

Interview with Steve Ruddick

The date is November 8, 1996 and I am Lee Bahrych coordinator for the Colorado Legislative Oral History Library. With me today is Steve Ruddick. Steve served both in the House of Representatives and in the State Senate. This interview is being conducted in one of the House hearing room in the state Capitol at Denver. Well, Steve I'm glad you're here with me today and I'd like to start the interview by asking about your family history and your education.

S.R. Well I was born here in Denver and adopted in Denver, grew up here and went to school both either in Aurora or Denver, about half of my education in both public schools. Got through the University of Denver for my law school, before that I was a history and political science major at Metropolitan State College of Denver.

L.B. Then you went to Metropolitan State College when it was , was that on the Auraria campus at that time?

S.R. No we weren't yet on the Auraria campus but we moved there, that the legislature would create a college that was a total urban college. Our school mascot was the road runners. The reason why was one of the administrators looked down from the top floor of the administrative building at the school and saw all of these students running to their cars to try to beat the meter maids and he said don't they look like roadrunners. That was our school name

L.B. Uh huh, So you stayed in this area since that time.

S.R. Yes Mame

L.B. What made you decide to run for office?

S.R. Well, I think from my earliest time in my teens I would come and watch the Capitol proceedings from the balconies in both the House and Senate. I can remember being in the late 60's and early 70's. coming down and watching.

L.B. Well that's rare because some Representatives and some Senators have never been to the Capitol before their elected. So you were acquainted with the process.

S.R. Well I don't know if I was acquainted with the process but I was acquainted with the place and the activities that went on.

L.B. When you decided to run for office how did you proceed with it.

S.R. It was probably a developing process. But I think my wife was my greatest supporter. We were married in 1984 and actually in 1985 we made a decision that the time was right. I started probably getting involved in politics in 1974, I was still in college. I met Anna Maria, my wife in 1980 when I was a house district captain and she was a new committee

person and little did we know where it was going to take us. So a lot of the support and the reason I could run was because of my wife.

L.B. What was your impression when you knew that you had won and you were going to be sitting on the floor instead of up in the balcony?

S.R. We were having a party in our home and a lot of people came and about an hour after the polls closed we had gotten all of our numbers in and it was exciting but we also heard a rumor from the other camp that another opponent had announced a half hour after that he was going to run in the next election against me. So from the very beginning we had an opponent already to work with. But it was exciting and we said now we've won, now what do we have to do to properly serve. I had some good people from before who'd served in the office in my district that it was good to learn from.

L.B. How did you feel when you entered the Capitol after you'd won, on your first day, when you put up your right hand and swore to uphold the constitution and took the oath of office.

S.R. Well we were talking about it laughingly, I think it was the day after election we came down just to see where we were and what we were going to do and see what the office needed and then we were off to the office supply shop getting things. But on the day of the swearing in we had a hundred supporters who came.

L.B. Oh, Really.

S.R. They were up in the gallery they were all watching it. I remember one of my supporters who was just wonderful people, and one lady Bernice Cox who was a smoker herself, but she was just aghast that Speaker Bledsoe would be smoking up in his chair while the swearing in ceremony was going on. I never heard the end of it all the rest of the time. It was wonderful, it was exciting, it was a lot of fun. People just had a ball. I still have a plaque made up by an eight year old who had walked with me for a block and his mother was my volunteer coordinator. He made up a picture album of me, pictures he took of me and him at the inauguration. So I still have that, and they're the best pictures I think I have.

L.B. What a memory for that little boy.

S.R. Yes. Well it was so funny, I remember, he was eight years old and he had to walk with me. So we walked from his mother's to his grandmothers home. Him carrying his toy soldiers and me knocking on votes.

L.B. Those were your votes.

S.R. Oh yes, You bet, you bet.

L.B. And he was here for your swearing in

S.R. Yes

L.B. What a nice memory

S.R. Course now he's college age. Going to school.

