was in the broad area of neurological research. The spin-off could have been in an Institute of Learning which cuts across all areas, you know. Another spin-off was the fact that whatever you do to prevent mental retardation prenatally, you're also, at least theoretically, helping to cut down cerebral palsy, congenital anomalies, epilepsy, the whole bit. So it isn't just that narrow, but people can't, you know.... Training, it opened up a lot of new ideas in medical school training which, even though it went in under the category of mental retardation, it covered a greater span than this. But if we could have had the....

So getting back to the original question, I don't think it was opposition; I think it was pure apathy, and so many, so many things – then, of course, November 22.

STEWART: Let's see, what were the others? There were two others.

[-11-]

DOYLE: Well, the regional genetic laboratories. The difficulty with the regional genetic laboratories, as I see it, was that until the Commission Report on Heart Disease, Cancer, and Strokes came into Washington, that no one ever thought regionally. You know, we have the HEW nine regions, which is strictly administrative; it's not a professional regionalization. Until Heart Disease, Cancer, and Strokes, we never thought about regions, so you would have a lab here or a lab here and so forth. I think that was part of the difficulty, that no one thought regionally. Every state had its own program, and they couldn't care less about the next state. Now Heart Disease, Cancer, and Strokes has come along and said, "Look, you've got to get tri-states, four states, and all the counties, like in greater Washington." That's probably part of the reason that we didn't get that. But you must remember that during that period, when Dr. Warren came in until the assassination, it's only a year's time. And there was a hell of a lot going on during those periods.

Another area that I had particular interest in – ironically, we had our first meeting on international activities in mental retardation on the morning of the assassination. I took off for Florida and learned of the President's assassination when I hit the airport in Miami. We did form a subcommittee on international activities, and from that came out the first intra-American conference that I chaired in Puerto Rico, San Juan, in which we got money from different agencies within HEW. We brought approximately forty to fifty delegates from Latin American countries in this field, all professionals. This has had a great impact on Latin America. There's been two follow-up meetings to that that they themselves have run. It's set up. I consider this one of the major things that we accomplished in the White House.

And you also know that, while I was there, we had the White House Conference on Mental Retardation.

[-12-]

STEWART: I was going to ask you about that.

DOYLE: Yes, that was a very formidable kind of thing. We had between four and five hundred delegates from all over the country that were designated by the governor of each state. The President himself could not attend it, but we had a taped message from him. Of course, the Shrivvers were there. And this was the big, big.... It was more of a public relations, professional awareness kind of thing. The report itself, I don't think, was that great, but it did bring people together under the White House aegis. There was a White House reception following this.

But, if I may be frank about all this, I can compare, you know, the interest of President Kennedy with the interest of President Johnson; President Johnson shows more interest directly, whereas President Kennedy, it was all done through Mrs. Shriver.

STEWART: Did you at any point have any.... Well, let me ask you basically: did you meet President Kennedy at any time during...

DOYLE: I met him just a couple of times very casually, not to speak about mental retardation as such. I was on the speaker's platform with him at a couple of occasions and saw him once in the White House very briefly. Most of my contacts were with other members of the Kennedy family. Dr. Warren saw him only, I think, twice. So he didn't have....

[-13-]

In contrast, President Johnson had had us up in his place three times already in a year and a half. The last meeting with President Johnson at the White House, he spoke to us in the rose garden, took each of us into his office individually, and got a picture taken with him, which you see over there, and then put us into the boardroom or council room, and kept his National Security Council waiting twenty minutes, and then brought them all in to meet us.

STEWART: You're talking now about the President's...

DOYLE: President Johnson's present Committee on Mental Retardation. I'm trying to make a valid comparison between the interests. And, you know, it's difficult. President Johnson's interested probably because there are some key committee members, like Mrs. Arthur Krim [Mathilde Krim], Mrs. Humphrey [Muriel Fay Buck Humphrey], that he has a personal interest, attachment to, and they tell him quite a bit. I don't feel that, again, the people closest to President Kennedy or the people closest to President Johnson, I don't think, really care about mental retardation, basically. Why should they? You know, they have other problems; it's a pretty specialized kind of an interest.

STEWART: You mentioned three aspects, three recommendations of the President's Panel. I believe the third one was something about this life consultation service. Was that it?

