Black Leadership in Los Angeles: Augustus F. Hawkins Interviewed by Clyde Woods

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1. Tape Number: I, Side One November 17, 1992

Woods

> You had a lot of material on African American history I know you were collecting. Is that part of-?

Hawkins

> Well, a lot of that, yeah. I had a trunk, a steamer trunkload of that. I had another trunk on the Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act, some of the material there. Then I had one on the [California] State Assembly. Most of that- Well, all of that is gone. Trying to recover what one did from year to year- I'm talking about between the years of- Well, roughly 1933 and 1992. That's quite a long time ago. You're talking about seventy years, which is almost ancient history.

Woods

I don't think it's so ancient. I'm in the planning school [UCLA School of Architecture and Urban Planning], so I've been through some of your papers. I've been through all of them, actually. It's funny how you see a lot of the programs that came up after [the] Watts [riots] in '65 are being brought back out-you know, the same sort of structures. I think even Rebuild L.A. You and Tom [Thomas] Bradley at some point had talked about a private sector board, public sector board.

Hawkins

Well, what we were talking about back then is almost the same that we're talking about today. It looks like, despite all of the changes, there has been no change. You know, the same issues that we were worried about then, we're still worried about them. High youth unemployment, just as bad then; maybe a little bit worse now. But we were trying to do that then. The law enforcement was bad then; it's still bad. The lack of leadership, I guess. I mean, we had more leadership, I think, community leadership. We have quite a bit more political leadership now, but not community leadership. And that makes a big difference, because the people in the community-your professional people, your business people, church people, all of these people-really make up the tone of a community. Yet, we have a scattering of people all over the county. It isn't as concentrated. Perhaps the big difference has been that- Breaking down segregation was a positive move, but it also had negative implications. It destroyed, in a sense, a good, strong base that we had of small businesses, articulate leaders, a strong grassroots community activity. We had central streets that were prosperous, doing well. Now all of that is gone, and it's hard to see how a group even survives as a group under those conditions. Not that segregation itself has a value, but as far as income is concerned, I doubt if the per capita income is as high today as it was then.

Woods

I'm sure it's less today.

Hawkins

Yeah.

Woods

I worked at a conference as a facilitator, the National Civic League. They had their annual meeting last weekend. [Henry G.] Cisneros was the outgoing chairman. They had a panel. They had Brenda Shockley, Willie L. Williams, Michael Woo, Antonia Hernandez, Linda Griego, and those type- It was sort of interesting at the end of the conference that everybody agreed that Los Angeles was basically not coming together; it was actually more fragmented after [the 1992 Los Angeles] rebellion than it was before. Williams was talking about how after the bombing in Philadelphia that sort of brought the community together. Everybody's treating him like he's the mayor, and he has to tell people he's not the mayor. But there still does seem to be a leadership problem. But also other people were talking about the 60 percent unemployment among black males in the community, and it was approaching record-high levels.

Hawkins

Well, that's distinctly much worse than ever, much worse than ever, and it's becoming even more accentuated. I think that unless something is done about that, it's going to really be destructive. I had a page from a recent report that I was just looking over that detailed that trend. This was from *Within Our Reach* [by Lisbeth B. Schorr]. But it's a very startling statistic, I think, to an outsider; some of us are pretty aware of it.

Black employment and earning prospects for so many black men contribute to the black marriage prospects of black women. By 1986, one of every two black families was headed by a woman. The Center for the Study of Social Policy has projected that by the year 2000

-which is just a few years away-

in the absence of intervention, 70 percent of black families will be headed by single women and fewer than 30 percent of black men will be employed."

Well, if we have less than 30 percent of black men employed, that doesn't speak too well of our prospects.

Woods

Right. There was also a guy there from I guess it's the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives, which is, I guess, located in Alexandria or

somewhere around here. He did that study about the 40-some percent of black males in [Washington] D.C. are involved in criminal justice, 50-some in Baltimore, and I think he's about to do one on L.A. But, yeah, it's a huge incarceration. Almost two-thirds of the prison population is black. You know, people get caught up in the criminal justice process. In fact, maybe we can start there on that question.

Hawkins

Okay, good.

Woods

Because he made the assertion that it was the California criminal justice system that created groups like the Bloods and the Crips and the Mexican Mafia and the Aryan Brotherhood by taking people in so young, not giving them any training, sort of warehousing them, and being sort of a brutal institution. And I guess when people came out they had fewer employment opportunities because they had these criminal records. What do you see as the role of the criminal justice system in the rising up of the gang movement? When did it occur and-?

Hawkins

I don't think one can really look to the system-the criminal justice system, as such-as a solution. That to me is somewhat the remedial approach. I think it can do a much better job and that there are weaknesses in that system. But two-thirds of those who are in the prisons are functionally illiterate, which indicates to me that one of the basic causes is unequal educational opportunities. And when I say that, I'm thinking of the entire system going back to birth, from birth, early childhood. That's when we get off the track. In the first grade, for example, one can pretty well tell how many of minorities are going to end up in prison, jail, and so forth, on welfare, etc. That's when the problem should be attacked, in my opinion, at that point, rather than waiting until problems develop. Behavior problems, law infractions, they start out very minor, then they build up. Sometimes individuals form gangs as a means of expressing themselves and looking to really define themselves in terms of gang activity. It's sort of a natural thing to do, I think, in that respect.But I think one has to begin at birth. Over a period of years, we

have developed programs in order to do that. We have the WIC [Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children] program for dealing with pregnant women, we have nutrition programs ending up in the school system-school nutrition programs-we have early childhood programs and preschool programs. The best example of that is Head Start. But many of these programs are pathetically underfunded. And although some of them are twenty-five years old or have been in existence longer, that funding is no better now than what it was twenty-five or thirty years ago. Head Start, for example, reaches approximately 20 percent of children who are eligible. So that means that four-fifths of those who should benefit from early childhood development as represented by Head Start do not get the benefits. So many of those individuals that we're talking about who, we will say, deviate in social behavior are drawn from that four-fifths that are really not benefited, and then we say, "Well, don't we have Head Start?" Well, we do have it, but only for a small number.Now, after Head Start we had followed through with a program [Follow Through] in order to retain the gains that children in Head Start make. Then, in 1965 we enacted the Elementary and Secondary Education Act-now known as the Chapter One Funding Program-in which we try to concentrate on educational deficiencies among the disadvantaged. Again, it's sort of a remedial program, but it's there to give many of them a second chance, to pick up on those who didn't get benefited earlier in the Head Start and the other programs.But there again, the act is pathetically underfunded; about 40 percent of those who are eligible get this aid. And those who get the aid get it at a very low amount, so that the quality of our schools is largely determined by unequal funding. A child in a ghetto receives about- Well, let's put it another way. Affluent districts in Los Angeles, for example, suburban districts or Beverly Hills or other school districts, receive two or three times more than the kids in South Central [Los Angeles] in their schools. So you don't attract competent and caring teachers, you don't have the same facilities, you don't have the same curriculum, because you don't have those who can teach, so again you have inequality.So we look at the end result of all of this, and you see people in prisons and in our jails who are denied an equal opportunity from the very beginning and who are surrounded by an environment that does not value education and belonging to a community affiliation as well as in other areas. So I would not blame the victims; I would try to go back and trace back and look at the causes and start

at that level. We need to start when a child is born-because they're all born equal, in effect-and assume that, if given an opportunity with early intervention and competent guidance, every child can make it and generally does. We've proved it.

Woods

Yeah. I had a chance to look at some of your papers in terms of social policies in California in the forties, and it does seem like a lot of these programs go in cycles. I think that immediately after the war [World War II] you were pushing for the continuation of day care and housing, and they did have some social programs in California. What happened? It did seem like there were some food programs, some social programs, and then there was a push to eliminate them. Where did that push come from? Because those programs seem to be the ones we're still advocating now.

Hawkins

Well, most of the programs that we started at that time, including child care-I guess is a good example-have continued to exist, but their existence has been more symbolic than real. We don't have a comprehensive child care program today that any child can qualify for and one that will provide the type of services that are needed. Unfortunately we have gone in the direction of looking at such programs as custodial in nature rather than educational.In my opinion, parents, particularly mothers, are very desirous of their children being adequately cared for. They will work and spend the time outside of the home if it means that their children will be given an opportunity to obtain good education, health benefits, sound nutrition, and things of that nature. But our child care has become, in the minds of many, purely custodial-that is just simply keeping the child, maybe not providing the child the type of training that's needed. The staff involved in child care are the poorest paid among our wage earners. They do not necessarily qualify on an educational basis, and in order to do it, they may like children, and that's it. Now, liking children is one thing, but teaching children and giving them the early skills that they need, that's quite different. And you have to pay for that. You have to have qualifications.But that's the way our job here has developed. Many women who are criticized for not getting out to work should not be criticized, because there are not really facilities for caring for their children the way they

should be cared for. It would be my idea that we should have good child care: it should be regulated, it should be thoroughly supported, it should be governmentally assisted, and that that- We shouldn't even call some of the day care that children receive child care. I think it's like leaving your child with a stranger merely to get rid of the child, and that's about all that it is.I would hook it to a large extent with the school system. I think it should be a part of the school system, and it should be all day. We have many children-we call them "latchkey children"-who are dismissed from school and have no home to go to or no one at home when they get there and who roam the streets and get into trouble. And I think that by having all-day care the year round we take care of many of those problems. Many of those kids become delinquent as a result of the lack of child care.

Woods

I see you're really up on the current issues and-

Hawkins

Well, this is what we've been fighting for for years. Even up into the last two or three sessions of Congress we tried to get through a bill. One time we virtually had a bill that was completed, but it was the stubbornness of the Ways and Means Committee [House Committee on Ways and Means] in the Congress that blocked us. There were two or three members of that committee who, for selfish reasons, blocked the bill.

Woods

So you're a lobbyist now or-?

Hawkins

No, I'm not a lobbyist.

Woods

An adviser?

Hawkins

I'm simply working through a foundation [Hawkins Family Memorial Foundation for Educational Research and Development] that I created some twenty years ago that was engaged in economic development. What I'm doing

now is using that foundation to work in conjunction with other organizations and foundations to try to get some of these ideas into legislation, adopted and then funded. Our biggest problem is that we don't have the funding for some of these programs and they are not being strengthened the way they should be or are not being implemented, and that's what we're trying to work on. It's a purely voluntary operation that I engage in; I get no compensation for lobbying, as such. I make contact with members of Congress and with universities and schools and work with various school districts. In this area, I work with Prince Georges County school district and the Montgomery [County] school district [Maryland]. But then I also work with universities: the University of Pittsburgh, Columbia [University], Howard University, and so on.

Woods

On policy or-?

Hawkins

Formulation of policy, but primarily right now its implementation. Laws on the statute books do all that we need to do, but they're not being enforced, they're not being implemented. The Department of Education has all the personnel we need, they have the mechanisms, they have the National Diffusion Network to disseminate information, they have the means of identifying schools and school practices that are successful in teaching the most critically disadvantaged children. All of this is a matter of knowledge, but we're not applying it.

Woods

So you work with Howard and Columbia looking at how to apply these practices-?

Hawkins

How to apply them. An example, I believe one of the big issues is teacher development-training teachers, principals, and those who work in our schools. We don't have nearly enough teachers who know their subjects and who care about teaching and who have the right ideas about what to expect from children. Too many do not expect very much from minority children, for example, so they don't attempt to teach as well because they don't expect the

children to learn. Yet there are some examples where the most critically disadvantaged children are learning. I would say the department should be operated in such a way as to identify such programs, such schools, and to make the information available to all other schools and districts and to train the staff to expect children to learn so that they can be taught. If a child doesn't learn algebra or calculus it's because the child never is taught that. Then you test a child eventually and the test shows the child doesn't know algebra or calculus. Well, the child doesn't know it because the child never was taught it. So we say the child is dumb and we track that child into some other field.

Woods

Well, maybe we can start in Los Angeles in the fifties, during the migration. What was the impact of the migration on, say, the existing black community? Did the large numbers of people come in the fifties, late forties, early sixties? And what were some of the responses of the officials and corporate leaders and also black community leaders, African American-?

Hawkins

Well, the area was practically overrun by migrants from, I would say, Louisiana, Texas, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, primarily because of economic conditions in those areas-some natural phenomena such as the dustbowl migration from Arkansas-and also civil rights violations; lynchings had occurred annually at a very high rate, and many blacks were leaving the South because of a lack of civil rights. At the same time, they were attracted to other areas that they felt offered them better jobs, economic opportunities. So you had both professional people as well as laboring masses of people.The first great migration was up the Mississippi River to places like Kansas City and Chicago, but later it went west. There was some idea that it was a land of golden opportunities-orange groves and beautiful beaches-and life was all a matter of milk and honey, you know, and many came. At first many went to Oakland, San Francisco, but for some reason that climate did not accommodate them as well as Southern California, so they flocked there. My own family came out to Los Angeles in the early twenties. After having gone to Denver, they just simply moved westward.The area was pretty well isolated. It was the South Central area that seemed to offer the greatest attraction for

most of them. You had these hordes of people piling into the area. An area that was completely white turned around in a few years to become black. My schooling at Jefferson High School in the central part of the area, for example, I think illustrates the turnover. When I went to Jefferson-it was in the early twenties-I think there were about a dozen, or not more than twelve or fifteen, black children. Now I would doubt that there are twenty or fifty white children. It became mostly black, and now it's become, I suppose, practically Hispanic because of a majority of Hispanics in the area. So it shows that evolution from white to black to brown.The opportunities were plentiful. There were a lot of small businesses. I recall that along Central Avenue, every other block was a black-owned drugstore. We had a great assortment of restaurants along Central Avenue. Eventually there developed a hotel-first called the Somerville Hotel and then the Dunbar Hotel. There was another big hotel at Washington [Boulevard] and Central called the Clark Hotel. That's where most of the railroad men stayed. Mr. [Horace] Clark had a contract with the railroad companies to put their people up overnight, and it was a very prosperous hotel. All of this existed at that time, so that there were wonderful opportunities.As far as the segregation was concerned, blacks really accommodated themselves to the segregation. They really had no other places to move to because of restrictive covenants. There developed an area on the west side around Jefferson [Boulevard] and Normandie [Avenue], but the vast majority of blacks lived on the east side. That means the so-called bigshots, upper-class blacks, lived on the east side. Homes were usually privately owned rather than rented, which indicates a degree of prosperity.And all of this attracted others. When people from Texas or Louisiana came out and wrote back South, it made people in the South believe that this was heaven. So it kept coming throughout that period of time and didn't slow down till after the war itself, and really hasn't slowed down altogether even now. You still have that immigration. I found that in my representation of the area, first as state assemblyman, that when I would send down a mailing to the area, a year later or two years later, when I sent a second mailing, the second mailing indicated that over one-third of the people had moved. So there's a great movement in and out. As people became more prosperous, they moved elsewhere, and it was the newcomers, the people generally from the South, who moved into the area.In a sense, it was a port of entry. What we tried to do was to acclimate these people, tried to educate

them, tried to get them civic-minded and so forth, in order to be good, solid citizens in terms of owning property and paying their bills and getting jobs. Now, of course, political complications in the early years interfered with this, because all the leaders were not, in a sense, independent of political ties. That proved to be a barrier to some of this. But that's another story.

Woods

When you say acclimated, what kind of things-? Would you have meetings or-?

Hawkins

Well, we tried to get them into their churches. At that time, the lodges or the Fraternal Order of Elks and then the Masons did a wonderful job of assimilating them. We tried to get them into unions when unions became popular, where they would have some organizational attachment. We tried to get them into the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association], YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association], and there give them courses in citizenship. We used the schools for public meetings. We used the Elks hall, which was very popular as a meeting place, at Jefferson and Central. The civil liberties department of the Elks had, for example, forums every Friday night, and individuals would go there and attend. We would show them how to read their meter bills or gas bills and so forth so they wouldn't be overcharged. We provided them with a great amount of civic information on candidates and how they should vote and how they should register. These are some of the things that we attempted to do in conjunction with a lot of other community people.