L.B. He may be sitting down there on the floor some day.

S.R. Some day

L.B. He's grown up

S.R. Yes, Yes

L.B. Well Steve how was your family affected by your service?

S.R. Well, I don't know, Maria came in. She helped me my first session. She was the judiciary committee aide, and in those days as Democrats we had volunteer aides who covered every committee for us and wrote down all the issues and bill and questions that were asked.. Then we would make up reports and give it out to the rest of the caucus members about what really went on in our committees. She was in charge, really of all that. But it was sort of fun because I can remember coming out of one of our committee hearings and I had disagreed with a couple Republican ladies, Representatives, Dottie Wham and Representative Bonnie Allison. We got home and she got mad at me, she said you should have voted with them. Then they heard about it and they said Ho, Ho, Ho, we know who to talk to from now on. That was really fun.

L.B. How do you feel about having more staff for the Representatives and Senators. Now they have their aides, of course they don't pay their interns, but for the first time this coming session they can, I think a hundred dollars a month, That's for parking.

S.R. It may be all it is for parking. We had a wonderful time with volunteers that came down. I remember we had a gentleman by the name of Ivan Cox who was a retired man. He used to wow all the ladies on the house floor. Because he was just a real nice gentleman. Probably in his 70's.. Who was just Mister Class. He came down and it was his place. He came down, how many days a week three, my gosh this was his place. I was his Representative and he was my aide, so you miss a lot when you go to paid verses when you can find that unique person that just loves doing it.

L.B. Now Steve, you weren't here when they just had their offices on the house floor were you? You always had an outside office or shared an outside office.

S.R. When we started in the house, all the Democrats were in one room, which has now become the house services committee room, and partially Democratic offices. We were all in one room and actually it wasn't too bad and I suspect the reason why it was broken up, there were 27 of us and we'd just come out of, when there was a veto proof, there was a legislature that the Republicans could veto the Governor's bills on and we just came out of that and also there were 27 of us, we were really tight because they had forced us into this little room by

ourselves, but it worked just the opposite of what it was intended, everybody had a lot of comradery. So then it didn't work so they broke us up and put us all over the Capitol the next year.

L.B. Well, from the truth here, I'll tell you the other side of it, storage. The way it is now when Peggy Kerns was handling the placement of everybody, she wanted to, she asked everyone in room 271 there if they'd like to move into another room. She said you couldn't have gotten them out of there with a stick of dynamite, because they have everything in there. They have those stenos, their mail, their messages, everything in one spot. She said, In fact people are waiting in a line to get in that room. Well she put.... What roll did you occupy in your time at the state house. I know you served on the Judiciary committee and your main interest was family, children. Did you make that your roll?

S.R. Well I think you sort of find things that interest us of course, and things we need to do. I was a house caucus chairman for a term so I did some what leadership. But I thought the roll was much more than just being down here at the Capitol. For me when I was first elected, since I was the only one of my party in the entire 6th congressional district elected at any level, I also had a responsibility outside the district to show that Democrats could represent more conservative suburban areas and that we could a, we didn't wear horns and you could trust us. So we had a great responsibility outside the Capitol itself to show not only that we did the job and were responsible here but that we were responsible out in the community. I think we built a lot from that.

L.B. Tell me about something the bills you carried, because being involved I remember some of your bills there, but I'd like for you to tell us more about the first bills you carried, a lot of them had to do with family, children, education, but I'd like for you to talk at length on that.

S.R. One of the area I was pretty strong of course was the criminal bill because I was a prosecutor when I came in and I had a lot of them.. My first bill dealt with increasing probation periods that a court could impose on someone and we did it because of the problem we had with domestic violence and we think that's a current issue. It just shows how all issues are always current and have always been an issue for hundreds of years. But we found that we didn't have enough time to put people on programs, just 36 week domestic violence programs because we couldn't have them on probation that long, so the very first bill I introduced, I was asked to carry two days after being elected. It was the first bill we had in House Judiciary, and I got it through and it passed all the way through the system. It taught me a lot about how even when you had a bill that was popular and didn't have any opposition you really had to work hard and you had to have your witnesses and you had to have your...