[-14-]

DOYLE: Yes. One of the recommendations made was that retarded should have, there should be a system of lifetime surveillance. The families of retarded children, they're nomadic. They're nomadic because they search out communities that have better services than the other community. They tend to be quite nomadic and you lose track of these children, so that the lifetime follow-up is very hard. Of course, this is true not only of mental retardation – it's probably true of many fields of medicine – but it's of particular urgency in mental retardation because of the very complex needs that these children have and their families. So if they go from state to state or county to county, they have to start all over again. And they're lost, so you really can't evaluate. This is why our statistics are so bad; it's part of the difficulty.

If I may change the subject, another very interesting aspect of that year at the White House was the fact that we did get a lot of international visitors who came in through there, who were attracted by the Kennedy name, and so forth, the Joseph Kennedy Foundation. After I left the White House, I worked one day a week at the Kennedy Foundation. I still do a little bit of work for them. But it was a great attraction for people from all over the world when they came to Washington to recognize that the President would have thought so much of this condition to set up, for the first time in history I guess, a health-related assistanceship, you know, a special assistant. I don't think this has ever been done historically, that I know of. So this interested an awful lot of people. While I was there, I made several trips to Europe and one to South America, and people just couldn't believe this. The closest analogy to it probably would be – there was one of the Danish high officials' wives who was quite interested because of personal reasons, and the then President of Mexico's wife was very concerned and interested, but no other countries had this high level, and they would say, "You know, this is great. What a tremendous advantage you have. Here we are struggling, and you have such visibility."

[-15-]

STEWART: I assume now you joined Dr. Warren right at the start or soon after he came.

DOYLE: No. He had another fellow for a brief time, Bertram Brown [Bertram S. Brown], who is now the deputy at the National Institute of Mental Health. He was there for a while. Now I'm not sure whether... I think that Dr. Brown came over from the Panel.

STEWART: Right. He had been on the staff.

DOYLE: He had been on the Panel, right, right.

STEWART: Well, when did you...

DOYLE: I think I joined them – I'm trying to think now. You say Dr. Warren came in when?

STEWART: In December of 1962.

DOYLE: December of '62, yes. I came in part-time shortly thereafter, shortly thereafter. I'm kind of hazy because I was kind of shifting half time back and forth.

STEWART: All right. Let me ask you: were you involved in going over the Panel's recommendations to see exactly how they could be implemented, whether they could be done by...

[-16-]

DOYLE: Dr. Brown had started some of that. I continued and expanded on what he had started. Of course, one of the recommendations was to do an assessment of the present federal agencies to see what they are doing. This took up a great deal of time because, in some instances, Dr. Brown had not made any contacts with any of them so I had to start off all the contacts. This was quite a task. It's hard to believe, but you had to do this weeks ahead of time and line them up. And then we brought in... Dr. Warren had this advisory group in which some members had been on the President's Panel – Dr. Cooke [Robert E. Cooke], Dr. Mayo – and he did take up the recommendations to find out which should be implemented, went over them one by one. But the biggest responsibility they had was preparing for the legislation; that took up an awful lot of time.

STEWART: Do you remember which of the Panel's recommendations you would consider controversial either within the government or within the professional field?

DOYLE: Well, if you'd give me a...

STEWART: I have a list.

DOYLE: May I see them? I was going to get the book out.

[Interruption]

I can think of one area that we had a lot of difficulty with. The Panel endorsed and assigned the highest priority to assist in the construction of academic facilities for higher education and to provide scholarships to students. I remember having several meetings about this. This was pretty much glossed over; we didn't get a chance to follow through on this at all.

STEWART: Why?

[-17-]

DOYLE: I'm not quite sure now. I think it, again, it was apathy and other priorities that we had assigned. Another one, of course, which we thought was a little bit too

ethereal – this business about increasing the capacity of medical schools and to enable capable students to study medicine, you know, I think most of us thought that that was asking too much to get involved in such a Gestalt kind of thing.

One other area that we looked into that we had difficulty with – this took an awful lot of time. We met with the chief officers of a lot of the professional societies in this country – the American Bar Association, the American Psychiatric [Association], the AMA [American Medical Association], and so forth. We found a great lethargy among most of them. You know, they really didn't pay much attention to this. And so this was rather hit-and-miss. If I recall, we only had one or two meetings with the American College of Physicians in trying to get them concerned with training of interns and so forth. American Psychiatric was a little bit more receptive. But I'd like to get into the difficulties we had with the National Institute of Mental Health. Does this help answer your question? I'd be glad to...