Woods

So these were not urban residents. These were rural plantation residents who were coming- My dissertation is on the [Lower Mississippi] Delta [Development] Commission, which [William J.] Clinton was the head of for '88-'90-a federal commission supposed to deal with rural poverty in the seven Delta states, but mainly Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi. So a lot of what I'm finding- I'm preparing to do work on Los Angeles and sort of look at the people, why they came from Louisiana and Texas, and then what happened when they came to Los Angeles. One of the things I'm seeing as to why they

came is the human rights issues in the South, but also the mechanization, and even the- You know the mechanization, some people argue, was a response to the Brown decision [*Brown* v. *Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*]. Some people in the South, the dominant agricultural interests, thought that this progress, this push for democracy coming from [Harry S] Truman and [Dwight D.] Eisenhower integrating the services but coming through Brown- That eventually the people would get the opportunity to vote, but that mechanization was a way to sort of solve the problems. Or even at the height of the Civil Rights movement you have a lot of people being displaced. So I guess these were really rural residents that were coming in.

Hawkins

Basically, yes. I think mechanization, or let us say automation, was a little bit later. I think that started in the sixties. But the earlier people who came were largely those who made two or three moves, I would suspect. Now, I have not made an intensive study of this, but from empirical knowledge of many of them, I think they were rural people in the South who possibly moved to cities-first small towns, but then made a second move westward and northward because of opportunities of the industries that were opening up: meat cutters, automobile assembly, and things of that nature. There were many who probably moved to California to the rural areas first but who just didn't stay there long, I think. We had at that time in California a great cotton industry, and many came out because they were cotton pickers and then found that that was not as attractive as moving to Los Angeles or to Oakland. So I think you had several moves going on at the same time, and I think that basically it was because major industries were employing them: steel and rubber, the automobile industry, and industries such as that in northern cities.Now, in the West, I think most of them moved because they could get jobs in restaurants and hotels and various services, and they were the first to be employed in these service industries. Many didn't stay there very long. But they were basic industries, and some paid relatively well as compared with what had been paid to them in southern cities.Now, some obviously moved merely because of human rights. Whenever there was a lynching or a riot in a major area of the South, blacks just moved en masse, just moved away. Many of them left their property and all of their belongings and just moved to some better place.

Woods

So what were some of the first industries that opened up to-?

Hawkins

Well, in which area are you talking-?

Woods

In South Central.

Hawkins

Oh, in South Central? Well, government employment was a basic one.

Woods

This was in the fifties or forties?

Hawkins

Well, in the forties, I'd say. Agriculture was at that time a popular one, but that was largely in the Central Valley and in the Imperial Valley. Many were employed in utilities, gas and electric utilities, and many were employed in Metropolitan Water [District of Southern California] development. A line was built from the Colorado [River] into Southern California, and many were employed on that line. Water from the Owens Valley opened up a great transmission of water from the mountains. [tape recorder off] As I recall, a tremendous number of blacks were employed in those projects. And they lasted for several years. Now, this was during Depression years, so you have to keep in mind that unemployment was very, very high. But such projects like that employed a tremendous number.Blacks were never a factor in the early development of the motion picture industry; they occupied very peripheral roles at that time. My guess is more were employed in such things as catering and personal service to the motion picture stars, as chauffeurs and in that capacity, rather than directly in the artistic end, although the few who were were given the special attention of a lot of publicity. But it was primarily, I think, in very, very peripheral roles.The water and power bureau employed quite a few. As I've said, blacks had not yet been able to get into federal service. The post office did not offer a great amount of opportunities at first. Later it did. They flooded into that when that opened up, but that was

somewhat later than the forties. We were into the fifties, I guess, almost before we had any appreciable number in federal service.

Woods

So people weren't coming for defense industry employment?

Hawkins

Later, in the late forties- Well, in World War II, when the defense industries opened up, it opened up a lot of opportunities. But we're talking about a little later period; I was referring primarily to the earlier period.Now, during World War II, our defense industries did attract many, and it also made other changes in the life-style of blacks, because many women, for example, who had worked in household service came out of household employment and became welders and riveters in the defense industries. That's when child care became very, very popular. I recall that the first effort I made to get child care centers was objected to on the basis of being a socialistic experiment. The L.A. *Times,* for example, editorialized against me. But later, when the defense industries opened up and it was necessary to employ women in the industry, it was a great American practice, and it became patriotic to do so. So I got all the support that I needed in those days to promote child care, because it became necessary to industry to have women employed. A scarcity of employment promoted that.

2. Tape Number: I, Side Two November 17, 1992

Woods

I remember reading a story on Chief [William H.] Parker. It was after the Watts rebellion, and he was saying that basically they were-they meaning African Americans, blacks-flooding in, he said, 12,000 a year or some enormous number, 12,000 a day, something sort of ridiculous. But there seemed to be this-at least it came across in his article-almost panic by some of the officials that they were being overflooded. He was stating that if the migration rate continued at this level, blacks would soon be the majority and overwhelm the entire city. Was that response prevalent? Was there really a fear of this huge migration? I know there were a lot of incidents defending the covenants and residential boundaries. Could you discuss that?

Hawkins

Well, I assume there was a great fear on the part of whites of the great phenomenon of many movements of blacks into the area, unassimilated blacks who really were there for the first time in all of the neighborhoods, and the white flight to the suburbs. Because the whites suddenly were able to sell their homes at a very exorbitant price, so it was to their benefit to move out. They could move out and live much better at the same time, but they were getting away from all of these blacks moving in, with a certain amount of racism probably involved. I would not, however, rate then-Chief Parker as a social scientist with any degree of credibility.I would certainly say that he probably looked upon his problem in trying to enforce the law among many individuals who obviously were sensitive to human rights. That's the reason they came in. That's the reason they came to the area to begin with. So it was not the criminal element, as such, moving away; it was people who really were very knowledgeable of human rights-a lot of professional people, technical people, and so on included-so that suddenly you had an area that was not really controlled but obviously dominated by blacks who supported human rights.Now, there the concentration of blacks in such an area presented both a political opportunity and also serious problems. We had then what was known as the Sixty-second Assembly District, which was the district I represented in the assembly. That district covered virtually all of the blacks outside of the isolated areas on Central [Avenue], the west side, a few in Pico Heights, and other places. But the vast majority-I would say two-thirds-were in that assembly district. At the same time, the [Los Angeles] City Council is made up of fifteen councilmanic districts, four of which were in that assembly district, so that whoever politically controlled, in effect, that assembly district was very influential in four votes on the city council.Some whites recognized that and tried to develop that control through being able to control the assembly district. And in controlling that, they controlled, in effect, a large bloc of votes in those councilmanic districts. And if they did that, they went a long way towards controlling the city council, and they could, through that control, elect councilmen, elect the mayor of the city, and so on. So that presented an opportunity to use law enforcement to tolerate gambling and prostitution, and at that time, Prohibition, the flow of liquor and whatnot, and consequently, that developed an opportunity to increase the political graft and corruption in the city. And that setup, strange as it may seem, was used

for a long time by political machines, such as the [Frank L.] Shaw machine, the Pete [Erwin P.] Werner machine, the so-called Werner machine, which was really dominated by his wife [Helen Werner]. She was known as Queen Werner. They used that machine to dominate the politics and in that way try to control and keep blacks in line.Now, obviously, they had to have the law enforcement agencies, primarily the city department, so that your chief of police used that setup. First, the Shaw machine used it. They controlled the police department. That's why, in a later period of time, some of us who were young and rather, let us say, aggressive-some would say we were reckless-looked to that leadership of the assembly district as being the key to breaking up that political domination and trying to liberate, in effect, the thinking and voting habits of- We saw the numbers, and we wanted to use those numbers ourselves for community improvement, and that later presented an opportunity and led into some political activities.But getting back to your original thought, I'm confident that, as many newcomers came in, law enforcement officials viewed with some degree of alarm what might happen if these people suddenly became more active in voting and exercising their rights and used law enforcement many times to crush opposition. They had what was known as a Red squad, I suppose to control the communists. Well, everybody was a communist who challenged this machine. So you automatically were viewed as a communist or someone that was going to be crushed by even speaking out about this situation of the city being gerrymandered in such a way that blacks were really denied, as effectively as they had been denied in the South, their rights.

Woods

Could you give an example of how the Red squad was used in local black politics?

Hawkins

They attempted to break up any assembly of people who did not agree with their views.

Woods

This is in the forties and fifties?

Hawkins

This was in the forties, and it possibly lasted over into the fifties as well. But it was largely under the Shaw machine.If, for example, a meeting was staged and the purpose of the meeting was to speak in terms of lower gas and electric bills or to speak in opposition to the rising fares on the public transportation system- At that time we had streetcars, and, as I recall, it started out at a nickel, and the fare was raised to six cents- I know when I ran for office I ran on the platform of reducing the seven-cent car fare back to six cents. It shows how obsolete we become sometimes. But if the meeting was of that nature, the tone of it was to oppose the leadership that was then entrenched.The political leadership was primarily built around the one who controls the employment on the railways, streetcars, and so forth. And when I say employment, I mean not as motormen and conductors, because they didn't have blacks doing that. It was cleaning the cars, primarily things like that. Well, Pop Sanders was a big Republican who controlled that. The man who controlled the employment of janitors in the public buildings there-in the [Los Angeles] County Hall of Justice, [Los Angeles] County Hall of Records, and so on-was a fellow by the name of [L. G.] Robinson. He controlled them. Those who controlled employment with the utilities, the gas company and the other companies, who were able to employ a number of individuals, all of these people were the real leadership.They had some ministers. The Second Baptist [Church] was the church most often used so that anyone who opposed any of these leaders- The newspaper editor of the*California Eagle* at that time, the Basses [Charlotta A. and Joseph B.], for example. So if you had a meeting and you did not have these people represented but you had people who, in effect, criticized them for some of their activity, that became a meeting which had to be broken up or in some way controlled. And many times the Red Squad would march through the meeting, you know, sort of intimidating, and those who were promoting the meeting were hounded around the streets as-and suspected and classified as-communist suspects. And if you violated a simple infraction, you were arrested. You always knew that you had to walk a very straight line so that you could not be arrested. That's how serious it became.It was only the younger people who were unattached-maybe students-who dared to brave these practices. One of the principal ones in the early days was Leon [H.] Washington [Jr.] of the [*Los Angeles] Sentinel.* He had a throwaway newspaper which published a lot of the things that were going on, and he was arrested several times. [H. Claude] Hudson, the old man, H. C. Hudson, was

put in jail for daring to go down to one of the public beaches. Minor infractions that led to their arrest.

Woods

Well, let's continue with the political discussion. I had this article which was, I guess, by Booker Griffin, that I found among your papers, and-

Hawkins

Boy, the name comes back. I had forgotten.

Woods

He had a series about the different factions: the [Samuel W.] Yorty faction and the [Jesse M.] Unruh faction and which city councilmen were part of the Unruh faction and who programmed with what faction and-

Hawkins

Oh, yeah, I see this. Unruh. Well, I was anti-Unruh; I was never a part of his faction. When I went to Sacramento to the state assembly, I was only the second black who was elected to any statewide office. Actually there were not many elected to any other office except perhaps some local boards of education. Being a public official was a very unusual thing and, I would say, a very lonely thing in a way. The man who preceded me, a very able fellow from education, was Fred [Frederick M.] Roberts. Fred Roberts was Republican and served sixteen years in Sacramento. So he was a veteran of Sacramento when I defeated him and, I would say, a pretty highly respected man, very able-I said he was able. And a newspaper editor. When I went there, it was fighting against machine control. Actually, I had to fight machine control to get there, so I was very much committed and very ideologically opposed to the idea of a machine being able to dominate-

Woods

You didn't want to establish your own or-?

Hawkins

No, I never had a machine myself, unfortunately in a way, because it was always a matter of just brute campaigning. Machines depend on either money or jobs. If you're able to provide jobs for people- I mean political patronage.

Were you able to pay, you could build a machine without that.Well, we didn't have money to begin with, and as far as patronage is concerned, California is not a good state. It's practically a civil service state, so that I would say 90 percent of the jobs are under civil service, and they're not patronage jobs. So we didn't have a lot of jobs to give out. We fought for jobs, but only in a generic sense. We fought for opportunities for individuals, who, if qualified, could go into the various fields. That's the reason we went into anti-discrimination in employment legislation, in order to break down discrimination so blacks could get jobs in various industries-jobs in that sense, but not political jobs. Whether you were a Republican or Democrat or you favored a candidate, it didn't make any difference; you had to pass the civil service exam. So that's what we-

Woods

Were they also biased exams?

Hawkins

Well, bias is in the exams obviously, yeah. And we even had to fight even against that. We fought against, for example, the weighting of exams, so that if you pass a written and were flunked on the oral that- We tried to do away with that practice of weighting the exam too much on the oral part of it. For a long number of years, firemen, for example, didn't get jobs, because they were otherwise qualified but just never were able to get through an oral examination. So we fought that. We fought for jobs in that sense.But getting back to the thought of this article, when I went to Sacramento, I preceded people like Unruh. I was there before them and some of the other black officials. I don't know how many are there now, but we only- As I say, I was the only one for a long time, the only one. Later I was joined by one, but from Oakland, [W.] Byron Rumford, and the two of us for a long time were the only two.Unruh came along and was what I would call a ward heel politician who saw a great opportunity of using his position in Sacramento to control a large bloc of votes. His technique was to go to lobbyists. At that time, you had four or five lobbyists to every member who had money to spend-big entertainment fund and campaign money to hand out and election-and he became, in a sense, a broker for these lobbyists. So that instead of contributing directly to a candidate, they would give the money to him, and he would hand it out, so

that if you're on his list you automatically got your campaign money paid for.In terms of minorities, he could see that minorities who were then becoming interested in running for office would need a large amount of money to get elected. So he approached every prospect for an office-assemblyman in this instance-with the idea that "I'll back you and elect you," and he put that package together. And if you belonged to him, you were in his pocket, then obviously you got elected because you got the money to campaign on. If you were not too well known, it meant a great deal-several mailings and sheets and everything else. Not only that, but the lobbyists who gave him the money also sent the word down so that the newspapers and everybody else sort of fell in line. So that's the way he built his machine up. I was never, as I say, in his machine, because personally I just didn't like the man, his method of operation or his- I always suspected him of being somewhat of a racist anyway and using blacks.Now, eventually he asked the members who were elected to support his candidate for speaker. It's a spoils systemin Sacramento; it's not a seniority system. No matter how long you've been there, it's- If you vote for the speaker, then you get all of the spoils. Having voted for the speaker, he names you to the committees, and you get on the committee you want. So not supporting him, I never got the right to name the committee that I was put on or to earn some of the other perks that those members earned. But I ran for the Rules Committee, chairman of the Rules Committee.Now, the Rules Committee is the only committee in Sacramento that is not a part of the spoils system. You are elected as chairman of the Rules Committee by the other Democrats, so it's done in a caucus, and the speaker does not control it. I, for a number of years, was chairman of the Rules Committee. The Rules Committee, in effect, was the administrative body that controlled the appointment of different staff people, so it was, in a sense, somewhat powerful. So that's what I did instead and never worried about being appointed necessarily to any of the other committees. I didn't get the other committees of my choice-So that's pretty much- I don't know. I guess this article is somewhat about that. Having said that, then it's pretty obvious that those who were elected- I'm not saying everybody who was elected was necessarily a stooge of Unruh; it was a convenient relationship, and many, I think, some at least, became fairly independent and good people. And some good people were elected, so

everybody was not necessarily disqualified because he happened to go along with Unruh. Sometimes it's a matter of convenience.

Woods

So it reached down into the city council?