L.B. You mean your first bill went through the House and Senate and went on to the Governor, that's most unusual.

S.R. Yes, but it taught me a lot about what you had to do because from that point on I thought, Oh my God, I got to do this now and this and this so it was a really a good learning

experience.

Outside of the criminal field, which I really had very easy time with cause I thought I, I was concerned a lot of people think crime and punishment and don't think crime prevention and other things we really need to do. But outside of that I really got involved a lot with children and adoption issues and probably the most exciting bill I had as far as doing something to change the processes, was to create a intermediary, confidential intermediary bill that allowed adoptees to look at their closed adoption records through a court intermediary and then try to find family.

L.B. Both sides had to agree.

S.R. Yes. Both sides had to agree to meet. Which was a way to protect them cause actually if you're a good detective the person could find another person even with all the closed records but this way we had a little bit of balance as well. We found it was so popular that I had people writing even from France. We hear from France all around the country really and the world, asking about how it could be done and what they could do and how they did it in their own state, and we just

L.B. It was a bill that other states were quick to adopt.

S.R. Well, yes, or least were working on it. I don't know how many passed it or not.

L.B. The idea.

S.R. But the idea was brand new and it came again out of constituents and people coming and saying well we've got a problem, how do we fix it. So it was really an exciting bill to see develop.

L.B. So that's your first bill approved by the assembly and sent to the Governor. That's unusual. Do you think the public was aware of these issues you worked on except the few that would call you, do you think it had wide publicity?

S.R. Well I think actually everything I did started out with base of constituent support. I didn't put a bill in generally unless it had people that had come to me from my own district and said they had a problem or concern. I remember the one I had which was really a strange one which I didn't realize wasn't even a law. The fact that children could bring onto school handguns or weapons. We found out they could because we tried to trick somebody with that, it came out of one of our high schools so everything like that.

L.B. and what did you do about that?

S.R. Well again, we put in legislation to change the law that said you couldn't have a weapon on school ground unless you were an authorized police officer or official to do that. In fact that was one of my scariest bills at one time because I got all the way through the house committees I was on the house floor it had gone to the Senate. I had to change some legislation because one of the legislators who was now a, our U.S. senator, it was in the time

of Senator Allard, was concerned about being able to shoot a mad cow on the campus of CSU. So we had to change legislation to in effect allow anyone on a school campus to be able to shoot rabid cows. I won't tell you exactly how we did that but we did it to satisfy his concern about mad cows at CSU. But I got all the way back to the floor of the Senate and then to the floor of the House and at the last ratification of that, Speaker Bledsoe got a call from a gun smithing school and they were very concerned because they thought it meant they couldn't have their gun smithing school. Of course I had an exception in there for it, but people don't always know that, when you talk about does the public know these things, sometimes they hear things at the very end and they get very sacred. So I remember Speaker Bledsoe coming down and questioning me and I think it was the only bill he had ever questioned anyone on that year that I can remember.

L.B. You mean he left the podium?

S.R. Yes he left the podium and came down and asked questions, and I had to answer them

L.B. At the mike, I should remember that.

S.R. He accepted them, said ok, and went back up and I thought oh my gosh.

L.B. You wiped the perspiration off your brow.

S.R. Yes.

L.B. Well there are so many things that can happen to a bill when it goes to the other house and then it goes to a conference committee and sometimes like children you want to disown it.

S.R. Yes, that's happens sometime.

L.B. Well some of the issues you've worked on are never resolved but are on going just like the criminal side of it. Now that you're a judge are you seeing a different perspective?

S.R. Very much so.

L.B. Tell us about it.