STEWART: Unless there's anything that really stands out in your mind as far as a controversial recommendation that the Panel did make – I didn't expect you to go through all of them in detail, but, certainly, if anything stood out in your mind, I'd want you to mention...

DOYLE: I would say, in general, during that year that we were able to take some action on maybe two thirds of the recommendations, at least start out, that kind of thing. Now one area that I think should be recorded, because I think it's important, is the problems that we had with the National Institute of Mental Health.

[-18-]

STEWART: I was going to ask you about this. There was a good deal of confusion and possibly conflict.

DOYLE: Yes, and I was caught right in the middle of this, and I think I could document how some of this happened. There was an element within the National Association for Retarded Children that was – I don't want to mention names but.... Since these organizations are basically...

[Interruption]

Well, I don't want to mention names, but there was a segment of the National Association for Retarded Children who had a very proprietary interest in the retarded, naturally, because they had to raise funds. And, I suppose rightfully, they felt that for so many years the mental health people in the states were able to get good funding, good legislation and so forth, and that they now felt that there might be some overlapping and that mental health might try to get on this rather glamorous bandwagon that was developing in Washington. So there was quite an antipathy at the central level of the National Association for Retarded Children.

We sensed this, of course, and Dr. Brown, who then left the White House office to go to the National Institute of Mental Health – he and I had very good relationships. We tried to get Robert Felix [Robert H. Felix], who was the director in those days. Dr. Warren and I had

a series of meetings with Dr. Felix, Dr. Brown, and Dr. Yolles [Stanley F. Yolles], who is now the director but who was deputy in those days. The National Institute of Mental Health was very upset with our office because they felt that we were working hand in glove with the National Association for Retarded Children, which we weren't really.

[-19-]

In addition to this, Mrs. Shriver had a very strong feeling about the role of the state mental health agencies, mental hygiene agencies. She felt that they had too long suppressed the retarded programs, and so she herself was quite opposed to the mental health people. So, I think those two forces – Mrs. Shriver versus the NARC – there began an estrangement between our office and the National Institute of Mental Health.

Now this is carried over until today, so much so that the National Institute of Mental Health, the President's Committee is asking for a special investigation to find out why they're not doing more in mental retardation. Now, I must say that it's not all their fault, that they had a lot of programs taken away from them. The HIP, the Hospital Improvement Program, was taken away; the National Clearinghouse for Mental Retardation was taken away from them.

And yet, to me – and we talk about this in a lot of our meetings now – to me the National Institute of Mental Health and Psychiatry has a great deal to offer in the field of mental retardation because, you know, that iceberg phenomenon – the peak out of the water – here of the so-called medically retarded, the stigmatized physically, but below the surface, you have all these milder retarded that, if they walked into this room you wouldn't know they were retarded – cultural deprivation, emotional problems. I think the National Institute of Mental Health has a great role to play, but somewhere along the line there, we've lost them.

STEWART: You mentioned the National Association for Retarded Children. The other major organization in the field, I believe, is the...

DOYLE: AAMD.

[-20-]

STEWART: American Association on Mental Deficiency, could you comment on what their role was in this whole...

DOYLE: They played hardly any role at all. There was a Dr. Nisonger who came in and helped a few times, but, in general, they were a relatively new group, a professional group. They weren't interested in fund raising. They were going through a process of reorganizations themselves. They had done some pretty good work on classification, as you know, of mental retardation. But in terms of their involvement with our office or with the national program, it was of a very low order of magnitude compared with the National Association for Retarded Children, who were much more interested in the political aspects, with their own fund raising, legislation, and so forth. The National

Association for Retarded Children were very helpful. Of course, it was a symbiotic relationship: we got a lot out of it; they got a lot out of it.

STEWART: Was there any attempt by your office, or anyone else concerned with the problem, to bolster the status of the American Association?

DOYLE: Well, not really. I don't recall – not having a chance to look the notes over, I don't recall anything that we did, really. We may have helped them get some help from NIH on some of the classification work they were doing. But outside of that, I don't think... For example, we did try to intervene to get a grant to the AAMD to help them work out some help for the International Congress in Copenhagen, and we couldn't do it, we weren't able to do it. Of course, you must realize that after the assassination that the federal agencies no longer felt that they had to pay too much attention to us. There was quite, you know, quite a difference before and after.

STEWART: Really?

[-21-]

DOYLE: Oh, yes. Because, obviously, the federal agencies, prior to November 22, anytime they got a call on mental retardation, they would move because they knew it had the White House behind it. But after November 22, of course, even though Dr. Warren's office continued open, it was feckless.