Hawkins

It reached down into the city council because the whole thing somewhat revolved around being able to persuade the voters in that area that black officials could be elected and were being elected.Early on there were some politicians, black politicians, who daily got up and went down to the city hall just as if they had a job there, or they were councilmen themselves. They would go down and sit outside the council chambers. They had several benches outside, and they'd sit on the outside, and they would go through resolutions and act as if, in a sense, they were members. They'd debate among themselves. We'd call them the "black city council." But they had no official connection. It's somewhat like the shadow senator here in the district. No official connection, but they'd do that daily. And some were very articulate; some were very, very bright. And it was a long time before we were able to get a councilman elected who could go inside officially and sit on the council. Technically, [Gilbert W.] Lindsay was the first one. But he used to sit outside on that bench, and he later on became a member of the council.

Woods

Who else was on that bench?

Hawkins

The best name I can recall was Lindsay. There were others, and I'm trying to think of- A couple were jackleg lawyers; their names slip me for the time being. Many had actually studied law and were practicing as if- They had never passed the bar, but they would go down to the county library, and that was their office. And if they wanted to interview a client, they would say, "Come down to this number. I'll be there all day." They would go and sit at one of the tables in the county library, and they'd practice law outside of- Now, they could only draw up wills and notarize. Some were notary publics, but a notary public at that time was almost assumed to be a lawyer, because in the deep

South many notary publics are the only ones who notarize papers, so they had the flavor of practicing law. Of course, we had legitimate lawyers, two very outstanding ones at that time. But these people were among those who sat outside the city council.But Lindsay was always ambitious. He was in the Department of Water and Power. He was the head janitor there. He had an office in the basement, and his office was sort of his political office. He became quite well known as an employee in the water and power bureau. They employed some blacks in the water and power bureau, and Lindsay was, in effect, the head guy over the employees in that department. I recall when I first knew him, I would go downtown and go to his office, and we became quite friendly. Technically, he was the first one, I think, who was named to the city council and then elected. Then, later, we had Bradley and several others.But it was quite a battle. It was a battle to become first in anything: the first conductor, the first person in the gas company. I recall we fought like hell to get a head janitor for the telephone company; the telephone company didn't employ blacks. So there was a fellow there who worked there for a long time, all of his life, and we fought like hell for the position of just head custodian in a local office of the telephone company. The first councilman, the first black judge, the first black superintendent in the post office, these were all firsts that- It was a battle to get each and every one of them.

Woods

Yeah. I've looked at some things on the defense industry, and I guess there was a women's march on the Federal Building at some point to get the defense industry to open up in the forties, during the war-the victory campaigns, something like that. But there still seems to have been- When they did open up, they maybe hired one or two people. It was still a question up until a couple of years ago about the hiring in the defense industry. Was that part of the-?

Hawkins

That was part of it in the early years. I've forgotten about the victory committee, but they spearheaded the thing.But the thing that gave it the greatest impetus was the hearings that A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters-a national organization of sleeping car porters, which he headed- They held hearings throughout the country,

including Los Angeles-San Francisco, too, I think-on the opening up of defense industries. Now, Randolph was very close to the political situation then; he was a friend of Eleanor Roosevelt, a very fearless individual, organizer, and feared, really, by the power structure, because he couldn't be bought. He held hearings on the defense industry employment, and out of that came a national fair employment practices committee that later spearheaded the drive and demanded the creation of the [California State] Fair Employment Practices Commission, which lead to the creation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act [1964], which I was involved in, and the establishment of that commission-which is still in existence-first in the [Franklin D.] Roosevelt administration and then in the Truman administration, and led to the March on Washington in 1963 that got the Civil Rights Act and got Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, which established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, to break down such discrimination that was not only in industry, it was in the unions. We were able to break through many discriminations.Now, blacks were very anti-union because they did discriminate, and they were being used as strikebreakers. So the situation was unhealthy, really, for both sides. The blacks were used as strikebreakers, but after the strike was over, they weren't employed. So it didn't help them, and it made it harder for them to get into the unions. On the other hand, we had to fight with them in order to get admission into the unions. And there were many blacks who opposed us even on that, because you had some of the unions controlled by blacks, but they were separate unions. We had a tough time trying to get the breakdown of discrimination among musicians, for example. They had their own unions, and they preferred to be president, secretary, and so forth, of their own unions, and they resisted. It was Randolph and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters that primarily spearheaded the drive and got us along in that respect and got blacks into the unions, so that the area that I represent turned from being anti-union to pro-union.

Woods

So when you started engaging in the Fair Employment Practices Commission campaign, that was part of a national movement that you were-? Were you in contact with Randolph and other people in New York?

Hawkins

Yes. We were very active with- When I say active, we met with him, we knew him, and we promoted his activity wherever we could. Randolph was never really involved in political activity, but he was a very influential political figure because of what he really did in organizing people along labor lines. And his hearings were well attended. Whenever he went around the country, his public speeches were directed at liberating blacks from these old practices. He had to oppose local people in many of the areas. For example, when he came to Los Angeles, his opposition was the newspapers, because the railroad company-the Pullman Company and so forth-put ads in these black newspapers, so they really had bought them. It was the Basses, for example, in Los Angeles that editorialized against his newspaper. They put money out in the black community among various leaders in the churches, in YMCA's, and so on, to boycott his meetings. But in spite of all of this, his meetings were always overwhelmingly attended, and he made quite an imprint on blacks. In my opinion, he was truly one of the real black leaders in this country. I'd rate him among the top three.

Woods

Okay, this was in the forties when he was coming to Los Angeles.

Hawkins

Primarily, yeah.

Woods

Do you remember a particular date when the hearing was?

Hawkins

I can't recall a particular date. They were usually at the Second Baptist Church.

Woods

I've read the *Eagle,* I guess in the fifties, and it was like- When they helped to bring Paul Robeson into the city-

Hawkins

Well, that was later. That's quite later. See, later Mrs. Bass, I guess as atonement, went to the other extreme, and then she became identified with liberals and very liberal people. But that was later years. In the early years, she

was opposed to all of these people. She was opposed to me, she was opposed to Randolph. She was really a tool of the special interests. You'll find out if you go through the *California Eagle* newspapers how this transformation took place. Nobody knows why, but-I don't know whether she ran on the communist ticket or not. I can't recall, and I'm not accusing her of being even a communist, but I somehow- Her causes in the later years were identified with far-out left organizations. Quite a contrast to the early days. Again, by that time, the old man-we used to call him "J"-Joe Bass had died, and she was a widow and became quite independent.

Woods

Yeah, I think she ran for vice president with the Progressive Party.

Hawkins

Was it? I've forgotten who. I know she ran for some big office.

Woods

So what was [Governor Earl] Warren's response to the Fair Employment Practices Commission?

Hawkins

Earl Warren? I had to fight him every inch of the way in Sacramento on fair employment practices. I'd introduced a bill early on-during the war, as a matter of fact-and he was bitterly opposed to it. Earl Warren had been a lobbyist for the district attorneys in the state; that's how he came to Sacramento in the first place. There were many issues in human rights that he was on the other side of, and so consistently-

Woods

Could you give some examples? I know the internment-

Hawkins

Well, he was very much for yellow dog contracts. Those were the contracts signed by union members with companies not to do certain things. He was also a promoter of what we used to call the spy system on the railroads. They had people who went around the country in a sense framing employees of the railroad company for violations, minor violations, because they happened to

be involved in union activity. Earl Warren supported such things. He was against all of our civil rights bills in Sacramento. In the early years, blacks did not testify in courts against whites. They couldn't enforce their contracts with respect to the ownership of property, there were many instances where they were not allowed to ride on the streetcars in San Francisco, all of these infractions. Well, as the D.A. [district attorney], and later as representing the D.A., Earl Warren was on the other side. He was on the wrong side of all of these issues.There was only one issue we coincided with which was quite significant-it became later significant-and that is he favored pre-employment health insurance. And that was very close to me, because I also, for a number of years, fought for prepayment of health insurance, which is still far from being accomplished in the health field. But it so happened that was one thing he was for. But he was against me on everything, and particularly in fair employment practices. So we fought against him until we were able to get a candidate running that we felt would commit himself, and that candidate was "Pat" [Edmund G.] Brown [Sr.]. So we used those years to build up Pat Brown as a candidate based on a commitment that, if elected, he was going to sign a fair employment bill. And Earl Warren, may I say that when he became chief judge, he was completely different. He changed and reversed himself ideologically in his decisions, and we became quite friendly.

Woods

[laughter] Do you know why that change occurred?

Hawkins

I don't know. To this day I don't know. I don't know why. I know he's for prepayment health insurance, because he had a very serious- I think it was his wife who had a health problem, and he had catastrophic illness. I guess he could see how much it cost him, and economically, I guess, it became something that forced him into a belief that prepaid health insurance was a good thing from a personal point of view and then social policy. But as to why he changed once he became a judge, I don't know, because he, as a governor, was a very stern individual, very committed to his ideology. And why the man changed? Thank heavens he did, but I have no recollection to this- We never discussed it. We never discussed it.

Woods

So were you surprised when the Brown decision came up, *Brown* v. *Board of Education* [*of Topeka, Kansas*]?

Hawkins

No, I was not surprised. I knew it was inevitable, but when it would happen, I didn't know whether or not- The timing of it was somewhat surprising, but I just felt that it was inevitable, just like I feel now that eventually the Supreme Court is going to become progressive again. In a global setting, it means our survival as a nation, and I think people are beginning to think in those terms. I think the present Supreme Court is a disgrace, that the people named there are politically motivated, purely politically motivated and not out of respect for constitutional law.

3. Tape Number: II, Side One November 17, 1992

Woods

So maybe the last point is about your actually coming to Washington. I saw some mention of James Roosevelt, and maybe that leads to the question of the creation of the district and who some of the allies were. Did you consider him an ally? And how was the [Twenty-ninth] Congressional District created? Under what circumstances?

Hawkins

I was in Sacramento for twenty-eight years, but long before the end of that twenty-eight years I had thought of Congress. And I can't but express that I did have some aspiration. My area represented only about one-fourth of the district. And it was very difficult to get the people that I know-having not been a part of, say, a political machine or not having a machine of my own-to raise the money that I thought would be needed to run for Congress. So I just waited for my time; I almost had become adjusted to Sacramento as being- Maybe spending another year or two there and quitting. I didn't see much future in Sacramento. The job didn't pay enough to keep a person on a full-time basis, and yet it had become a full-time basis, so from a personal point of view, one is actually serving at one's own personal sacrifice.I had thought of running at the same time that Helen Gahagan Douglas, who didn't live in the district, ran for the office. But she had been active and had just selected a

district that was open. The district happened to be opened by a fellow by the name of Thomas [F.] Ford, who had been in the office for some time as congressman of the district. He decided he would retire, but he didn't tell anyone, and he apparently had selected Helen Gahagan Douglas as his successor and had groomed her for a year or two to become a congressman from the district. We didn't know that. She was active, and a lot of us helped to build her up as a party official not realizing we were building up somebody who was eventually going to use the district as a springboard to get elected to that office. She wanted to be senator, but this was a springboard. So we were caught unaware of the thing when Ford announced his retirement and at the same time-I don't know if it was the same day, but the same time-Helen Gahagan Douglas announced that she was running. Well, she had a head start, she had the money, her husband was a movie star, and she-

Woods

Melvyn Douglas?

Hawkins

Melvyn Douglas, yeah. Melvyn Douglas. And she was presumably well liked. We introduced her around in various activities. It's very difficult to say very much against an individual that you had been commending for such a long time, so that opportunity was foreclosed due to many circumstances. So we didn't run, because I didn't think we could afford to put out the money, and I didn't think we could raise it.But after a few years, after she represented the district for some time, we began thinking again that the time has come. But then it happened that reapportionment-that would be the census of 1960-indicated that additional districts would be created. So it was a matter of putting together the creation of a congressional district that we thought would favor a minority candidate. So I went to Jimmy Roosevelt, and he agreed to go on with a program to give up some of his district [the Eleventh Congressional District]. He lived in Beverly Hills. We also had a good friend from Long Beach by the name of Clyde [G.] Doyle, who represented the eastern area of what is now that congressional district [the Twenty-third Congressional District]. He also agreed to give up some of his area. So we had two congressmen, sitting congressmen, who agreed that they would give up some of their areas to put together a congressional district.So when it was put

together it was pretty much a district that we dictated the outline of. At that time, it was roughly about 65 percent African American and low-income people. Well, many of the people in the district who were white were still strong Democrats, so it was an easy matter. I think we possibly spent maybe $5,000-I don't think we spent any more than that-in getting elected the first time, and a lot of that was really unnecessary. But I think it was a rather small amount compared to what most campaigns would cost. We were trying to get the costs down so that it wouldn't be very costly.

Woods

You say "we." Who were your supporters?

Hawkins

Well, just personal friends of mine and not any particular ones. We did have the support of the [*Los Angeles] Sentinel.* Leon [H.] Washington [Jr.] always supported us. He was very, very supportive. The labor people in the area, the [Los Angeles City] Central Labor Council, as I recall, was also on our side in helping to carve out the district and to get elected. The labor people, the local newspapers, and by that time we had a few ministers who were very active in supporting us.

Woods

[H. Hartford] Brookins?

Hawkins

No, not Brookins. I don't even know whether Brookins was in the city or not. But we were never really one of Brookins's supporters; he was never one of our main supporters. He was primarily interested in city hall, I guess. He and [Thomas] Bradley were close. But we had the Southern Christian Leadership Conference group, Clayton [D.] Russell when he was alive, but I don't recall whether Clayton Russell had passed away by that time.

Woods

[H. Claude] Hudson?

Hawkins

Hudson. We had the strong support of Hudson and his group. Small business type of people supported us.

Woods

Well, I guess you really had no opponents.

Hawkins

The strongest was a lawyer. I'm trying to think of his name. Porter. But as I recall, the opposition did not spend a lot of money. It happened to be a friend of mine, if I recall. It wasn't any collusion; it was simply someone who conducted a very high-principle type of campaign and opposition. And no dirt or anything like that; it was strictly on the basis of issues.

Woods

Okay. So the last question- I guess we'll end here and finish off tomorrow, but maybe just a little bit on the transition from the [California State] Assembly to Washington. Did you take the same staff?

Hawkins

In the transition from Sacramento to Washington, we did not take the staff because we really didn't have any. We were only entitled to employ two or three people at most-I think two, probably-in the district office of an assemblyman, so we really didn't have staff, as such. And we didn't have a great number of people who wanted to leave Los Angeles for Washington. They didn't see any great advantage. Housing in the Washington area runs about $800 and up a month for an apartment, and if you have a family, you can't afford it, and if you are single, you probably don't care so much about leaving Los Angeles. So we didn't really have any staff.We had a close relationship with Jimmy Roosevelt, and he had a girl in his office named Juanita Terry [Barbee], who was from an old pioneer California family that lived on Adams Boulevard, and she had worked a number of years for Jimmy. As a matter of fact, I recommended her to Jimmy, and he employed her. So she was very familiar with Washington, and when I came to Washington, I asked him if he'd let me have Juanita. Juanita became my office manager and chief staff person for a number of years until she passed away a few years ago. But she was from the old Terry family in Los Angeles. She knew the area, the

area knew her. So that became pretty much the core of my staff. For a number of years we only had about four or five staff people in Washington, so it wasn't a great number.And we were never able to attract many people from Los Angeles to make the change. It's quite a transition. And if you ask people to come back, you feel as if they should have, in effect, a job security. These jobs are not secure. They last only as long as the member, and if the member is dissatisfied, he can terminate them. The turnover is quite great.

Woods

Okay. There was a person on your staff named [William J.] Williams. I forget his-

Hawkins

Bill Williams?

Woods

Bill Williams, yeah.