S.R. One of the things the legislature constantly does is it tries to create sur charges on criminal matter to balance the budget or to try to find a way to bring a program into the state budget and they don't really work very well. But now as a judge if I set a fine for someone then I have to decide what 37 percent of it is for a victim assistance fund and then I have to come in with victim compensation funds surcharges and alcohol education surcharges and there are so many that we sometimes say as judges we have to become accountant just to figure out all the different surcharges.

L.B. Are these things that you think need to be changed, would you come down and testify about these things.?

S.R. Oh, I think they're public policy decisions but we've probably been unrealistic I think in the legislature to think that criminal surcharges will pay for things when it's difficult to get criminals to pay restitution and that's the first job that we have. It is a different perspective, I've even had to look at my own bills that I've passed and tell people

L.B. Is that right?

S.R. Yah, they'll challenge me in court and I'll say do you want me to decide this because if you look this is one of mine. So that's sort of fun to now have to do that. I do remember a lot of my legislative history and when people challenge the legislature I'll always remember to tell them wait a minute, they made a decision, if you don't like it you go somewhere else, you don't come to the court to change it, you come to the legislature to change it. I have a lot of, I think as a judge now having been in the legislature, I've a very good perspective and a handle on issues that come up. Cause if you know the other side of the legislature side then you understand why the legislation is there. I've really had a ball doing that. I've even gone to judicial conferences and they'll complain about something and I'll say now wait a minute, that's not true, Representative so and so said, and they'll look at me and say oh no there he goes again telling us

L.B. You understand legislative intent.

S.R. Yes

L.B. Then many of the bills that you worked on and many of the bills that you sponsored are still in effect

S.R. Yes Mam

L.B. I heard once that every bill you see has a life time in the statute of about ten years before it's changed.

S.R. I think that's true. Even some of the ones I did pretty quickly are being changed some. If nothing else moving to a different place. Or changing one or two other provisions of it or something like that. So yes they move pretty quickly

L.B. Life moves pretty quickly anymore, especially when I just had my seventy first birthday, it goes very fast. I had a wonderful happening the other day. I was in Far more and the young man, he is going to go places, the young man looked at me and he said are you eligible for a senior citizen discount. He made my day. A warm fuzzy feeling all the way to the car. Well Steve how were committees handled when you served. I noticed the committees that you served on but tell us about some of the committees you served on and how the staff worked with that committee and the Democrats had a little different procedure in that I believe you named leading members on the committees. Tell us about that.

S.R. In all of our committee hearings, course we were in the minority party and that didn't mean we didn't have the same voice and the same input in committees, in fact it was probably from

our perspective, the most important work was in your committee, because that was where you discussed bills and you discussed ideas. All this partisanship really doesn't effect the real processes because most of the time, at least from my time and maybe I'm very privileged, people were really interested in issues and if you disagreed with somebody it might have been philosophically but it wasn't because of the party you were in. But as Democrats then we wanted to have as much input as possible and I always found very very openness. In committees you had to work with one another and you got to like one another very quickly. You get to know one another a lot better that way. But in our committees we had one staff person and his job was simply to make sure the tape was on and we were following general orders, general rules, but actually the committee chairman ran the show. But each of our committees, we would designate Democrats, as lead Democrats, and those were our alter egos to the chairman. Our job was to make sure that on every bill, that we had the information out to the rest of the members about what the bill did, why it was defeated or why it was passed, who voted for it, what the back ground behind it was, maybe who testified so that when you got the bill on the floor you would know why it was there who supported it and maybe you'd have a better idea on whether you ought to vote for it or not. I got to serve on that. I was the lead Democrat for the Judiciary committee most of my time, cause they figured well you're the lawyer you go tell us what all the stuff was. And then like I said, my wife was my first aide on that except when she decided to side with the non-lawyers which is the best part about the Judiciary committee it became not Democrats or Republican but lawyers verses non-lawyers and a Representatives Allison and Wham were the non-lawyers who doted over the rest of us and said well there's more of us than there are of you, they'd all get together and say all right we non-lawyers want to do it this way. So that was really fun. But that tells you what kind of fun you have in committees.