STEWART: Could one conclude...

DOYLE: I left a month after the assassination because I saw the handwriting on the wall, that we were just a holding action and that the office could be disbanded at any moment. It's to Mr. Johnson's credit that he kept it going as long as he did.

STEWART: Could one conclude from this that, in many aspects of this whole problem, these agencies were being pushed much, much faster than they really wanted to go?

DOYLE: Oh, yes. I'd say this is very true. I suppose using the word "catalyst" is a euphemism. We certainly were catalyzing, but we were, at times I would think that we were plenty rough, too, because there was a great impatience, especially on the part of the Shrivvers. They were quite impatient with the slow pace, and they were both impatient with the bureaucracy as they understood it. Coming from families whose whole motif was to get things done quickly, they tried to do this. Now this led to difficulties at times. Wilbur Cohn would arch his back from time to time, but he knew he had to do it. I'm sure that we offended more people than we should have. But on the other hand, the people that would criticize that statement would say, "Well, look, if we hadn't done this, we wouldn't have gotten the retarded anything. They've been in dungeons too long." They could

justify their impatience. Very often I had to play the role of a pacifier. Sometimes it was like pacification teams going out. We would spend time out...

[-22-]

I must say that Dr. Warren was a delightful person to work with. He was very understanding and had a broad vision of medical education. He came under some criticism because of that fact that the Shrivvers were quite critical of him from time to time. But the thing, I think, that Dr. Warren did was the fact that he called the attention to this problem on the part of medical educators, because the medical educators themselves gave this a low priority. When they saw a man of his stature in this, I think they paid more attention. So, even though he himself may not have been a great leader in the field, I think this was a very important item, and I think he handled himself with great dignity.

STEWART: When you speak of the slowness and the inaction, could you give some examples? Are you thinking, are you referring to the making of grants, or the establishment of something new, or just what types of things are you referring to?

DOYLE: Well, one of the areas that we had great difficulty with, and it still hasn't been worked out, was with the Department of Defense. You see, the workshops for the retarded are all over the country. And there was a fellow on the original Panel, who's now on Johnson's Committee, by the name of Henry Viscardi, Jr. Henry's a very interesting fellow. He was born without legs; he wears artificial legs. He's the president of Abilities Incorporated in New York, and he's written all kinds of books and so forth. Henry had tried in vain over a period of years to get the Department of Defense to give contracts to the retarded in workshops. And Hank was running some very good workshops himself. But we were completely frustrated in our meetings with the Department of Defense. If it hadn't been for the fact that there was a White House office, they would have almost insulted us. We never got anywhere with them. That's what I mean about you had to prod.

[-23-]

On the other hand, most of the HEW agencies were very cooperative. Vocational Rehabilitation Administration was very, very cooperative. Children's Bureau already had been doing a lot of work. Public Health Service, I had a great difficulty with the so-called downtown Public Health Service. There was great apathy. The National Institutes of Health were fine, but the downtown Public Health, we had great difficulty getting them to take responsibility. And it took on various forms – disregarding letters, meeting with you and coming up with all kinds of negatives, very unenthusiastic, you know. Kind of a negativistic approach, no question about it. I found the Children's Bureau, in general, very cooperative. The Office of Education was again going through their own reorganization throes, and they weren't too helpful, but they were trying.

STEWART: In putting together the legislative proposals for 1963, in general, first of all, let

me ask: were you involved in setting the levels, the recommended levels, of various programs, and if so, can you recall any major problems in determining how much should be included?

DOYLE: Are you talking about guidelines for agencies, or are you talking about the legislation?

STEWART: I'm talking about the...

[-24-]

DOYLE: The legislation too, as you know, several major forms. One was the construction legislation, which was for research centers and for university-affiliated training centers. Another part of the legislation had to do with the state setting up comprehensive plans for mental retardation. Now the legislative language was written in such a way that practically all of this was the responsibility of HEW. We didn't tell HEW how to set up their guidelines. We met with them when they were setting them up, and, you know, we consulted back and forth, but we didn't dictate guidelines.

STEWART: Well, as far as the levels of spending in a number of the areas – let me change this first.

[TAPE I, SIDE II]

STEWART: In those parts of the legislation that concerned increases in the money authorizations, can you recall any problems in determining what amounts you would ask for or what amounts the Administration would ask for?