Hawkins

Yeah, well, he was later employed by me. As a member of Congress, you have a district office, and I opened up a district office, and for a number of years Bill Williams was head of my district office. He has been on the faculty at USC [University of Southern California]. I think he's in a private consulting business now. But for a number of years he was my district office manager, and he had under him two people in the secretarial field. Then later, as an office manager, as opposed to an administrative assistant deputy, we had Edna Woodward, who is a Los Angeles person, who has retired, of course, by now. Her husband [Walter Woodward] was very active in veteran affairs. She was the office manager. And we had three or four others. Two or three who are now on Maxine Waters's staff worked for me and became caseworkers.We tried to provide as much service as we could for our constituents. We were always interested in handling immigration, Social Security, employment, issues like that, and providing information to our constituents. So we dealt a lot in individual cases, and I'll tell you, they are voluminous. I've never seen so much that goes through an office. Because not only did we handle matters which were federal, but everybody came to the office whether it was federal or city

or county. They came there for welfare cases, for example, which we had nothing to do with. It's the county, but we always tried to have good contacts, to provide a service, because there's very little service being provided to people in Los Angeles. It's one of the missing links, I think. People who have problems have no place to go.

Woods

Yeah, I saw some letters from Chino, some from the prison inmates. What about the other congressmen or city council people? Were they as interested in service as-?

Hawkins

Well, some are, some aren't. In my opinion, not too many are. It's a tough thing. You have to have two or three people in the office who do nothing but that, because, as I say, it soon becomes a central office where people come regardless of what problem it is. They give it to you, and it's difficult to say, "Well, this is not a federal matter. You ought to go to your councilman." They say, "Well, can you fix it up for me to get the appointment and explain to my councilman or my supervisor what my problem is?" So it consumes a lot of time, and for that reason very few-Not only that, but I found myself to be handling minority issues regardless of where the people lived. They came countywide. And it was difficult for me to explain to someone who had been discriminated against in a defense job or something like that, or post office or whatnot, that, "I'm not your congressman. Why don't you go to your congressman?" "Oh, he wouldn't understand." Maybe he's a white congressman, you see, so he came to me. And I'm sure that's the situation with respect to black representatives, which means simply that black representatives serve, really, a dual role. Not only are they representing their own districts, they are also, in effect, representing a group of people statewide. I had people who called me or got in touch with me who lived in the northern part of the state. They'd say, "Well, look, you're supposed to be the father of fair employment practices, and I have a matter of discrimination, and I think you ought to do something about it." It's difficult to say that you can't handle all of these cases.So it requires additional staff for that reason, if you get into the business of doing it. And once you start doing it, you're stuck with it. You build up files, and you build up a reputation, and people will

automatically come to you. And any discrimination that takes place in the state, you're supposed to be responsible. You can't explain to the individual that there are boundaries, that there are levels of government, and that you're not over the others. They think a federal official is over the city and over the county. To this very day I've been unable to explain to many people why that isn't so.

Woods

Okay, that's a good place to stop.

3.1. Second Part November 18, 1992

Woods

Before going back to Los Angeles, what do you think of Bill [William J.] Clinton?

Hawkins

Well, I think that he's going to do a good job, myself. He's capable of it. Philosophically, I think we agree with him. I think his approach has been very sound. The problems lie outside, though, of individual ideology and philosophy. I think we have an accumulation of twelve or thirteen years of bad policies, and many structural changes have to be accomplished before we can get back on track. You can't do that overnight. A president has four years to accomplish something, and you have almost the same Congress that you had last time and the same problems.However, this time most of the activity can be done by majority vote rather than trying to get three-fourths or two-thirds in many instances. So that makes it easier, because a minority has to be pretty strong to block things. That's what's happened. Numerically, the Democrats don't really have control. With about forty Democrats more Republican than they are Democratic, you have a problem. Now, I would hope that there are at least forty-one Democrats and twenty-one in the Senate who will be pro-Clinton and go along with him. If so, they can accomplish something.

Woods

You think that the so-called boll weevil Democrats, or southern Democrats, who a lot of times support the Republican agenda-?

Hawkins

They're just as much Republican as- More Republican than they are Democratic. You've always had that problem to contend with. Now, some of them were replaced. I would ordinarily judge that about fifteen, maybe twelve or fifteen, have been replaced with solid Democrats, some of them women, some- Minorities have replaced some of them, so they're not as strong as they were, so we don't have that problem.However, there are some northern Democrats who are conservative, fiscal conservatives, that may give some problem. To them, reducing the deficit is really the issue, and that to me is not an issue at all. Why, a balanced budget can be accomplished, but the proper way to do it is not simply to slash domestic programs. The proper way to do it is through economic growth and targeted domestic programs. Education, the infrastructure, research and development, these are the things that we've neglected over a decade. Giving tax breaks to the wealthy will not do it, because those individuals will invest overseas, wherever they can get the greatest return on their investment. That isn't going to help Americans.

Woods

Getting back to another sort of current event, I remember reading at some point that Malcolm X came to Los Angeles. Was it '63? It was 1963 or 1964, I guess. There was a shooting of one of the members of his organization, and that sort of gets into your perspective on police/black community issues, how they've changed over time. But also, what were your opinions of Malcolm X at the time and-?

Hawkins

I don't recall. I don't recall his visit. Up until quite recently, I don't think he had much impact. I may not be quite familiar with all that he's done, but I'm a little surprised at the great amount of attention which is currently paid to Malcolm X, as opposed to other leaders who've had, I think, much greater impact. Now, as I said, what his impact is and how much he has impacted I don't know, so I'm talking a little bit without knowledge of what he has done. Up until quite recently we never discussed him. His name never surfaced-let's put it that way-in all of the struggle that we've gone through in the Civil Rights movement, in the economic trends and so forth of our time. We never regarded him as being of any great influence, certainly not nearly as much as a

Martin Luther King [Jr.] or even a Stokely Carmichael or a [A. Philip] Randolph or any of the other leaders of the Civil Rights movement.Martin Luther King's philosophy seemed to have dominated most of this, and that's the nonviolence type of approach: sit-ins, boycotts, marches, political action, getting voting rights. Things of this nature seemed to have dominated the struggle pretty much, and any action beyond that was not really even thought of. It didn't really fit in the struggle of black people; they've always been very devout, religious-minded people. Now, that is not to discount the threat of more militant action, but that doesn't characterize the history of black people in America.

Woods

I saw a picture with you and "Pat" [Edmund G.] Brown [Sr.] and Martin Luther King. I would have to check the date. He made a few visits to Los Angeles before 1965. What type of relationship did you have with him, and what were some of his opinions of Los Angeles?

Hawkins

Very cordial. I was never too close to his movement, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference type, but my relationship was primarily- As a member of Congress, we obviously had to implement a lot of his ideas and programs. At that time, we worked on such things as the Voting Rights Act [1965], the Fair Housing Act [1968 amendment to Civil Rights Act of 1968], in the Congress in conjunction with several other congressmen: Don Edwards, Phil [A. Phillip] Burton of San Francisco, and, as I recall, one or two congressmen from New York. We did go South in 1965, right after the Voting Rights Act was signed, and we did encourage registration at that time. We visited on one occasion, as I recall, Dr. King. We requested a visit with him when he was jailed. And in order for us to visit with him, they let him out of jail to go home. So at least we had that much side contribution to his liberation. [laughter]

Woods

That was in Birmingham?

Hawkins

In Birmingham, yeah. We spent a day with him. And I recall, not long after that, at the Democratic National Convention-that would be the one in Atlantic City-he came to the convention. It was through our efforts that he got to meet with Hubert [H.] Humphrey [Jr.] and the delegates who were drafting a civil rights platform. He got an input into that and was very influential in getting the right things into the Democratic platform largely through our intercession. When I said "our intercession," I meant several of us in the California delegation who were fighting at that time for a strong civil rights plank.

Woods

You, Don Edwards, and-

Hawkins

Phillip Burton, and one or two of the congressmen. I'm trying to remember the others. There were about three of us, three or four of us, who at that time went South. We traveled by automobile throughout the area. And this was largely in the Delta region: Mississippi, Alabama.

Woods

What were your impressions during that time?

Hawkins

It was really frightening. We saw a great amount of intimidation. We ourselves were followed all the way through. We were told it was by the Secret Service. We don't know whether they were protecting us or alerting people in the places we went. I think they expected us to test the Civil Rights Act. It had just been signed by President [Lyndon B.] Johnson. We were at the ceremony, and I think it was the next day that we left, and everybody thought we were going to go to the hotels and restaurants and different places to test out the Civil Rights Act.We were really there to talk to and to encourage the people that we knew-Aaron Henry being among them, as I recall, a civil rights leader in the South-to encourage blacks to get out and register. We talked to a lot of people. I think the Student Nonviolent [Coordinating] Committee was one of the groups that we worked with. There were a lot of students down South, both black and white, many from all over the country, and the idea was to encourage them to get out and register in order to vote. That was a very

touching type of thing, because we witnessed many elderly people who for the first time really wanted to vote before they passed away. They really wanted to be able to vote. And we tried to reason with a lot of people to provide what was needed in terms of literacy training and whatnot in order to get them to see the value of voting.But they had been frightened and intimidated so long that many were reluctant. They were afraid that there would be economic reprisals. So the act of registering to vote was quite a decision for many to make, because it meant that on their jobs they would be targeted and probably listed. Who knows how many suffered as a result of it, but by and large we saw a great spirit of people who, despite all of this, had a great determination. And it was much influenced by King and his philosophy throughout the place. He was quite a hero among these people.But as I say, we did not know of any Malcolm X or his philosophy or whatever it was that he was doing in his way. We never came in contact with it. So whether right or wrong- I'm not indicating any degree of being demeaning of what he was doing. I'm not familiar with it; I just don't know. Our contribution was at the place where we had the greatest influence, and that was within the Congress, and we thought that was our main obligation.You do a lot of talking on street corners when you can't go inside. In other words, that gets back to the city councilmen in Los Angeles who, before they became city councilmen, had to engage in their activity outside. But then, when you're able to move into where the decisions are really made, then you have to develop a different strategy, and you have to be responsible, then, in making those decisions.

Woods

So Stokely Carmichael. Do you see him as an outside or an inside person?

Hawkins

An outside. He was very much in evidence throughout the area, and many people in his group [Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee], many names I don't even recall, but I know they were affiliated with the student movement. I would credit the students with a great deal of service in that struggle. I think had it not been for the students, it would not have been carried forward. They did a remarkable job.

Woods

There were a few members of the California delegation who went on this trip. Did you stay in any segregated facilities? Or did you try to-?

Hawkins

No, we stayed almost exclusively, as I recall, in private homes. I recall spending one, two nights with several families, and they all were armed, patrolling their properties. Even throughout the night they had watches. Whether they were just protecting us or it was a daily routine, I'm not entirely sure, but- They expected bombs to be tossed into their homes, their homes to be ignited in some way by fire or whatnot. This thing, what I said, it was really frightening to see this, because some of us were not really familiar with it. We had read about it, yeah, but we were never that closely associated with that type of a climate where law and order just didn't rule.

Woods

So this was rural areas or urban areas or both?

Hawkins

It was little towns and countryside. In traveling from town to town, of course, we went through the countryside, and many times part of the night was trying to get from one place to the other. Driving by automobile on country roads was not really the thing that we had been accustomed to.

Woods

That trip sounds like it was sort of unique. I've never heard of any group of congressmen- Was there a core in the California delegation? Or was the California delegation as a whole unique in Congress?

Hawkins

No, it was just members, those of us who were involved in civil rights within the Congress that knew that we had to get a Civil Rights Act passed, who had been in the forefront of battling for the Civil Rights Act itself, which had just been signed in 1964. All of this came after the March on Washington [1963], between the March on Washington and the passage of the Civil Rights Act. 'Sixty-three, '64, '65, those were the years that we were pushing for the Civil Rights Act.When I had worked on the Fair Employment Practices Act in California, I followed up in introducing in the Congress what became known as

the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. That was the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Jimmy Roosevelt had a bill similar to mine. He and I got together and merged our bills so that we had one bill which became mine, and we pushed for that. During the consideration of civil rights, most of the emphasis was placed on public accommodations, being able to go into restaurants and hotels and traveling about the country. Basically, that was the main emphasis of the act. We pushed to get employment into the act because we thought that it wouldn't make any sense to be able to eat in a public restaurant, to be accommodated in a restaurant on a public accommodation basis or go to a hotel, if one didn't have the money. We felt that jobs were really the key to making the Civil Rights Act meaningful, so we pushed for that.The [John F.] Kennedy administration, which we began with, was not receptive to the idea at first. The attorney general [Robert F. Kennedy] opposed us on the basis that, while he agreed with us in theory, he thought it was too much. He thought that that would kill the Civil Rights Act, but we pushed to have it included. Eventually, as I say, it did become Title VII of the act, and we won the battle. They later joined us, and, of course, after the assassination of Kennedy and Johnson became president, he signed it and was very delighted to do so. So that was accomplished, I think, as a result of the Civil Rights movement.At the same time, we moved ahead in other fields, primarily in education. For example, we passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [1965] and for the first time provided federal aid to education. The Congress had worked for years trying to get something like that through, but it was very much opposed by southern Democrats and completely by all the Republicans. So in the mid-sixties we passed ten or twelve acts altogether that are still on the statute books and which I think laid a basic foundation for most of the things we have today. It was the War on Poverty, and out of that came Head Start; federal aid to education was approved; a Voting Rights Act was approved. We went on to put a Fair Housing Act on the statute books. And all of these things actually were accomplished during the Johnson administration.

Woods

So the federal fair employment legislation was stronger in language than the one passed by the state of California?

Hawkins

Oh, yes. Well, I wouldn't necessarily say that it was stronger. There were some parts of it that I would say were not as strong. But it was national. The problem with a state act is that most companies do business in more than one state, and it's pretty difficult to enforce the act against a national or international organization or concern. Unions operate across state lines. So a national act provides a uniformity across the country that is needed. And a company in one state can't make the argument that it's a burden to them and companies in other states don't have to comply with it and that this in some ways is a disadvantage-a very weak argument, I think, but nevertheless one that is politically rather effective. So we got the national act. We did not get cease and desist and other powers that we wanted. We had an act all right, but it depends largely on negotiations, education, and many other things. But [it was] very weak in terms of enforcement, because the orders cannot be adequately enforced in the courts. That was one of the weaknesses that we were faced with.

Woods

I'm trying to look for the exact date when it [California State Fair Employment Practice Act, 1959] was passed in California. You don't remember offhand.

Hawkins

No, but it would have been between '59 and '67-'59 and '63, actually, because I left in 1963, and it was passed shortly after [Pat] Brown became governor, and he became governor I believe in 1959. So we're talking about '59 and '60, I would think.

Woods

So you had a lot of popular support. I saw something with Lena Horne campaigning, maybe in the forties.

Hawkins

Yes, we became quite friendly. And it was during the time that- Prior to '59, obviously. Because we had tried to pass the Fair Employment Practices Act by the initiative process. We got enough signatures-

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Hawkins

We had known members of her family for some time.

Woods

Lena Horne's?

Hawkins

Yeah. I was personally acquainted with her uncle, who became secretary of HUD [Department of Housing and Urban Development], Frank [S.] Horne. He was a part of the so-called black cabinet during the [Franklin D.] Roosevelt administration. And many times on our visits to Los Angeles, we had talked to her in general. When the campaign started to get a Fair Employment Practices Act, I asked her to help out, and she did. She traveled throughout the state and participated in the campaign. We used her in many of the fund-raising activities that we had. She was a drawing card and lent her support in the campaign in every way: right on the streets, in fund-raising luncheons, and speaking engagements and so forth throughout the state.

Woods

So that was during the forties and fifties?

Hawkins

Well, it was during- No, it wasn't. It was during the sixties. It had to be around- Before '63 and after Brown became governor. I think he became governor 1959 or 1960. So it was in that frame of time-I would say the early sixties.

Woods

So what was your opinion of the Fair Employment Practices Act as signed by Brown?

Hawkins

Oh, I thought it was adequate. I thought that it accomplished its purpose. It permitted the appointment of good commissioners. I would say one of the outstanding persons in the movement to get one was C. [Cottrell] L. Dellums, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. I think he was the third or fourth vice president at that time. But the leading one on the West Coast lived in Oakland.