L.B. Now could you bring in witnesses, everybody could bring a witness? And did you have a witness register with the chairman of the committee or who called them?

S.R. Well, when you brought a witness for a bill particularly, they would sign up on the sign in sheets and then they'd be called. I'd always ask the chairman the courtesy to be able to call my witnesses in the order I wanted to, and I also promised if I did that it'd go a lot quicker. We were always able to do that. A very good courteous situation. One of the best committee chairman I had was on House Transportation, Bud,(Moellenberg) Bud was such a gentleman, he would not let us leave a committee hearing until everyone had an opportunity to talk. He actually, and it was good because as a freshman you didn't know if you wanted to speak all the time, but he wouldn't let you not. He wanted your input. So he always demanded it every meeting and if you hadn't talked he'd pick on you and make sure that you had something to say. Then he'd used to kid me because I was the only attorney in the Ad committee and he'd say well lets ask what our resident lawyer thinks about the legality of this. That's the kind of fun you could have with your committee people, who seems to really respect the system. Then if you did they really respected you.

L.B. I always hated it when I would heard that a witness was brow beaten or not treated with the respect they deserved.

S.R. You know I was lucky in my committees, I think we treated people well, but you know the

few times I saw someone get beat up, like I brought a witness to another committee and they'd do something, they generally, the legislator embarrassed themselves. There's an old rule that you don't go around embarrassing, you don't try to brow beat a normal citizen, cause a normal citizen will beat you every time. And generally I think that was true.

L.B. What change do you see in state government since you served, and do you think these changes are good or bad. Course you were here when we had the gavel amendment passed. that made the change.

S.R. I was in there on both sides of that.

L.B. What do you mean?

S.R. Well I was in there before the gavel amendment and then after the gavel amendment. The gavel amendment opened up the process a lot particularly for minority members. I remember before gavel, I would have to get my, bring on the bill and even if you could get it past the committee, you sometimes had to hound the committee chairman, particularly Representative Panky, who if you got a bill through his committee he wouldn't sign it unless you just stayed on him days on end. I used to track him around daily. I remember one time he killed off one of my bills by simply, I bothered him for three days straight but he kept not signing it, finally he signed it because he was so mad at me bothering him, but then it was too late to the next committee. Then once we did that we had something called the House Rules Committee and again a good friend of mine was chair but they had pretty good rules about it and there was a rule that, and they kept a list of the bills that they had allowed to pass already if you were a Democrat. You could only have at most two a year. One or two, so a nice time that I had was that I was actually able to talk the chairman into letting me decide which of the one of the two were going to go with my five. That's sort of like deciding which baby you're not going to take care of. So when we went to, after the gavel, then when we lost the rules committee, and we didn't have committee chairmen pocketing or vetoing anymore, and for me that was the best thing, cause I found out that most of the Legislators really did care about what their votes were on every bill on every issue. Even if your from a safe district, they wanted their vote to count, and they wanted, so when the change in gavel came and you had to vote on every bill there weren't a lot of bills that were killed because of partisan reason anymore because you were Democrat, it was simply we didn't like the concept or the merit of the bill. That was a really wonderful eye opening thing for me from two perspectives, one yes, it meant you didn't play games and lose things unfairly but also you found out how much people cared from both parties about their role here and how seriously they took it.

L.B. When I interviewed Representative Skaggs, Congressman Skaggs, I was reluctant to ask him about the episode on the House floor when Bev Bledsoe was speaker and it was over the opt out and I didn't have to ask him because he said Lee, you may not remember, but I sure do and he told of the start of the gavel amendment at that time and that really was the start of it. So we have that on tape, the history of how it came about and I thought that was, you know it changed the work of the front desk too because we handle all the bills on the calendar and it did make the session longer but like you said it opened up the process.