DOYLE: Oh yes. We had lots of discussions about what were realistic figures to go on. Now, you might ask, well, how did we arrive at these figures? Well, I'm not quite sure how we arrived at it, except that the National Association for Retarded Children gave us great help in arriving at these projections. And then in turn, of course, we worked very closely with Wilbur Cohen in terms of the realistic part of this. We also worked very closely with Children's Bureau because they were going to have the brunt of this, you see, in terms of staffing. We worked with the construction people, with the Hill-Burton people to find out how much it would cost to put up a research center. And we worked with architects, and we worked with the Federal Hospital Planning Council. And the figures kept changing; most of the time they were escalated. And so by consensus we arrived at these figures.

[-25-]

Now, in retrospect – I think this should go on the record – in retrospect one of the major mistakes that was made in the legislation was not asking for staffing of university-affiliated training centers. Now, as I understand the reasons for not asking, they had already

asked for Community Mental Health Center staffing and took an awful lot of flak from the Congress and the AMA. At that time Wilbur Cohen was trying to get the Medicare Program through, so he didn't want to do anything to antagonize the AMA or the private sector of medicine and, indirectly, the Congress because obviously they were reacting to their constituents. So he backed off from asking for staffing. On the other hand, ironically, he had some strange bedfellows in this attitude because the National Association for Retarded Children also were against staffing but for another reason. They felt that they would be painting themselves into a corner but putting a fixed price on these things; they wanted to have maneuverability.

Now in retrospect – it's easy to be a Monday morning quarterback. In retrospect, now faced with the great problem we have in operating and staffing the university-affiliated training centers, if we had had legislation for staffing, it would have made the thing a lot easier today. Yet, in those days, in the heat of battle, we all agreed that this was a better way to do it. We all had a share in that mistake. I don't mean to....

STEWART: As far as the increases in the amounts that were going into research grants, do you recall any general problems in determining those levels?

[-26-]

DOYLE: Yes. We had problems with those levels because several institute directors would say to us, "Look, we're doing neurological research" or "We're doing the perinatal collaborative study. Now even though it isn't completely mental retardation – it cuts across the whole board – we consider that bona fide mental retardation." Well, when we tried to work out with them what we thought was pertinent to mental retardation, we had great difficulties with it at times. So we did have problems arriving at research things. It was felt, for example, that on the major research centers that we'd hold them to ten and then come in later and ask for more. And the reason that it was held at ten was that the people at NIH were quite interested in quality in research, and they felt that there weren't probably more than ten centers in the country that could really turn out good research. And I went along with that. No, as it turned out, we later changed our mind about this and asked for more than ten, but as you know, at the last Congress it was held at ten. I'm not sure that that was a bad decision; it I think that that was a pretty good decision.

STEWART: I was going to ask you if the number of qualified institutions or individuals to receive research grants was quite limited at that time?

DOYLE: Yes, it was. It was very limited at that time. As I say, Mr. Fogarty had gotten a little bit of money going before that, but, in general, there was a great limitation. And the legislation, the Kennedy legislation, opened up other – you know, the special ed part of it, the special education part of it, too.

[-27-]

It wasn't without its difficulties though, and even in retrospect I – you know, we're now beginning to see some of the problems that were brought out by all of this, and I've been trying to rack my brains to see where we went wrong in some of these things. If I had to do it over again, I don't think I would have voted for such a concept as university-affiliated training centers because, let's face it, we are not really at this stage, February 1968, we're not really attracting too many professionals into the field. When you go to meetings, it's quite incestuous. It's the same people meeting with each other over and over. The new people aren't coming in. Now, we're quite concerned with this.

There's a program out at Public Health Service called "Sweat," S-W-E-A-T, which has been going for a couple of years, to take high school kids and college kids and give them exposure to this problem. This was a good source of manpower. That's been cut out for lack of funds this year. So the manpower situation is very bad, and I would have looked for different models of training rather than models centered in the medical schools, which I think was a kind of a narrow concept. But, again, it's easy to feel – in those days everything that you could do that was positive, that had money attached to it looked good because up until 1962 there was such a poverty in this area.

STEWART: To what extent did you follow politically the course of this legislation? Were you involved in all aspects of it?