Let's see. He would be the uncle of the Dellums who is now in Congress, Ron [Ronald V.] Dellums. But he was most active; his group was very active. Another active individual was Clarence Johnson of the Brotherhood of Dining Car Cooks and Waiters union in Los Angeles. In Southern California it was Clarence Johnson and in Northern California it was Dellums, C. L. Dellums. Dellums ended up being one of the commissioners [of the Fair Employment Practices Commission] and followed through on it and has consistently been very influential in the whole movement.

Woods

There seem to be several attempts to form statewide organizations of black political leaders, like the Negro Political Action Association and others. What were some of your goals? And what were some of the major problems that you encountered?

Hawkins

There were no problems. I think the idea is good. It is somewhat reflective of early attempts in California for blacks to get organized. Primarily, earlier movements were centered in Northern California and in the rural areas, not in the major cities. It consisted of people from places such as Riverside, Redlands, the Central Valley, Marysville, Yuba [City], small towns outside of Oakland, San Francisco, but with some sprinkling of support in San Francisco. But this was where the earliest settlers had settled. Later the whole shift was toward the big cities.The idea of a statewide political organization is very, very sound. However, I think they have not really accomplished a substantial amount that I know of. I'm not acquainted with them because I haven't been active with them. But whether or not any recent initiatives are a result of that activity, I'm not so sure of it. Not a great deal has been done, in my opinion, in the later years compared with what was accomplished in the earlier ones. And that's true on the national scene. It's true in Congress. There haven't been any great initiatives now compared with early accomplishments. What we did during the Roosevelt administration, the [Harry S] Truman administration, the Johnson administration has not been matched with any recent initiatives among blacks or whites. There are no great projects, there's no outstanding accomplishments; it's all been a matter of trying to get what was done years ago implemented, enforced, and funded. If we had not put a federal aid to

education bill on the statute books in the sixties, we couldn't get one now. We couldn't get Social Security, we couldn't get unemployment insurance, we couldn't get the insurance of bank deposits. All of these things would be opposed now, even by the current Congress. You couldn't get them now.

Woods

I have a couple of questions related to the resistance to this whole Democratic thrust, particularly in California. First maybe, the Rumford-Hawkins fair housing legislation and then Proposition 14 [November 1964]. Who were some of the forces behind Proposition 14? Some people might argue that it took on a national impact. California was seen as a very progressive state, and when it turned this corner- If it was ever going in that direction. But it turned a corner and sort of created this alliance, I guess, this new Republicanism or conservatism- A lot of people would trace its origins from Proposition 14, this alliance between the South and the West.

Hawkins

After the adoption of the Fair Employment Practices Act, some amendments to the Civil Rights Act, and a few other things, by the time we got to the Fair [Rumford] Housing Act- Incidentally, may I say that I had introduced the first one, but we alternated. I would put it in one year, [W. Byron] Rumford would put it in the next year. That's the way we agreed to do it. By the time it was adopted [1963], it became commonly known as the Rumford Act, and, as such, it was put on the ballot, because we couldn't get it signed by the governor at that time.The act- And I believe you're correct; I think it was Proposition 14, if I recall. There was a reaction to the progress that blacks seemed to be making, so you had what some referred to as benign neglect. Everybody said, "Well, we've done enough now. The time has come to slow down, a cooling period, and to help others now, give them what they wanted." So that period set in. It was somewhat national in scope; it wasn't just a state activity or phenomenon. On the ballot, it became very unpopular, very strongly opposed by the real estate interests, by chamber of commerce groups, by manufacturing associations, and so on, without equal support, in my opinion, from the church and labor groups. They had somewhat cooled down by then, and there just wasn't the same drive. But it proved to be very unpopular and I think led eventually to the defeat of Rumford himself, who ran for the Senate

from his area. And he was defeated, I think, largely as a result of this.Now, I think the mistake was made when, for some unknown reason, [Jesse M.] Unruh decided in Sacramento that he was going to name this act after Rumford, and it became known as the Rumford Act. But it was unpopular in many sections of his area-that is in the Alameda County area-and led to his defeat, and the proposition itself died.We moved on the national scene and later passed the Fair Housing Act [1968 amendment to Civil Rights Act of 1968] in Washington, which was comparable and just as good or equally effective nationwide. So no great harm. In the meantime, the fight against restrictive covenants had gone on, and restrictive covenants were thrown out, and local action took place in many areas. Municipal ordinances were passed with the decision to outlaw restrictive covenants. There was no enforcement, anyway, of fair housing practices at the local level because private suits were available. So the issue became somewhat moot after a while, and the defeat of the Rumford Fair Housing Act did not really create any appreciable hardship.

Woods

What was [Samuel W.] Yorty's role? What was his base at this time, and what kind of role was he playing?

Hawkins

Sam Yorty was elected as an outstanding liberal, but somewhere between his first few years in Sacramento and his later years in Sacramento he became very conservative, some would say reactionary. He and Jack [B.] Tenney teamed up and created what was known as the Un-American Activities Committee [California State Joint Fact-Finding Committee on Un-American Activities], and I think that it was used primarily politically against people that they didn't agree with. But it was sort of a conservative movement and a play to become popular and to erase their earlier records of having been accused themselves of being too far to the left. So they just gravitated as far right as they could get and became strong advocates of punishing these, in quotes, "radicals, communists," and so forth. Later Yorty became mayor of the city of Los Angeles and carried on pretty much in that conservative tradition. I don't think his administration created any great record of efficiency and didn't improve law enforcement at all.I recall that during the War on Poverty in the mid-sixties, when we had been able to get the War on Poverty moving

throughout the country and to create the Office of Economic Opportunity [OEO], that money became available to help in areas such as South Central [Los Angeles] and the Watts area and so on. What we wanted to do was to have an agency in the city of Los Angeles to receive the money and to administer the programs. You had to have that to get the money and the expertise, technical assistance, and resources of the OEO. But Los Angeles was slow. It just did not have an agency to do that, because Yorty was fighting over the appointment of his people to the agency, and for some reason the city council did not agree with him, and the whole thing was blocked. And Roosevelt and I and several others, including one or two Republicans-I remember one was Alphonzo Bell from the Beverly Hills section- Jimmy Roosevelt and myself, that's three. Now, I think we had one or two other members. We held hearings, including one in the Watts area, Will Rogers [Memorial] Park. The whole intent was to get Los Angeles to adopt an anti-poverty agency in order to fully participate in the War on Poverty.It was shortly after that that the [Watts] rebellion took place in Los Angeles. I think what we anticipated, what we foresaw at that time was happening, really did happen more than we realize. That there was a deep-seated feeling of resistance to political activity, because these were- Things were happening when we had a so-called or actually a friendly government in Washington, but a local government that did not match the quality and philosophy of the government in Washington. As a result of that, the rebellion took place, and we all know that's a matter- With the exception of the last one [in 1992], it was the worst thing that had ever happened in the area.But it was somewhat related to Yorty and his blocking of the War on Poverty efforts that were taking place nationally. I don't know whether he realized it or not. It might have been just a case of politics as usual, but it was just one thing that people just didn't accept.

Woods

You formed, I guess, an organization in early '65. I think it was the [Citizens] Anti-Poverty Association. You were trying to build up community support to pressure Yorty. Was that the goal of-?

Hawkins

We did have a citizens group-well represented, very, very broadly represented-and the effort was to really carry on a War on Poverty in California. We had gone into various fields. For example, we developed a health clinic in the Watts area. [R. Sargent] Shriver [Jr.] came out, helped us get it running. The outgrowth of that was what is now Clyde Odom and his health clinic in the Watts area [Watts Health Center]-doing a very good job-but it started on 103d Street. We did the same thing in health. We laid the foundation for what later became the Martin Luther King [Jr.-Charles R. Drew] Medical Center, because we didn't have hospitals in the area. [tape recorder off]

Woods

Nineteen sixty-five is sort of a complicated period. Everybody seems to have to go back there.

Hawkins

Yeah, I don't know whether you ever got- This is an old biographical sketch. It's a couple of years old, but it is pretty much up-to-date as of that time. It may give you some idea of- I don't know whether you have a copy of that.

Woods

You said there was a conflict between Yorty and the city council over appointments.

Hawkins

Oh, the appointment of individuals or what the local structure should be. He was trying to put just his people on; the city council wanted to be represented. The county, of course, had some interest, also. So all of this went on-the usual politics and bickering over appointments. And in the meantime, the people in Watts were suffering because they weren't getting the money.

Woods

So it wasn't a philosophical question; he just didn't want-

Hawkins

It was political, purely political. Purely political.

Woods

Also, at the same time, the rebellion sort of happened because of an incident with the police. Had police practices-?

Hawkins

Well, that was the spark that did it, but there had been seething unrest for a long time in the area, because the country seemed to be participating in a revival. It's the Kennedy-Johnson spirit, you know, throughout the country. But Los Angeles didn't enjoy the benefits or see the effects seeping down to them, so they- That, I think, was one of the basic causes. Of course, racism, years of neglect in which the city did not get its full share of economic growth and all of these things, all these things came together all of a sudden in the area, and they were ready, at the least spark, to do something, and they did.

Woods

Had conflicts between the police and the community increased over time? Or do you think they were pretty much-?

Hawkins

Yes. You see, we went through the battle, first of all, of getting black officers, then getting officers who were in key positions, of getting a favorable police commission and all of these things. That had gone on for a long time. The role of the police in ignoring law enforcement in the area was just as severe as their enforcement of good laws. The time that it took a law-abiding citizen who had trouble to get a response to a police call was much greater in that area than it was anywhere in the city. So you had as much neglect as you had instances of alleged police brutality.

Woods

And it deteriorated over time between, I guess, the thirties and now? Or was it the same bad-?

Hawkins

It was a continuation somewhat of the thirties, when graft and corruption had some protection. It was an extension, really, of that same system that did not have blacks really represented by the personnel, certainly in key positions-as

commanders, in policy-making positions, and the right people on the police commission, and so on. All of this was just a continuation.

Woods

Do you think that same policy of sort of protecting graft still exists or-?

Hawkins

Not as much as it did in those days, but I think you have the remnants of individuals who are soft on it, let's say, rather than a part of it, probably, and who are not trained. A lot of it goes back to training, many officers who are not accustomed to dealing with cultural difference, and they just don't understand it. As sincere as they may be, they don't understand it, and it's frightening to them to be assigned to areas where you have a mixture of people: Hispanics and foreign-born whites and a great immigration of blacks and all of this, a changing cultural situation in a city. Sometimes you don't even speak the same language or you don't understand the cultural diversity that you're dealing with and how people get along with each other, so you have a tendency to intensify these animosities, even in the enforcement of law. Unless you understand it, you're doing a lousy job even when you are sincere.

Woods

You saw the rise of Tom Bradley in the fifties as a patrolman. When did you first meet him, and what were some of your early views of him?

Hawkins

Oh, I did not know him very well until his first efforts to run for the city council. Prior to that, I don't recall knowing him. I maybe knew of him, but primarily it was- I guess his first campaign was not successful, but he left an impression and built up for a more successful one later on. That was my first acquaintanceship with him-not a firsthand one-but just a knowledge of what he was aspiring to become.

Woods

So you were here in Washington in 1965? Or were you in Los Angeles?

Hawkins

I was elected in 1962. From 1963 I spent the major part of my time in Washington.

Woods

I mean during the rebellion.

Hawkins

Oh, I was there in both. You're talking about the earlier one.

Woods

Watts, yeah.

Hawkins

I was in Los Angeles at the time of the actual rebellion. My office was at Forty-first [Street] and Avalon Boulevard. I had an apartment over the office, and that's where I spent that time during that rebellion.

Woods

What sort of things did you observe? Did you go out?

Hawkins

Very little, very little. There wasn't very much that you could do. You had nothing but hordes of people involved in burning buildings, looting, and trying to protect themselves. But most people stayed indoors. Not much you could do. What could you do if you approached a group of individuals bent on burning and looting and apparently moving in the direction of downtown, towards city hall? There was no pattern to it. The area was patrolled by the National Guard, but I don't think they understood very much why they were there. Public officials were almost uninvolved until it was all over and they began investigating the causes. The whole thing was sort of an artificial social revolution.

Woods

A lot of people flew in, I guess.

Hawkins

Oh, you had many people who'd come in, but- You come in, you walk down the street. Even if you talk to people, to me that doesn't really solve very much. It's pretty much what we are facing right now; all of the rhetoric about rebuilding and doing something different is primarily that. Economic development and education are things that have to be planned and planned very carefully. It's obvious that unemployment, particularly among black males, is at abnormal rates. But you don't get it by talking about it; you have to do something to plan for it. We have stagnant economic growth in general, and as long as you have anywhere from 15 to 20 million people unemployed or underemployed, it's obvious that blacks will bear a disproportionate share of this problem and will not get jobs. Those who are deemed to be more qualified are in the line ahead of them. Good, qualified people are being laid off. With that situation, it's obvious that unemployment is going to continue for a long time.

Woods

Did you think Martin Luther King's visit was helpful?

Hawkins

I don't think it was much of a factor, because he didn't offer anything that the people needed, and that would be primarily jobs.

Woods

I guess the mayor and the police chief, Mayor Yorty and Police Chief [William H.] Parker, made a lot of comments that these were just hoodlums and mad dogs. Did positions harden? People say now that positions are hardening after this year. Did they harden after the Watts rebellion?

Hawkins

Well, they certainly hardened after the rebellion then. There seemed to be a little softer understanding of things now, but compassion and an understanding of things don't always bring you the results that you need.The economic reconstruction of the area is a very complex situation, and it's going to require a great deal of funding. The corporate sector has to be involved. At the same time, all of the things have to move together. People are not going to go in and invest if they think their investment is not safe. That's true

internationally; it's true in South Central. You have to have insurance of property; you have to have long-term low interest rates to get loans to construct buildings; you have to have a viable consumer purchasing power or, let's say, demand for goods and services by the people who live in the area. All these things have to move together. One has to have an educated and trained work force in order to qualify for the higher skills that are now required. You have a much tougher situation now because you don't have low-wage jobs, so the only jobs that are developing are those that require the type of skills that the local schools do not provide and all these things. So you have to move together in a coordinated manner in order to do something.And psychology just doesn't work, or empty rhetoric about, oh, "things are getting better." All of this is probably more damaging than things that are good. People have to have a sense of ownership, that a building that they would be tempted to destroy, to burn down, is one of their own, not that that belongs to somebody else.These things have to all work together in tandem and not as isolated fragments. That type of planning is not being done, in my opinion, at the present time.

Woods

You said something very similar before the McCone commission [Governor's Commission on the Los Angeles Riots]. You stated that, "Negroes want to govern ourselves. We're tired of welfare and want jobs, not make-work." So this was your whole philosophy about ownership, that some of the anti-poverty programs were stopgaps or not well thought out. Was that your opinion?

Hawkins

It's true. Yeah, many of them were not well thought out. It was quick remedies that were not too well thought out. Basically, they provided maybe some of the basic necessities, which for the time being might have been all right, but for the long haul you have to move beyond that. And even today, in my opinion, people don't go on welfare just because they enjoy it, because it's not that generous. They're on welfare because they have nothing else better to do. One has to plan these things in such a way that opportunities that open up may be at that low level. But they want to see careers. They want to see themselves moving ahead, and unless there's that built in, then to merely

train people for jobs as hamburger flippers or to wash an automobile- That's not what they're looking for; they're looking for something beyond. They're looking for that which everybody else is looking for.So our programs today have to be in the high-order skill category. Otherwise the jobs are going to go overseas. You'll be able to get people from Mexico or other low-wage countries occupying the jobs. And the businesses will be at that level, as well.

Woods

So further along that line of thinking, I guess you helped to found the South Central Improvement Action Council. What were some of the goals of that organization?