- S.R. But on the budget it was really interesting, by the time I got to the state Senate then we actually, both sides actually had a lot of say on what the budget was and the people that complained about it were the ones that hadn't been working on the budget from the beginning. But you could go to budget hearing early on and you give your input and make your suggestions, and you'd find that they were in the budget, at least when I was in the Senate. There were many times I would even change the budget and make changes on the floor and that was something that was unheard of years ago before gavel
- L.B. By both sides. The Democrats presented the budget and there weren't any changes and the Republicans did it, so, but you said it opened the process.
- S.R. That's the best change. The worst change I think, was the term limits that we've passed in Colorado. I think that because normally there's about a 30 percent turnover every year in the legislature anyway. (?)offices and legislature. Mandatorily retire everybody after eight years, means that we lose a lot of legislative history and insight from members who had served and when you do that you wind up losing the a legislative perspective on the system. I think we're going to lose a lot of the history, the tradition, the why we do things, the civility of it all because there's always going to be the pressure of well I'm not going to be here very long so I don't care about the process.
- L.B. I think we'll lose what I always admired on the house floor, there was respect for custom and tradition on both sides of the aisle and there was deep respect for the procedure. I have noticed even in the last two years, that that's slipping, went away, and that's very important.
- S.R. It'll destroy a legislature not to have that because you live within a system that's fair that way you know what the rules are and you live with them and they make sense, you lose that. Also I think another thing I think we're going to lose is the ability of the legislators to balance what their told verses what they've heard and I know in my eight years I see the same bills come up time and again and I can say to somebody do you realize this failed the last time because of this, Well now we're not going to have that. We've lost the institutional memory. So who's going to have the memory are going to be our lobbyist and our government bureaucrats. Government employees are good but they have a different perspective than the elected officials. I think we elect our officials, Representatives and Senators to be our voices for the citizens, when we put in term limits we weakened that voice. I remember one of our House Transportation committee hearings, one of the transportation employees told a fellow legislator once I don't care what you want to do because I'm going to be here, I'm going to outlast you, and now that's going to be true more than it was back then before we had term limits, he said that. Now they will know, well you're only going to be here six more years I'll do it the way I want to anyway. I think we're going to lose the ability of the citizens to have an input in their government
- L.B. Well when I was Chief Clerk, I will tell you about one incident when I was behind the desk, two freshmen came up and asked me about a rule and I said, well, it isn't in the rule, but custom and tradition of the House, you do not do that, please don't do that, and they did, and I was so gratified that what I call the heavy weights from the floor, both sides rolled those two freshman and I was silently cheering from the back of the desk.

- S.R. Yes, I remember what you're talking about. Yes
- L.B. Because it would have been, I just felt, there was Ruth Wright and there was Pat Grant and Betty Neal possibly you over there.
- S.R. I remember the battle.
- L.B. The heavy institutional memory they stood and rolled the freshman, and I tell you a silent cheer went up back at the front desk.
- S.R. Sure, that's one thing we're either going to miss or have to probably create, and you can't create rules for these kind of things, you can't create rules for procedures and civility.
- L.B. It has to be the feeling or the continuity of the way that rule was used. You can take almost any rule and try to change it and of course if you know the rules you can play the game better.
- S.R. Right, that's true.
- L.B. Well Steve if you could change one thing back to the way it used to be, repeal a law or relocate an office, or bring back a particular elected official what would you change down here?
- S.R. First I thought we'd get rid of the term limit. I think that's going to be terrible. But if I was going to bring something back, I think, I wouldn't want to change anything in the process because I think it's wonderful to watch how the process moves and develops. I don't think we can ever go back to anything as far as offices or people are. I think it's, I enjoy it now to watch from the sidelines and see people struggling with the very same issues we struggled with. I once saw a scrapbook of Senator Groff's when he first came in and what was so interesting was watching and reading twenty years ago the same issues we were dealing with twenty years later, and I'm sure that's going to be true forever. But probably if we can just keep our tradition and our civility here, be able to keep that line separate, this is a process much greater than any one of us, then that's what we need to do.
- L.B. What's your favorite place here in the Capitol?
- S.R. Oh, it's got to be on the main floor. You go up the main stair way with the brass and the marble and you look up and see the top of the Capitol or sometimes you look down from there that still is and when I knew I wasn't going to be in the legislature anymore I had to keep it pretty quiet that I was up for appointment to the judgeship. I made it a point everyday of spending time walking up and walking down, people must have thought why is he standing there, but I did that every day, and when I come back I still like to go up and look at it.
- L.B. Go up the grand staircase.