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DOYLE: We were involved. We had a person, David Ray [David B. Ray, Jr.] – you probably have talked to David already. David was the congressional liaison. We spent an awful lot of time on the Hill talking to key people, counting votes, cajoling, going out to their states and talking, and so forth. We spent an awful lot of time on the Hill, especially Mr. Ray. We worked very closely with Mike Manatos [Michael N. Manatos] and Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien], who helped us quite a bit. I would say that we spent, prior to the enactment of the legislation, which I guess was October of '63, that we spent, I would say spent, boy, I would say 25 per cent of my time on the legislation.

STEWART: Really.

DOYLE: At least that.

STEWART: But the overall strategy as to the important people and so forth was basically determined in O'Brien's office or was it the other way around, you asking them to do things?

DOYLE: It was reciprocal. We could very often identify people that had a professional interest in mental retardation, where they wouldn't have this knowledge. They would tell us who was approachable; they could tell us who was a political liability to them; they would tell us the ones that were censored, that we couldn't approach because Larry O'Brien was working on them for some other vote. They would cue us in the technical sensitivities. On the other hand, we came up with, for example, Catherine May. We

found out that she was very interested in mental retardation. They didn't have that in their dossiers. So this was a constant reciprocal kind of thing going back and forth – where again, though, people like Manatos and O'Brien, you know, they gave it a low priority.

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STEWART: In terms of congressional opposition, who would you say were the....

DOYLE: The guy that gave us an awful difficulty was Curtis [Carl T. Curtis]. As a matter of fact, Curtis voted, you know, was the only vote against, I think, the legislation. And he felt so bad about it later that he went back and had the record changed.

STEWART: Oh, really.

DOYLE: Yes, Curtis gave us a hard time, if I recall. Wilbur Mills was very good. Oren Harris was great; he was very good. Fogarty and Hill [Joseph Lister Hill], of course, were both great. I don't recall.... You see, this was a very salable item. There was really very little opposition. Quie [Albert H. Quie] gave us a hard time from time to time. Laird [Melvin R. Laird] was good; Laird was very good. I can't really think of anybody who gave us a real hard time.

STEWART: Did it in fact go easier than you had originally anticipated?

DOYLE: I would think it did, but I don't take much credit for that. I think Mrs. Shriver and Sarge Shriver had a lot to do with that. Mr. Shriver, as you know, is very persuasive with Congress, and he was the Director of the Peace Corps in those days, and he was popular with Congress. The President was alive so that when Mr. Shriver went around to see a congressman, they paid a good deal of attention to him. I think that he was the one that should – he and Eunice both deserve the credit for most of it.

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STEWART: To what extent, if at all, were you involved in the setting up, the organization, staffing, and initial efforts of National Institute of Child Health and Human Development?

DOYLE: I had nothing to do with that. That was set up before I.... I forget the exact date that was set up. When was that set up? Dr. Cooke had something to do with that; I had nothing to do with that. And as a matter of fact, our office had really nothing to do about that. We worked very closely with Dr. Aldrich after he was assigned to it. And then Dr. Cooke and Mrs. Shriver were both on the council, so they perforce had a great interest in mental retardation, plus the fact that Dr. LaVeck [Gerald D. LaVeck] was there – he's now the present director – and he had a retarded child of his own and he worked in the field of mental retardation. So the National Institute of Child Health

and Human Development has been really, among the federal agencies, one of the outstanding supporters.

STEWART: You mentioned some of the departments and agencies in the federal government that you had worked with. Were you at all involved with the Civil Service Commission in their efforts?

DOYLE: Oh yes, very much so. Mr. Macy [John W. Macy, Jr.] was completely cooperative. We helped to set up, with the help of the Rehabilitation, the U.S. Officers Employment, and the President's Committee on Employing the Handicapped, Bernie Posner [Bernard Posner], P-O-S-N-E-R. We were able to set up the program, or get it started, on the federal agencies hiring the retarded. You know, that's a pretty good program. And we helped get that going.

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John Macy not only helped us do that, but he helped publicize it; he was a great help. In those days he was not working at the White House. He was very good. And he did all he could to expedite getting professional people assigned to us in terms of red tape and all that. Very effective fellow, very effective. And Mr. Wirtz was excellent, too, as Secretary, when he came on.

STEWART: You mentioned before the White House Conference on Mental Retardation. Let me ask you: as far as the basic decision to have a White House conference, do you recall this? Were there any fears that there might be some adverse effects from such a big conference? And if so, what were they?

DOYLE: I had this major responsibility in setting the conference up. There was a lot of discussion leading up to what would we do dramatically to kick off this office, the White House Office, and so forth. We talked about many mechanisms. We talked about going out and having the regional meetings.