Hawkins

Well, it was basically economic development. We felt that if we could get a great number of minority-owned businesses operating successfully it would stabilize the community and provide some jobs. We also obviously felt that manufacturing jobs that were disappearing had to be a part of it. So we fought to get big companies to join ownership and to support more manufacturing jobs. Lockheed [Corporation] was one of those companies that did come in, but there were others. We thought that using the Small Business Administration to get loans for black entrepreneurs was very helpful, that type of thing.Now, many of these agencies that were operating are operating now, but they're trying to evade really doing what they're equipped to do, and they're not providing the help, even now, that is badly needed. They're not operating to help spread the ownership but to concentrate it in the very hands of people who are outsiders, not the people from the area itself.

Woods

So was that a shift from sort of a direct infusion of anti-poverty money to a more economic-development approach? What did that mean in terms of-?

Hawkins

Yeah. Well, we felt that the anti-poverty money was good, was well-spent, and- Not well-spent, but it was good, and it was needed to get people to alleviate human suffering. But you don't go on doing that. There comes a time when people should be freed from that type of help and should be self-

sufficient and be able to have a much larger income than what those incomes were. One cannot live today off of that type of an income and get the health benefits, for example. So you're denied health benefits by virtue of the fact that you have low incomes and jobs that don't offer that. You have part-time jobs or seasonal jobs that offer no benefits, no fringe benefits that permit people to survive on a year-round basis. And as long as you have that situation, you're going to have individuals who are prone to have the type of antisocial attitudes and behavior that we see expressed in rebellion.

Woods

Well, how did you respond when there was some-? I guess Sargent Shriver and I guess also Johnson, when they started to rethink some of the poverty programs, there was- Late in the administration there were questions about allowing some of the mayors more control. I guess it was almost a step back from some of the active intervention of OEO and-

Hawkins

Those programs have gone through a great degree of development. What we did then and what we would do now may be quite different. Not that those programs were not good; for the time, they were. They helped the people through troubling times.The tendency now is to look for long-range solutions, basic solutions. These solutions have to begin much earlier in the lives of people. You don't wait until an individual is twenty-one in order to try to give that individual the skills and the income that they need in life. Early childhood development has taken on a new meaning in which the basic foundation for success in life comes in the first six or seven years of a child's existence. That's when you've got to really give that child the type of skills that the child will need later on in life. The ability to read, to do simple arithmetic, and so on, is all pretty well fixed by the time a child is in the fourth or fifth grade, and without that, that child is going to be on the road to welfare dependency or criminal activity. We've got to start at that point.And then obviously you've got to do a lot more in terms of economic development for the area. At the present time, so far as I know, everybody is waiting for outside corporate interests to come in and make large investments. Well, I don't think they're going to do it unless there is some assurance that the area is going to be completely adjusted to a new style of living, because the same thing may

happen again. The law enforcement has to be strengthened. One company has to be assured that others are coming in. One has to be assured that there's going to be adequate transportation developed in the area. We have never had adequate transportation developed in the area. All of these things have to be part of a package in which business interests are going to be assured that their investment is going to be worthwhile.We have to have a lot more local ownership of things. Now the people in the area without income are not able to own as they should. So you have to have outside ownership of the same ethnic-

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Woods

Okay. You said more local ownership among all ethnic groups.

Hawkins

All the ethnic groups that are represented. I think the people of the area have to understand that the area is very diverse. It's made up of not only African Americans, but it's made up of many Hispanics who are as American as the African Americans and other ethnic groups that are now in the area. Somehow you have to bridge the gap from one cultural group to another, because you cannot have, let us say, the Americans of Latin origin fighting the blacks and the blacks fighting them and get along as neighbors in an area and have economic development. That discourages the type of investment that's needed.

Woods

I figured I'd just finish up off of anti-poverty programs in Los Angeles. So after the rebellion in Watts in '65, I guess two things- Well, one thing that did happen is that [Ronald W.] Reagan was elected governor on a platform-almost in direct response to what happened in Watts-of anti-crime and not supporting poor people, welfare cheats or however he phrased it. I guess the second point, well, did these funds start to flow into the community? And what role did Reagan as governor play in anti-poverty programs?

Hawkins

Well, Reagan was not actually a positive factor for what happened thereafter in Watts. Whether he knew where Watts was or had any inclination to provide what was needed, one really would probably have to speculate. But his whole ideology was to help a few. And when [William J.] Clinton used the trickle-down argument during the campaign, he was exactly right; that's all it was. It was true on the national level. It was true on the state level that during the [Richard M.] Nixon administration, the Nixon-[Gerald R.] Ford administration, we had the whole concept that the philosophy of government was to have as little government as possible. There was always an idea that the federal government somehow was the enemy rather than a help to people. Reagan really practiced this philosophy. So that when we, in 1981, for example, had a great tax cut in the Congress-which we never should have had-it was to help out the wealthiest. The idea that they would invest in jobs here in this country was a mistake. But as a result of that, what happened was, because the money went out in tax cuts for the wealthy, domestic programs had to be cut, including education, welfare, the community development block grants. All these programs that had started to help rebuild low-income areas were just cut back. So the progress that had been started in the [Lyndon B.] Johnson-actually in the [Harry S] Truman-Johnson-years was just sidetracked. So the cities became the main victims of these cutbacks including education and health and housing. So during the Reagan years in Sacramento and the later Nixon-Ford-[Dwight D.] Eisenhower years in Washington, we just didn't even take up housing bills. None were even considered.And the job programs that we had- We had at one time in the Los Angeles area, which was a tremendous help, a community employment and training program called CETA [Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, 1973] in which local service providers operated the programs. And if the private sector did not offer the employment, at least we had public service employment, which, for the time being, served well, I think, in stabilizing communities, because the people were getting some income, and they were providing worthwhile services. But during the Reagan years at the state level, and at the national level as well, these programs were cut back.So the idea became, let's help a few, the very top 5 or 10 percent of the people, and to hell with the rest of the people. In the meantime, of course, jobs began going overseas, destroying the very industries that we had pioneered: the automobile industry, the steel industry, the meat-packing industry, the textile industry. All of these industries were the

very place where masses of blacks were employed, so their livelihood was really cut back.

Woods

I'm going to throw out a few names of some anti-poverty organizations just to get your brief opinion of them. In Los Angeles: Greater Los Angeles Community Action Agency.

Hawkins

Yes, we were active with them, supported them.

Woods

The Neighborhood Adult Participation Project, Opal Jones.

Hawkins

Yes, they were very supportive. Opal Jones did a good job. They had quite a few centers around, and we heartily supported the concept.

Woods

Who was Opal Jones?

Hawkins

Opal Jones was a social worker who became active in the anti-poverty program, largely developed and implemented the concept of local operation of the poverty programs. They were outside the official government, as such, so that the public officials were not actually operating the program; they operated at the neighborhood level- Let's see, neighborhood feasible participation, I think it was called. But that was the concept. The concept was that the people who were most affected should be the ones to operate the program. They proved to be very successful. The only problem with them, in my opinion, was that there was no logical development beyond that operation. In other words, they never really became the owners of the businesses or the activity that they sponsored. There was no follow-through, so there was a tendency to possibly lean on the agency too long without getting off of it, becoming more independent of it. But for the time being, they did a lot of good things.

Woods

So I guess there was some pressure by the city council and the mayor to get-

Hawkins

Well, public officials never really liked it. They thought that they should have more control. And unfortunately, as they got more control, they made political appointments, and the operations became a matter of favoring political activists as opposed to just ordinary people. So what you had, you had an individual who supported a certain official being given the jobs. So they took over, and I think the whole complexion of the programs that we had at that time became identified with political appointments, to some degree with a loading up of the program with members of the family of officials and so on. And there were a few scandals of that nature which destroyed the whole program.

Woods

This is the citywide effort? Or county? Or just the-?

Hawkins

Yeah, yeah. The public officials alone, I think, made a mess of it, and as a result of that the reputation of CETA became somewhat tarnished, and it was easy later for Reagan, when he became president in '81, to actually just eliminate the program in its entirety, which meant then that we didn't have any jobs or training program at all. And from then on, the effort was made then to turn the program over to business rather than to the politician. That's how we developed what became known as the Job Training Partnership Act [JTPA, 1982] and private industry councils with a business person at the head of it. It was our hope that there would be a better operation of the program if we could get business, on the one hand, and the public officials to form a partnership. That was the theory. It's a good theory, good concept, except that it hasn't really worked out quite as well. The public officials sort of backed away when they lost control of it. But those are the ones we can hold accountable. We can't hold a business accountable, but we can hold a public official. On the other hand, the jobs must be developed by the private sector; that's where most of the jobs are. So a partnership, a good partnership, is sound in theory, and that's the way it should operate.

Woods

Well, that seemed to be the goal that you were trying to reach with South Central Improvement Action Council: to form a partnership. There was also another organization operating in the same area, I guess, the Economic Resources Corporation, that seemed to- [H. C.] Chad McClellan.

Hawkins

Yeah. Well, that was primarily an operation of the [Los Angeles] Chamber of Commerce. Chad McClellan probably did a lot of good because he had the support of other groups in the chamber, and when you have highly regarded, highly placed individuals representing the business sector, you get some results. Unfortunately, most business involvement becomes one in which individuals are named to represent the business who don't really have the voice of business itself. They are at too low a level. They are not the key executive officers of their companies, but they are merely people who are named symbolically because they can get along with minorities but who don't really have a strong voice in their own companies, and they don't represent too much in terms of the real decision makers. And that is what we usually get in these partnerships. We get individuals who are not really high enough up in the corporate structure where they can really wield a lot of power in many ways because they are recognized as the chief corporate officer. Once you get that, you've got it made. But it's difficult to get them.

Woods

So this period seemed like it was one of sort of an evolving conflict between different parts of black leadership over the poverty programs, of control, and of the SPA [State Planning Agency] and EDA [Economic Development Administration] programs. Was the conflict within the leadership greater or similar to previous periods or-?

Hawkins

Well, most of the people that did a good job-the Opal Joneses, let's say-were eventually eliminated, or they moved away because they found that they really couldn't accomplish anything. As I recall, Opal Jones moved back to Texas, moved out of the area. Many moved to other areas of the county. Those who had pioneered just moved away, so the whole thing evaporated,

particularly when the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act was abolished. So you had a new group of actors who came in, who had to learn all over again, who didn't have the same philosophical feeling about the area group-possibly looked on it in a paternalistic way, almost a plantation system-and didn't have the same cultural background as some of the others.In the meantime, the demographics of the area began to change to make the area more of a battleground of ethnic groups that did not really understand each other, and there was no agency or no way that they could get together. There's no way in which, let's say, Koreans, Hispanics, and blacks-and I'm talking about American people, many of whom were born and came up in Los Angeles-could get together and discuss their problems and build a greater unity. There isn't such an agency at the present time to do it. So they do it on the street corners, which is the worst possible way to build relations. They don't have the same churches, they don't have the same lodges, they're not in the same unions, so where would they develop such unity without an agency of some kind?

Woods

They have some ethnic coalitions. They're sponsored at the top-top-level people-but they don't really have any large basis or following or organization behind them or organizations that can employ a lot of people. So they're like professionals from each different group; they're talking to each other. It doesn't really carry a lot of weight.

Hawkins

Well, there are some that possibly symbolically talk to each other, and I certainly don't want to demean the ones that are attempting to do a really good job, but I don't think that it's extensive, and I don't think that it's funded as it should be. We still have the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] and the Urban League, and the Latin groups have LULAC [League of United Latin American Citizens] and some other fine organizations.

Woods

MALDEF [Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund].

Hawkins

MALDEF and whatnot. But I don't think that they are represented that well at the community level. You take any block in South Central [Los Angeles], I doubt if the effect of these organizations is being felt by the average individual. I would say that what we call the gangs have more representation among ordinary people than any other organization. But where would young people go if they really wanted to identify with other groups and to engage in a common activity? I don't really know just where they- The playgrounds used to be sort of a meeting place, but it's no longer that. There are a lot of people who are more afraid of going to the playground than those who go there for actual leisure-time activity or for participation in neighborhood activity with their neighbors and trying to improve their property or even to engage in athletic activity.

Woods

I think the violence also discourages a lot of activity.A couple more organizations I wanted to ask you about. Well, there's the Central City Community [Mental] Health Center.

Hawkins

Yeah. Well, for a long time they had good leadership. They had several doctors, and I'm trying to think of their names.

Woods

Was it [J.] Alfred Cannon? Or was it-?

Hawkins

Cannon, in particular, was one of them. Highly regarded, very competent character. Did a good job. And we supported them. I'm trying to think of the fellow who was co-director with him who is still in Los Angeles. Cannon went to Africa-got discouraged, went to Africa. Later died. Was also active in the [Charles R.] Drew School [of Medicine and Science] and the formation of that, which is still in existence, still doing a good job. These were some of the positive things that came out of that.But, as I say, unfortunately so many out of that period became discouraged. Dr. Cannon is a good example. Opal Jones, who just moved away, is another good example. We should have retained some of those people in prominent roles, because they would have made, in

my opinion, quite a difference if we had only retained them. But that health center was good, and unfortunately it doesn't exist now. Now, the Watts Health Center is very good. It has good leadership, it's bicultural and, I think, something we can build on.

Woods

Just two more. Martin Luther King Jr. [-Charles R. Drew] Medical Center. I guess in the early days there was debate about whether USC [University of Southern California] was going to have a clinic or whether it was going to be a full-blown hospital. How did that evolve? And what were some of the health conditions in South Central and the areas-?

Hawkins

Well, it was a conflict between USC and some of the local doctors in the South Central area. There were a few doctors who opposed the building of a hospital because they thought it might interfere with their practice, I would assume. But there were, on the other hand, several doctors who were prominent in supporting our efforts to get the hospital. Eventually we won out on that battle. In the meantime, USC, which was trying to help, cooled off some, but we won the battle and got the hospital. I think the hospital has been a positive outcome of that era. The medical school is even a better example, in my opinion, because the medical school has had good leadership, attracted a lot of good professional people. Now, there have been problems with the county, which has not always supported the hospital as adequately as it should, and that has been a problem. But the hospital is one of the few positive things that we can claim rose out of the Watts rebellion of the sixties.

Woods

So do you think that overall USC plays an important role in the community?

Hawkins

It plays an important role, not as important as I would want it to play. I think that there's a great responsibility that USC has to the community. It has a lot of programs, but I think most of the programs are more symbolic than substantive. I think sometimes that its interests may be more in the countries overseas and building better ties on an international basis than with the

neighborhood in which it happens to be located. I don't know the current leadership or current president as I had known some in the past, and I understand that there may be more of an awakening of what their role should be in the community. Having worked with UCLA maybe a little bit more than with USC, having a greater interest in UCLA, it's possible that our ties with USC should be strengthened. I think USC has the potential of being a tremendous help to the neighborhoods in South Central, and I think that it has to be convinced that it's one of the unknown or remaining things on our agenda. I think, in terms of planning for the real development of that area, that would be imperative.I thought that the Olympic games in Los Angeles [1984] presented us with an opportunity for a follow-through. Unfortunately, I don't think that the Olympic games brought to the area the benefits that it should have. It should have resulted in more involvement of the area itself in the operation of the games and the aftermath of the games. The people in the area supported the games; they certainly did cooperate in providing the type of safety to those who came to the games, making it truly a great international event. But the area has not profited from the holding of the Olympic games in Los Angeles as much as I thought it would.

Woods

There was always that fear that USC was trying to sort of redevelop or gentrify the area. I guess that went on for a long time back to the Hoover [Street] redevelopment-urban renewal programs back in the early seventies. Did you ever think the university really had ambitions to assemble land and-

Hawkins

Oh, I think that the university wanted to expand and wanted to, in a sense, build an area around itself that it thought would be more adjusted to a middle-class existence rather than an area that was in the process of trying to become more than just another ghetto. I think that's true. I would not criticize the university too much, because I think that what we need with them is an understanding and a commitment that hasn't yet been made. Now, on the other hand, the university people probably feel that the leadership of the area itself has not approached them or submitted a plan as one which would involve them but involve them in a truly constructive manner. I think there's something than can be said on both sides. I would not criticize any help that

we can possibly get from them or to put something together now. I think we've got to get over a feeling of distrust, of animosity towards them and other groups, and I think they too have to be sold on a constructive program. And I think that we have to get African American leaders into the position that if there's going to be progress, they themselves have got to be the main initiators of it. They have to accept responsibility. There has to be some sacrifice on everybody's part, because the people themselves are the ones that are the main sufferers when we don't get groups together.

