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Learning the Ropes

Observations of the learning process for new Representatives.

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But the Members came here, truly to do a job. And you could see they would get here, and it would be the same thing when I first came, you kind of realize that you're not, you're kind of at the bottom of the pecking order. You may have been a big fish in the pond back home, but you come here and you're just a freshman Congressman, or Congresswoman, and you have to pay your dues. And you're going, "What?" It's the unspoken game up here. And you come in, and you just kind of go with the flow. And Members would test the waters. You could see them, that they would become vocal in a hearing, or they'd start to question why we're doing something this way when—and it was good to see the process unfold that way. And I think they became even more educated in the process. Most of them had been an like an assemblyman, or a state senator, or a state representative back home. So, they had the same concept, so it wasn't a total differentiation from when they . . . the people that had the biggest problem were the people that had no real political background, and came in, and are going, "What the heck is going on here? What are the rules of the game?" There's nothing written. So, that's when the Member, the Member needs a mentor. But, they became a tight bond, and I'm, I'm sure all the classes did. Freshman class would bond with each other, and they traveled through the Congress that way. And you could see that, too. But it was just interesting to see them grow on that different level and form their relationships.