Then finally we said, well, that we could dramatize it a lot better by having the governor appoint X number of delegates. Now, we even went beyond that. We tried to identify for the governor – this might have been a little paternalistic when I look back on it, perhaps presumptive – but we tried to identify through the AAMD and the NARC and other agencies who were the real key people. In other words, we tried to avoid the governor just making political appointees as delegates. And if I recall, we had some incentive in there in terms of, I forget, per diem or something, but we made it that the governor would have had great difficulty appointing anybody who wasn't on our list. Now, our list comprised those people that would be accepted professionally, or who would have some real power when they went back to the states, not some lackey that was just appointed to go to Washington. So in that sense, I think, we successfully got representative professional people – I think. That was one of the things I think was helpful.

[-32-]

One of the things that did bother us was the fact that it was a rather superficial meeting. It was only two days, if I recall. And even though we broke up into small groups, we didn't feel that there would be much in depth kind of things going on. So it was highly dramatic; it pointed out the impact of the presidential office. The charge these delegates had was to go back and make damn sure that your state is going to do adequate planning and so forth. I think in general, compared with some other conferences I've been involved with, I think it was fairly successful for that purpose.

STEWART: Was the purpose more in anticipation of the legislation rather than getting the legislation passed because...

DOYLE: Well, both. We felt that if the governor's people went back and got really interested in this, that they would lend support as constituents to the Congress. So it was that kind of a political endeavor, too. I mean, we were thinking in terms of vote counting and so forth.

STEWART: Can you think of any other instances of where you people did something that had an adverse reaction politically from someone on the White House staff?

DOYLE: Flip it off for a second. Let me just...

[Interruption]

One of the delightful things about Dr. Warren was that he was unencumbered by political insight. And he...

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STEWART: He was in fact a Republican, I think, wasn't he?

DOYLE: He was a Republican, and I recall two anecdotes that I think I should tell you about.

One anecdote was that Mike Gorman [Thomas Francis Gorman], who was a lobbyist for Mary Lasker, he and I took Dr. Warren down to meet John Fogarty. And John Fogarty had just come in off the plane; he had a sport shirt on. He knew me, of course, and he knew Gorman. And Dr. Warren, being very apolitical, immediately said, "Mr. Fogarty, I want you to know that I am a Republican." Well, you could hear a pin fall, and I could see Mike Gorman almost going into shock. Fogarty just sat up there very implacable – he's always a laconic personal anyway – and he looked at Dr. Warren, and in his clip New England accent he said, "Dr. Warren, you might be a Republican, but if it weren't for the Democrats, you wouldn't be here today." [Laughter] And Dr. Warren, being a real gentleman, smiled weakly. And Mike Gorman picked it up with some lighthearted kind of thing, and it was passed off.

Another interesting thing about Dr. Warren is that, as I say, he used to make a lot of speeches...

[Interruption]

We would try to monitor his speeches a little bit. I remember one time – I'll never forget it – he made a speech somewhere down in the South in which he was suggesting (and I think it was taken out of context by the United Press) that the retarded could be taken out of certain states and dispersed throughout the country. And he mentioned California as a possible place. Well, I'm sure it was taken out of context, but I never spent such a weekend in my life, with the Associated Press, United Wire Services trying to clarify what he really meant.

[-34-]

Then, when that happened and a few other things like that, the Shrivvers became a little concerned with Dr. Warren and began to watch, you know, watch out for him a little bit more. So there was that kind of a problem. And they began to lose some confidence in him, which I thought was unjustified. And there was talk that he might be relieved, you know. This was before the assassination. But I felt strongly that the people that didn't know academic life would have misjudged him. But I think his overall impact and his influence, I think, was beneficial.

STEWART: What contacts, if any, did you have with the press people at the White House? Did all your releases and things go through them?

DOYLE: Yes, yes. We had – I forget the chap's name – but we had a contact right.... We had no contacts with Salinger [Pierre E. G. Salinger] except maybe once or twice. There was a fellow in the Executive Office Building, whose name escapes me at the moment, but he had a staff and we worked through him, very helpful fellow. But again the big problem was that mental retardation with the people right around Kennedy had a low priority. Sometimes you had the feeling that they were very condescending because Eunice was involved, and that they were going along with you because of this, not because they had any real substantive interest in what we were doing. I always had that feeling. I think most of us had this feeling. And, of course, Eunice Shriver, that didn't bother her because she felt at least she was getting what she wanted out of it.