Woods

Okay. The last organization I had a question about was one that sort of came out of the '65 rebellion and suffered a lot during this current one, I guess, the Watts Labor Community Action Committee, Ted Watkins's organization. What were your relations with him and the organization?

Hawkins

It's been somewhat detached. I don't think that I have ever really been close. I have been friendly with him. But they have operated primarily with outside financial help, and they've had quite a bit of it, a substantial amount of it. But there you have really a oneman organization, and one has to know Ted Watkins to understand why one is not closely tied with him. His decisions have been primarily promoted by outside groups. I think he's done a lot of good work. Ted Watkins has worked with groups that would not have had- Nobody else wanted to work with them, and he went in and worked with them. So one cannot overlook that. I think he's made a positive contribution. But it's been primarily around his own life, or let's say he's not the kind that wanted to build other groups around him. I think we've differed with him on some projects, and I think that because of those differences he and I have never had that close relationship.I wanted to see the Goodyear [Tire and Rubber Company] property in Los Angeles- When Goodyear went out of business, I wanted to see that property become really an economic development project in which manufacturing would go into the area. It was suited for that to me. In my opinion, it was best suited for that. The business interests in Los Angeles wanted a place where they could develop an industrial park.

Woods

That's the Southern Pacific [Railroad]-

Hawkins

Yeah, with all of that around it. I thought that was a good area. I believe that Ted Watkins and others- [City Councilman] Gilbert W. Lindsay, a friend of mine, a very good friend of mine-wanted to develop it as a housing development, and a high-cost housing development, which I thought it was unsuited for. We had our difference on that. I had my difference with Gilbert Lindsay, who envisioned that as a high-class housing development.I had meetings with him in which we argued over the thing, and I said, "What about the adjoining areas?" I'dsay, "You're not going to be able to develop that area into such a high-rental area, because the people around it are not going to be-""Oh, no, we're going to put in playgrounds and swimming pools.""Well, what about the kids around it? Are they going to go into this area and enjoy these benefits?""Oh, no, we're going to have a wall around it."Well, to me, it was sort of a dream that wasn't going to be achieved. We had a lot of sharp words over the development of that. Eventually the city, I think, adopted the idea, but it never developed, because it wasn't a good, sound idea. It became sort of a wasteland. Now, of course, the federal government put a post office out there, which, I guess, is sort of a compromise. But it could have been, in my opinion, a good industrial park that would have employed a lot of people. That's what I was looking to get done. And I still think we need something of that nature close to the area to provide the jobs for the people who live in that area and to support small businesses that would be developed around that industrial park. That to me would be the best use of such land. And Los Angeles County, the downtown area, does not have such an industrial park still. Now, the [Los Angeles] Chamber of Commerce was willing to come in and help develop it. I'm not really that close to the chamber of commerce, but it's one thing that we did agree on, and they were willing to take the initiative. But for some reason, the city never took them up on the idea.

Woods

Yeah. I think there's a number of properties- Well, they talked about the other day that the Chinese were going to come over and cut up the Kaiser [Tech Ltd.] aluminum plant and number it and label it, write some Chinese characters on it, and take it wholesale to China and start it up. [laughter]I have

a question directly related to plant closures. During the late seventies you held hearings in Los Angeles on the rash of plant closures which removed much of the industrial base of South Central. The declining economic fortunes of African American residents continued during the eighties in the midst of a defense industry boom and the creation of large-scale employment opportunities in the surrounding counties. How do you explain the fact that you had this boom in areas immediately adjacent to South Central, but you had a rising record amount of unemployment in South Central itself?

Hawkins

I don't know how that connects with the hearings on plant closings.

Woods

Well, the area sort of became deindustrialized. What were some of the reasons why some of the factories-?

Hawkins

Well, we were worried that we were losing so many plants in the area as a result of automation and technological development and whatnot. We looked to the rubber plant at the Goodyear site. General Motors [Corporation] was closing its plant in South Gate. The automobile companies east of us, primarily East Los Angeles, closed several plants. There was a rash of plant closings. Some were moving south, some were closing up altogether as a result of technological changes.We tried to address this through one of the committees that I happened to be on in the Congress, the Employment Opportunity Subcommittee [House Subcommittee on Employment Opportunity]. We didn't have full jurisdiction, but we wanted to take some recognition of the fact that these plants were closing up. I don't know that the hearings accomplished a great deal, because these plants were closing up because of the global situation. Many of them were in competition with low-wage countries, and we probably couldn't prevent it. Certainly our committees couldn't, but we at least wanted to do what little we could.I would not say that we accomplished a great deal, because the policies of the Reagan administration and continued by the [George H. W.] Bush administration were completely opposed to what we were trying to accomplish. We were trying to upgrade the way work was organized in this country. It's organized on a low-scale, low-wage basis, when

we were trying to get more support for research and development so that we could technologically be ahead of other countries. So it was an international situation much beyond the jurisdiction of any subcommittee of a committee of Congress that I happened to be on. But I was using what little I could to slow it down. Now, I don't think we slowed it down very much, because it's continuing on, and it became quite accelerated all the time. During the Bush administration it became accelerated.

Woods

What was the impact of those closures upon South Central and the African American-?

Hawkins

Well, a direct connection, because so many of the people from South Central were employed. They were employed in the South Gate plant even though it wasn't in the area. They were heavily employed in the rubber industry at the time. The union itself had a large number of minorities employed in it. But the effect on the suppliers all around it was you had smaller entrepreneurs who were greatly affected and moved out as soon as the plant itself closed up, small businesses that depended on it; the larger companies depended on smaller businesses. So you had a mushroom effect of these plant closings.As I say, it was so much a national and international issue that it was beyond really the power of any smaller groups to do anything about. We worked at the same time while we recognized that these basic industries were closing up. We tried to work with such groups as L.A. Trade Tech [Los Angeles Trade and Technical College] in there and the other technical institutions to provide employment to developing fields in other industries. We tried to get more employed in occupations such as restaurant and food establishments to offset it. These are much lower-income occupations, and the competition is very keen. But that is about the best that we could do.In my opinion, Los Angeles is well adapted to the idea of the development of a furniture industry, of a clothing industry, and we have tried to get more minorities employed in such industries. Even though they are low wage, they certainly offer some opportunities within the skills of the people of the area. But that again will be greatly affected by what's developing today. We are moving in the direction of not developing such industries. We are losing out in textiles, we are losing out

in the computer industry, and all of these industries that could take up the slack of the defense industries that are being-

6. Tape Number: III, Side Two November 18, 1992

Woods

Okay. Well, coming from Baltimore myself, I remember what happened in the early eighties in Baltimore in terms of factories closing down. I imagine that there were a lot of middle-class, middle-aged black families that were completely eliminated from the South Central area due to the plant closures. What kind of effects did that have on the stability of the whole community?

Hawkins

A lot of solid citizens, the good old-timers-the people who worked and who paid their taxes, who improved their property, who participated in many of the character-building agencies, who supported the churches and the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association], YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association], and such groups-just simply moved away. Many are moving to outlying areas, even outside of Los Angeles, some even outside of the county. They are selling their property out or they're renting, so they become absentee landowners. We find that absentee landowners are not nearly as good as those who live on their own property. The property is not kept up the way it should be, and the renters who rent are many times not able to really pay the rent, even if it is cheaper than some other rents. But because of the pressure for housing with new people moving in, you have overcrowding of theproperty, and instead of one family living in the property, you have several living on the same lot. All of this adds to the downgrading of the community itself. There are people who don't have the means of supporting even their churches the way they used to and who are not inclined to be people who support such groups. Consequently, you have people who don't live in the community coming over to attend the churches and to support some of the organizations. But that's purely artificial and isn't quite the same.So the social and moral aspect of the community has to be somewhat limited by the fact that you don't have solid family units but broken family units, and low-income people-you have a lot of welfare recipients who cannot afford to live as regularly employed people-are the usual case and not the exception. It's

always had a tremendous effect. You don't have the professional people who provide the services in the area actually living there; you don't have the teachers who teach in the area actually living there. So it makes a big difference in terms of the quality of the services that are provided.

Woods

There's been a lot of criticism of welfare saying that it causes dependency. On the other hand, some of the people who are on welfare say that it doesn't provide enough food stamps to feed their families to the end of the month. And even now in some parts of South Central there are people who are experiencing shortages. What do you think about sort of the evolution of welfare in the area?

Hawkins

Nobody likes welfare. Even the people who depend on it criticize it. The taxpayers don't like it because they think their taxes are being misused. So nobody really likes it.And it is true that welfare should be greatly reformed and made into what it was originally intended to be, and that is temporary income relief. It's misunderstood, and, generally speaking, everybody talks about it, but it's an improvement merely on the old system of depending only on charity. So those of us who went through the years before the Great Depression of the thirties compare it somewhat with the old system which was- We had what were called poorhouses where individuals went when they didn't have a job. Well, welfare is better than that, but it still is not really a system that we feel is creative in the sense that it simply is a transition into a fully paying job at decent wages. But right now those jobs are not available, and I don't know what people would do if we didn't have the welfare system. So as bad as it is and as much as it's criticized, it is there. And until we can really build a different jobs program to provide meaningful jobs for those who lose their jobs, I don't know what else we can do.We've got to reform it, and I would say that to reform it, we've got to have- It goes back to what [Hubert H.] Humphrey [Jr.] and I tried to accomplish with the Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act [1978], an act that would provide that the government itself has to plan ahead. It has to develop greater production. We have to have more economic growth. We are now staggering along at a low economic growth, a system that isn't going to provide enough jobs for anyone. And as

long as that prevails, then it ill behooves people to talk about welfare or criticize it too much, because we have to remember that half of those on it are children, who are not those who will be gainfully employed and who still must have some means of support.But I would hope that eventually one of these days we will commit ourselves to a full employment economy in which we give the private sector the opportunity to provide the jobs, but if it doesn't, that we, through government, will develop projects-and there are plenty of them to be developed-that will employ people rather than provide the welfare. Our infrastructure is being depreciated so badly. Half the bridges in this country are unsafe, we have a very bad transportation system, our roads need repairing, and all of this work needs to be done, and yet we have unemployed people. Eventually we have to recognize this problem and do something about it. This, instead of welfare, is what I look forward to.

Woods

So the full employment program, would it target the inner cities like South Central and rural areas like the Mississippi Delta? Or would it-?

Hawkins

It would do both. It would target the cities that need the greatest amount of repairing, but at the same time it would provide greater growth so that you would have jobs available. I would hope that we eventually will eliminate these ghettos or these areas that we now call the slums. There's no reason in the world why we shouldn't rebuild them. I don't believe in perpetuating them; I believe in doing away with them. But they're there now because of neglect.We don't have the economic policies in this country- we haven't had them under the Reagan-Bush administration- to provide the type of economic growth so that we would be able to employ people and to have the projects funded. We passed a wonderful highway bill during the Eisenhower administration [establishment of the interstate highway system], but there's no building going on simply because there's no money available for it. And there are large areas of this country that need reclaiming. We certainly need a lot of public works that should be going on, but we're moving in the opposite direction: we close up some of our schools; we are cutting back on full-time education. We certainly need a national health program. People cannot afford the health bills that they are put to now. Millions of people could be

employed in health occupations who are not now being used at all.Now, all of this is certainly going to require some funding, but we have found it possible to fund those things we think are desirable and necessary. We are spending $200 billion a year defending Japan and West Germany. Against whom are we defending these countries? That $200 billion could employ a tremendous number, could employ almost every unemployed person in this country and do away with welfare if we would use it in order to fund the type of projects that are badly needed: to have rapid rail transportation across this country and to improve the housing of this country, to build low-cost housing that people can afford. All of these things need to be done, and yet we're not doing them simply because we've had administrations that didn't have the right philosophy. So I'm not hard-pressed to feel that we can do it, because we're spending the money anyway. But we're not spending it on the right things. We're spending $500 billion to save the savings and loan industry, so don't tell me that we don't have the money, because we're spending it.

Woods

Let me just ask you three quick questions, and I think that would finish up all the L.A. material, and then maybe next time we get together we can start on the national and your congressional period.

Hawkins

Okay.

Woods

First of all, about the defense spending: There was a huge boom in the defense industry in Orange County. I think a recent study said that 5 percent of the population in Orange County in 1960 or '70 was black, and today 5 percent of the population in Orange County is African American. How come people weren't able to participate in that defense industry boom, Reagan boom, of the eighties that really was California-centered?

Hawkins

I'm really hard-pressed to understand why they did not participate. It probably was due to some extent to transportation, to some extent to discrimination, and to some extent to the lack of the skills that were needed. Most of the

defense jobs became more sophisticated in the last decade. One had to have certain credentials; one had to be proficient in math and science to operate computers and whatnot, and there was no deliberate or formalized effort made to make sure that the right people got these skills. Those who had the skills already got the first jobs, and those who had to be educated and trained were just late in arriving. And this was not planned too well because there was no great desire to do it.I think the Reagan philosophy was we educate a few remarkably well and to hell with the rest of the population. Their idea is, even under the Bush administration, to have select schools that charge high tuitions or high costs-to build the private schools. All of this works against minorities and for that reason forecloses those who have over the years been denied equal educational opportunities.

Woods

Do you know what percentages of blacks were in the defense industry? Was it ever a large percent or-?

Hawkins

Oh, during the war there was a large percentage, but that-

Woods

The Vietnam [War] or World War II?

Hawkins

Oh, Vietnam as well as World War II. It started being scaled back after Vietnam, and the production has become highly sophisticated, highly skilled, and the low-wage jobs have moved overseas. We're losing a tremendous number of jobs to overseas. The international corporations just move overseas and begin producing, or they move to Mexico.

Woods

Okay. The next to last question was- You mentioned Los Angeles prior to welfare programs and poorhouses. What were they like? Where were they and-?

Hawkins

They were places on the outskirts of the city where individuals who became destitute were allowed to go to participate. We called them, prior to the Depression, the poorhouses. They were just people who were outcast almost because they had no means of support for various reasons. Some were mental patients and should have gone to mental care hospitals. And we did have the tendency, if people developed mental problems, for the family to keep them in a back room or, if they became militantly aggressive in their attitudes or dangerous, to have them locked up.

Woods

In jail or in the house?

Hawkins

Well, no, in what may be called prisons. There was a movie called *The Snake Pit,* and we called them all snake pits because they were just locked up. There were some mental treatment centers, and still are, that tend to lock people up who have mental disorders. In Sacramento we pioneered in trying to develop outpatient clinics and to develop mental hospitals that treated these patients as having mental disorders that were treatable. But this has not always been true. It wasn't true certainly of people who lost their jobs prior to the Depression. They just depended on charity; they were charity cases. And if you didn't have public charity of some kind, you had to go to a poorhouse.

Woods

Were there a lot of African Americans in the poorhouses?

Hawkins

Oh, yes, a disproportionate share of them.

Woods

And these were in L.A. County?

Hawkins

In L.A. County, all over the country.

Woods

So did they also get caught up in agriculture? Or they just worked at that house or-?

Hawkins

Yeah, well, in agriculture you had migrants who really just traveled about, and they were the homeless of their generation. But most of them just traveled from one harvest crop to another and lived as best they could.

Woods

All year long?

Hawkins

All year round, yeah.

Woods

But the people in the poorhouse, I guess, didn't want to get involved in agriculture.