S.R. Yes, It's so beautiful, and it tells you something about the people before us that cared so much about it and it's so beautiful and people have tried to keep it beautiful since. That says something about the respect we have for our system.

L.B. When I first came to the Capitol it was pretty dark and gloomy. It was not painted like it is now. The decorator who came in and did all the painting in the Capitol, if you look with a close eye, this color will be a little tiny shade darker than maybe the wall, and he trimmed it all and the colors, the bands, he put around the different floors, then he chose the House and Senate carpet and chairs, and he did all that, and it was a labor of love and just before he died he came down to see me cause he had helped me with other things, the Speakers Office, and some of the changes I had made in the House and he said this is my legacy to the citizens of Colorado because he made this Capitol light and cheery and open and it's been, these colors now have lasted since 1972. He really loved.., it was a sad moment when he died. He was a wonderful person.

Steve, people seem more pessimistic and skeptical and even cynical with government, do you think this is true? Do you think they really have a reason to feel this way?

S.R. I think people do feel more pessimistic or cynical or maybe skeptical, because I don't think their connected to it as they used to be, and yet at the state legislative level, I think that's the only level that you can truly communicate with people one on one bring them into a campaign. If all I had to do, if all politics was to me was watching it on TV and TV ads then I'd be pretty skeptical and pessimistic because it wouldn't do anything for me. That's what we see nationally and with our U.S. Senate races and the big races, but on our level we still have the opportunity to make that one on one contact with people and bring them in and have them be a part of our campaign and a part of our life at the Capitol. I think they're skeptical because a lot of us don't do that anymore. I think when people lose the connection with their own selves, in their lives, then they're going to be skeptical because what is it for them, they're not going to be involved.

L.B. How can we overcome that?

S.R. Well I think one thing that we need to do is look at trying to develop more of a grass roots kind of commitment to people. We talk about open committee meetings here but we really don't try to bring people down as we should. I always used to have a Capitol for the day program every year and we'd bring hundreds of people from the district. Well that was only hundreds but those hundreds went back and told all their friends and those friends were connected then to it because they heard the stories about it. I know that we had several of us that used to do that. There's at least one way to try to bring people into the system. Cause this is the only level we can do that. People go to Washington and they're already connected in many different ways and the normal person can't afford to go to Washington. But a normal person can come down here and be a part of it, and we can go out into the community and try to be a part of it with them.

L.B. I was told by one Representatives that he felt he was the first line for the people in his district that he being a member of the House was not shared by any other district, and when

you found that so, I imagine when you were a Representative you were the first line for the people in your district but when you became a Senator you were shared by many other districts. They share your council people, your mayor, your Senator your ..

S.R. That's true a little bigger district

L.B. You were closest to the grass roots in politics than anyone else.

S.R. Yes, but I think also the Senate can be too. There are only 100,000 people still, it's still a small enough district. When we look back at our original founding nation the congressional district was about the size of a House district in Colorado now as far as population. When you think about how the people were connected in colonial times despite the great distances and the inability to travel, but they were represented by about that number of people. A congressman represented about the same number of people that a House member does now. So it tells us that we do have an opportunity to really be with people. You do get a good feeling, cause people know you and they know you're their representative and if they've got a complaint they can come to you and if you feel that way and they feel that way then you know you've been successful at your job.