STEWART: Can you think of any instances or examples of where is attitude had a very detrimental effect on what you were trying to do?

[-35-]

DOYLE: I think that in the beginning when we were getting the office expanded and trying to get help and people, we had great difficulties getting off the ground because of the red tape of the people around the White House, around the President. And when things got rough – we tried to keep Eunice out of it, but if we got into a

real bind, we would call her and then she would expedite it. And that's, of course, another euphemism. She would really expedite it. But we felt we couldn't do that too often because it was crying wolf and it would lose its effect. We had all kinds of difficulties, you know, in getting the thing started. Now, I just never felt, you know, that any of those people really – well, you know, the top people, Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen], we never had any contact with Sorensen or Goodwin [Richard N. Goodwin] or any of those people. They never came....

STEWART: Myer Feldman had been involved to a certain extent.

DOYLE: Myer Feldman was great. I must take that back. Myer Feldman was, I guess, Sorensen's Deputy. Myer Feldman was a close personal friend of the Shriver's, and he was our closest liaison with the people immediately around the President. We used to deal with Mike directly, and very helpful. And he, in turn, was very close with Wilbur Cohen. I'm glad you brought his name up, because I think that he was, of anybody at the White House, he was one of the most influential as far as our needs were concerned, and sympathetic. As you know, now he is working as a counsel to the Kennedy Foundation. I see him every now and then. Very, very helpful guy, and you really felt that he was concerned about that we were doing.

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STEWART: Did you ever attempt to rouse some of these people by pointing out to them the potential political value of mental retardation?

DOYLE: I'm sure Eunice Shriver did. I don't think that we ever had the opportunity, except, as I say, in this memo back to O'Donnell. And, of course, O'Donnell, I don't think he would have understood if we had told him. He didn't understand professional setups this way. He was strictly, you know, a chief appointment clerk, bottle washer, ax man, and everything else. He had no concept of professionalism at all. I think that Eunice probably, I'm sure, whenever she got a chance would tell these guys to get on the ball, because every time Eunice would see you, she'd say, "What have you done for mental retardation today?" I've heard her say this time and time again to people. She used to say it to me. I'm sure she used to needle them. And I'm sure she used to needle the President. But as far as we were concerned, outside of a few reports that went up to the Budget Bureau and so forth – and that raises another question. The Budget Bureau was very helpful to us. I can't recall the fellows' names, but they were very helpful to us. We helped prepare materials for them, and we worked very closely with the Budget people. There's one fellow whose name I do remember, Mike March [Michael S. March], M-A-R-C-H. But they were very helpful in helping us think about the money needs of the agencies and the figures to put in on the authorizations for the legislation.

STEWART: I guess I asked you this before, and maybe this is my final question, but can you think of any areas or any specific decisions that you know the President

was personally involved in or that you know that he was directly concerned with?

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DOYLE: Do you mean in terms of the legislation?

STEWART: Yes.

DOYLE: Oh, I'm sure that the President was very much aware of what the legislation was, and, after all, he had to make the final decision.

STEWART: Right.

DOYLE: I mean, don't misunderstand me when I say that he didn't have time to do the initiation of these things, but still he saw the material and I'm sure it was his decision. And I'm sure that he and Eunice had to argue out a lot of points. I think that, you know, he had his advisers with him and so forth. He didn't always give in to her. I don't recall any specific items, though.

STEWART: That's just about all the questions. Is there anything else you can think of...

DOYLE: Well, I again would just like to say that, as I said before the tape went on, that I think that history is going to look back on all of this and I think it's going to be a bench mark, I think, that the President did appoint a special assistant in this field – a field which superficially looks like a narrow field of interest, but when you really analyze it, especially when you get into all the physiology and psychology of learning, has such tremendous implications for the whole field of learning that I think that retrospectively President Kennedy is going to go down in history as this being one of his major contributions. No question about it in my mind. On the other hand, through the Kennedy family, especially Mrs. Shriver, has been this continuity of interest on the part of President Johnson. Again, I think that the prime mover in that was the Shrivvers, and now helped by Mrs. Humphrey, who has a retarded grandchild. So there's been a great

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continuity because of this. But we are very much impressed by President Johnson's interest and the interest of people like Doug Cater [S. Douglass Cater, Jr.] at the White House. And, of course, we have on our Committee Horace Busby [Horace Busby, Jr.] who is very close to the President.

STEWART: Okay.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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