L.B. How do you feel about the salaries that are paid. Does it really compensate for the time that you give to the job?

S.R. No, I think the salaries are unofficially low. Primarily I've seen that from the lack of competition for the seats. It's very hard to get a candidate. When I was running for the State Senate, we had to try and find a candidate for the House. I went through seventy-five people that I thought were pretty qualified and had good backgrounds, none of them would run because the salary was too low. Or some of them were in a situation where they were at the end of a career they'd have to wait until the end of their career because if they came in now they'd lose everything they had. For that reason I don't think we see as many younger families involved. We were in the younger family group, my wife and I and there were a few of us that were in our twenties and thirties but most people were generally in their fifties or sixties. They've ended a career and now this is where they're going to come. That's now wrong, it just doesn't make it very representative of the whole body of people.

L.B. Because the young families can not afford to serve they're beginning careers, you have expenses, you can't give that kind of time. That's what you're saying.

S.R. Yes, well the time is fun it's an enjoyable thing. You also have to find a way that you can work half a year and have another half a year to do something else. But I also found something else, strangely after we went from the time when we didn't have a time limit of 120 days to get our sessions done I still believe we spent more time in special sessions with 120 day sessions than we did when we didn't have a time limit. and spent 130 140 days and didn't have special session. Seems like we were always in another special session every year.

L.B. Like a grasshopper special session.

- S.R. Yes, after we did our 120, yes a grass hopper session. United Airlines special session, isn't that what it was?
- L.B. Yes. I remember that. Do you feel this change is going to be not so good for the legislature. We're going to have more women and more older people and retired people and people that can afford to run. Course there is the element of the lack of privacy under the rules that you have to go under.
- S.R. Well, I don't see anything wrong with having more women, in fact they bring a better attitude about getting things done and compromise than men do and maybe I'm still a part of that old school of growing up, but men are too competitive too often directly with one another, verses compromise. We've got a lot to learn from our women legislators and they've done a wonderful job in teaching us that. I know I feel a lot different about compromising after my years here. You have to learn that. That's one of the best skills of a legislator is compromising and working out problems with one another. I think having more women is a good idea, I'm not so sure it's a good idea to always have only retire people or older people here because you lose the perspective of all of the people. It's hard to remember what it's like when your in your sixties about struggles, yes you can remember them but you may not have the same perspective as when you were going through those struggles. So we do need to find ways to get young people involved as well down here. I think the greatest danger we have is getting to the point where we're going to have a very difficult time finding legislators at such a low pay particularly when we throw them out after eight years on a regular basis. It's going to be hard to find those kind of dedicated people for that short time.
- L.B. Well it's sad when you lose your good solid people there that there's something missing on the House floor and the Senate floor that may come back to do more harm than good. Well Steve, do you have any stories about members, yourself, even about staff that you'd like to put on tape.
- S.R. Well do you have anything? (Judge Ruddick is speaking to his wife, Maria Ruddick)I'm asking my wife, she says no.
- L.B. I'll bet you have stories but you don't want to tell.
- M.R. I think the one thing I really enjoyed, because I really got to know the staff at least the Democratic staff and it was fun going down to the sub basement and it was fun listening to the stories about the Capitol and the ghost stories and the history stories and that 's the one thing I really enjoyed while I was down here getting to know the people who'd been here for awhile and could give really me a different type of in-site as to what was going on down here and not be having to be on the House floor I got a chance to really get to meet the people around here that work, and I guess that's the most enjoyable part that I had.
- L.B. Well you were a big help to Steve, because you understood the process and you could give him a different perspective, like you did on the one bill. Well Steve anything else you want to add ?

S.R. Oh no, I'll probably think of something later and have to call you later.

L.B. If you do, please do call me, because I'll just leave the tapes open and I can meet with you and be pleased to meet with you again. But I thank you both for coming today.

S.R. Thank you for putting up with my sore throat.