Hawkins

Well, most of them were too old or too, let's say, unemployable to do hardly anything. We never had what we now look upon as welfare or the social agencies that- Food stamps or the other programs for the unemployed. It was just unheard of prior to 1935 or '36. You didn't have Social Security. Many of them are now living on Social Security or social disability who used to go to poorhouses or who had no place to go, except maybe some members of the family supported them. But Social Security has made a big difference in the lives of people. Medicare has made a big difference. But all of this was unheard of before the [Franklin D.] Roosevelt administration.Young people today have never known of things of that nature. Banks would close up and suddenly people would become destitute, and they had no help whatsoever. When the bank closed up, nothing was insured, your bank deposit wasn't insured. If a bank closed up, what could you do? My dad [Nyanza Hawkins] was a victim of banks closing up over his life savings. It just happened that we were in Los Angeles and most of us in some way had some income. But for a family without that, a bank closing was a devastating experience. All that you had was suddenly wiped out. Insuring bank deposits became an important item, and is today.

Woods

Yeah, my bank is in receivership. [laughter]

Hawkins

Yeah, what would you do if your bank closed up and you didn't have any money?

Woods

It did close for a day.

Hawkins

But now at least your deposit is insured up to $100,000.

Woods

Yeah, that's a real interesting topic about blacks in Los Angeles in the twenties and thirties. I guess you're one of the few who-

Hawkins

Well, during the twenties we got along fairly well. It was a false prosperity, but we got along. You lived on an installment plan, and you might have owed quite a bit, but you were able to get by. Everybody was going on and the stockmarket was booming. Everybody was bullish on the future. But all that came to an end in 1929 in the crash, and suddenly overnight even the rich became poor. Pasadena was known as the home of millionaires. Orange Grove Boulevard in Pasadena had more millionaires than any other place in the world, or certainly any other place in this country. But then, in the crash of '29, many of them went to the Colorado Boulevard bridge there and jumped over; it became known as "Suicide Bridge." These were millionaires who suddenly lost their money.Unemployment was over 25 or 30 percent. People were selling apples on the streets. I've seen men fight each other for food in the alleyways where restaurants would put their waste products in garbage barrels. People would fight over this. This was the crash in 1929.

Woods

So were blacks pushed out of certain jobs or replaced?

Hawkins

Oh, yeah. Yeah. They were the first to feel it. They were the first to feel it.

Woods

And what were some of the conditions of the domestic workers?

Hawkins

Well, the few that had good jobs in domestic were okay until the people for whom they worked lost their money. Blacks in Pasadena lived just like the people they worked for: they had silverware and they had nice homes and nice places to enjoy, and they were living well. But the Great Depression equalized things for the rich and poor alike, and everybody was without. The blacks adjusted maybe better than the whites because they had lived in strife all their lives and were better able. They shared what they had, they developed soup kitchens that took care of each other, and they were able to share some of the jobs.Many of them, fortunately, were government employees. They were janitors for the county; they worked in street employment for the city; they were refuse collectors and whatnot. They were still employed to some extent. So these low-paying jobs probably were in greater supply, relatively speaking, than others. So the blacks, to that extent, did fairly well.

Woods

What about the conditions of black women?

Hawkins

Oh, black women have always had a great problem. Of course, most of them were employed in household services, and until the war came along, that's all they did. So they were day workers, but they got along. Many raised their families off of those day jobs that they had. That remained fairly lucrative for quite a while but of course diminished on a large scale during the Depression, because many of those for whom they worked lost their jobs, so obviously household service was not available to them. Many of them sewed for a living, andthey continued to sew in their own homes. A seamstress got along fairly well. Many of them worked in hotels as charwomen, and they continued to have some jobs. So this was the best way that they could. It wasn't good living, but at least it was survival.

Woods

I promise you, this is the last question. Could you compare and contrast the current situation after the events of April and May [1992]-the rebellion, uprising, whatever they want to call it-with what happened in Watts in '65 in terms of what you see are policies, programs, political will, morality, just the whole-?

Hawkins

You mean compare the recent rebellion with the one in 1965?

Woods

Yeah.

Hawkins

Well, the recent one was more widespread, and I think it's a misnomer to look on it as the South Central rebellion; it was countywide. It had ramifications much beyond the geographical area. It was more widespread in terms of participation. I think we had probably more involvement of other ethnic groups in the last one.

Woods

You were there?

Hawkins

You mean the last one?

Woods

Yeah.

Hawkins

Yeah, yeah. I was there for a couple of days. I was just in the process of leaving the day that it developed; I was on my way back. But I think statistically all the reports indicate there were probably more Hispanics than blacks actually involved. And it had racial and ethnic overtones that the other one didn't have. The first one I think was more anti-Semitic, anti-Jewish than the last one, which apparently did not have that characteristic at all.

Woods

Meaning that the Jewish merchants-

Hawkins

It was aimed against Jewish- Jewish merchants suffered a lot more in the original one, the first one, than the last one, so in that respect it was quite different. And as I say, it involved the Westside, even went so far as to go out near Beverly Hills. The first one did not have that- The first one was highly concentrated. The first one, I think, was more an outgrowth of the failure of the city administration to become involved in the anti-poverty program; it was under a friendly national administration. The second one was more involved in a rebellion against the policies of an administration that did not really involve them or care for them, as opposed to the first one.

Woods

National or local?

Hawkins

National administration, and a local administration that also was bad. You know, I think the state was not at all attuned to providing the policies to helping the last one at all, so I think that was true.

Woods

Do you think the mayor [Thomas Bradley] bears any responsibility for-?

Hawkins

I don't think so. I don't think you can blame him. That I think is a little farfetched, to blame him for the problem that was largely something that had developed over a period of time and was due primarily to economic and social policies of an administration in Washington that completely ignored our cities. You can't blame the mayor if the community development grants were not available to the city, if the jobs program had been emasculated, if education was being cut back. These were things beyond the power of the mayor of the city to do anything about.

Woods

Do you think that the mayor or the city council or the [Los Angeles County] Board of Supervisors could have focused more on South Central?

Hawkins

Oh, I always feel that they should focus more on South Central, provide more help to South Central. I think the people in South Central look to the towers or the skyscrapers in downtown Los Angeles with a certain degree of envy. You know, "If that can be done, why can't we be helped a lot more?" You know, I think that's true, but that is something that I don't think is centralized in any one individual.

Woods

So what did you think about the last supervisor, Kenneth Hahn, and the incoming supervisor, whoever that's going to be?

Hawkins

Well, I don't know. I've always worked very closely with Kenny Hahn over a period of time, and we worked very well together. Now, whether or not a change will make a difference- It can. I think it can direct more attention to what the county can do in Los Angeles. It certainly can do a lot in terms of health and in terms of providing really constructive leadership. I wouldn't want to second-guess the outcome of the election. I wasn't in Los Angeles during most of it. I just don't know what to expect. But I would certainly say that, again, it's going to depend a lot on the community itself and not on any one individual doing a masterful job. No one individual can do it.

Woods

Thank you.

7. Tape Number: IV, Side One December 22, 1992

Woods

The main purpose of this session is to begin on your congressional career. Before we start with that, just a few brief follow-ups to Los Angeles. Did you ever get a chance to meet Ida B. Wells? I saw some correspondence to her.

Hawkins

Yes, I met her. I can't recall too much of what happened or why. I really think it was in connection with housing projects. We had kept up with her work in housing in Chicago. My own interests in low-cost housing began in 1934. We were primarily concerned with getting low-cost housing through. As a matter of fact, we did pass the Slum Clearance and Low-Cost Housing Bill, under which Nickerson Gardens and the other housing projects were built, Pueblo del Rio. It was quite a battle because of a lot of opposition to the idea of slum clearance, because everybody thought that it meant just removing blacks from the inner city and clearing up the land without building any additional units. There was a lot of opposition to it. At first, the bill that we sponsored was vetoed. Let's see, that would have been vetoed by Frank [F.] Merriam, the governor at that time. But because there was such an outcry and opposition to the idea of not doing something, we brought the bill back and we got him to sign it, and we got our first housing projects there in Los Angeles.I think Nickerson Gardens was the first one, if I recall, that was built in our community. It was named after [William] Nickerson [Jr.], who had been one of the main opponents of the program, which I never forgot. From then on, I really didn't like the idea of naming projects or programs after living individuals, because to me that indicated how silly the whole durn idea is, that one who fights against something gets the first project named after that individual.

Woods

Why did he oppose it? He was on the mayor's housing-?

Hawkins

Well, he was involved with the insurance business at that time, and many of them thought that it was in opposition to the private sector and that public housing should not be created, that the housing should be left in the hands of the private sector. As an insurance executive, I guess he belonged to downtown interests that were pretty much involved in trying to keep out any public housing. It's just as simple as that. I don't think ideologically it meant that much to him, but it is true that he was one of those who did oppose the thing.I think it was named after him because, if I recall, [George A.] Beavers [Jr.], who was, I think, at that time secretary treasurer of the Golden State [Mutual] Life Insurance [Company] group that was just beginning, was on the

Housing Authority [of the City of Los Angeles]. And the housing authority, grasping for names for some of the earlier projects, just thought of naming one after a prominent business person. I think it's just as simple as that.

Woods

Yeah, they did the same in Baltimore. They named a project after Murphy, and they regretted that ever since. Yeah, that came up in a conversation: you were called, I guess, the "father of public housing" in Los Angeles or California.Originally I thought that a lot of public housing had been built for some of the war workers, but that wasn't the case.

Hawkins

No, I don't really attach that connection too much. I think there were some temporary huts that were made available at that time, but they were purely temporary. They were not permanent fixtures. They were never conceived to be the type of housing to be constructed under the state act or the federal act. I believe the federal act was called the Lanham Act. I believe it was the assembly tying in with the federal act in order to get housing in Los Angeles. The primary interest that we had was in creating additional units of decent, low-cost housing that individuals could rent. And in clearing up some of the slum areas in order to get the sites, we felt we were eliminating substandard housing-housing than people should not have been living in-and then creating additional units, hopefully more units than we were eliminating, therefore attempting not only to get decent, low-cost housing, but to bring prices down so people could afford it.

Woods

So were the units originally conceived of as being integrated? Or was the neighborhood already dominated by-?

Hawkins

It was the composition of the neighborhood. Certainly integration was assumed, that those who were displaced would be the first ones to have the option of the units if they qualified otherwise-that is, qualified by income-so that, in effect, it did not deliberately change the composition of the neighborhood. If the neighborhood was interracial, it remained interracial. If

the neighborhood happened to be, let's say, all white or all black or all Mexican or all Hispanic, it remained as such. The projects were built in various parts of the city, so that I don't think the racial-ethnic composition was drastically changed one way or the other, although everybody had a shot at it, with preference given to those who were displaced.

Woods

I don't know if you know him or not, but Frank [B.] Wilkinson-

Hawkins

Yes, I remember Frank Wilkinson.

Woods

He makes the case that at one point there were a lot more units that were scheduled for Los Angeles, but there were Mayor [Norris] Poulson or one of the mayors, the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation], and a lot of other people involved in preventing what was supposed to be a huge public housing program. Are you familiar with that situation?

Hawkins

All I know is that there was a slowdown in the construction after the original ones were constructed. There were not too many added thereafter, and eventually public housing itself became somewhat of a bad name. I don't know why, but the shift, I would say, started in the late seventies, and by the eighties it was just a finished matter. For a long time, oh, throughout the eighties and early nineties, I don't think in Congress we passed a housing bill, couldn't agree on one, and then the talk turned to vouchers as a means of facilitating the private ownership and private construction of units so that the low-income people would then be offered the option of buying into the private ownership of homes with the private sector dominating it. And that has not really been successful. It's been more a dream and an idea that just never has- Well, it just hasn't been successful.

Woods

What do you think about that proposal? I guess that's the [Jack F.] Kemp proposal?

Hawkins

That's the Kemp proposal. Well, it's a part of Kemp's ideology, and it goes into the whole general subject of privatizing housing, the schools, health, and the other programs. Medicare is predicated on that. As a matter of fact, health programs, pretty much the same thing. And I think there's certainly some justification for dealing with the private sector to the extent that they can offer quality services or quality products.But for the people we're talking about, to me there's no competition. We're talking about individuals that you don't make a profit on anyway, and to expect the private sector to operate without a profit motive, you destroy the concept. And in certain fields, in housing and in health, there's no great profit to be made. That to me means that if the public itself is not interested in developing something to meet that need, that need is not going to be met, and it's just as simple as that. So it's just an area, it seems to me, that should be left more to government assistance than to the private sector.

Woods

Well, this is the follow-up on the public housing. Maybe you can tell me, I guess, about Nickerson and Jordan Downs. What were some of the initial perceptions about the public housing and people who lived there by people in adjacent neighborhoods, and what type of leadership emerged? They always seem to be a center for people to- Like even [J. Danforth] Quayle and [Jesse L.] Jackson were visiting public housing, those projects, earlier this year. It always seems to be an area where people organize, where organizations come from. What are your perspectives on the evolution of-?

Hawkins

Well, rehousing doesn't itself change people, and if you base the occupancy of a housing entity merely on income, people being poor, that is one thing. If, on the other hand, you accompany the rehousing of individuals with employment and training, then you're changing people. And, if you don't have, let us say, security and the other factors that make for decent housing or a decent community, then you have pretty much the same thing. So you can't just expect too much out of housing, public housing or private housing projects, where you don't accompany the project itself with employment and training. People have to make a decent living; they have to be educated; they have to

become empowered to change their own situation to aspire to greater levels of human development. That to me is important, and I don't think we've ever really done that too successfully. We put people into an area because of low income, and then we either try to mix it with high-income people or we try to leave them alone. But that to me has been a mistake. It's been a mistake every place we've tried it. The same was done here in Washington in the southwest part of the city, and it never really worked out.What happens in a situation like that is that individuals who better themselves-that is, become more educated and their income goes up-they just simply move out. So there's a selection that leaves the area or the housing to individuals who are newcomers, primarily, to a city or to those who have not been able to go up economically to the point where they can become more active citizens participating in the civic life of a community. You would very seldom see teachers, for example, in a housing project. Those who teach in the neighborhood don't live in the neighborhood. You would never see professionals and other groups like that in the area of the housing project, and that, I think, is something that we have never really faced.We've never given to housing developments the amount of money and the resources to make them sort of self-sustaining social units. We have many times neglected security, law enforcement in those areas. So what you do, you have the ghetto life psychology built around them. Now, I'm not saying that there is something disgraceful about a housing project. What I'm only saying is that we have never really given them the resources to make them more self-sustaining or to improve them so that individuals would be going up the economic ladder and consequently become a powerful unit. We've neglected them; we've left them to themselves. They have done a reasonably good job being left to themselves, but that isn't really what life is all about.

Woods

I guess there was a public housing movement at one time. Who were some of the different groups that were supporting the creation of public housing, and what happened to the alliance? And why is there no push for public housing within the black community now?

Hawkins

I do not recall an organized group, at least in the minority community. I recall that labor people, unions and so forth, and the churches were among the most openly avowed groups supporting public housing: the unions on the basis of economic interests-construction, operation of the project-and the churches on a moral issue, really increasing the moral fabric of a community where children could be brought up. That was primarily their interest. Other than the unions and church groups, I can't recall any other interest that was really pushing heavily for public housing, and I don't think the movement lasted very long.There were individuals, some individuals. We mentioned, I think, Frank Wilkinson and others who lived outside of the community who were very active in support of it. There was a lot of opposition from downtown business interests. I recall the opposition more than I can recall the people who actually supported the movement.And today it's only a vague idea. It's not something that is really being pushed as vigorously as perhaps we would have thought by this time.

Woods

One final question on that. Maxine Waters opened up a job counseling project in Nickerson about three years ago. Is that one of the types of projects you think that needs to be included?

Hawkins

Oh, I think that's a type of a project that should be included, yeah. I'm not familiar with that project, however. I don't know whether it's still operating or what, but that's what I meant by the housing project including such services that are vital to its existence. The same would be true of child care and health facilities. All of these should be part of the project. And if it isn't, it sort of destroys the autonomy of the project. It should be a self-sustaining entity, so counseling and job development, things like this, should definitely be a part of the project.

Woods

Was there a lot of demolition in the area in terms of the slum clearance legislation?

Hawkins

Yes, it was extensive.

Woods

Highways and-

Hawkins

Well, not highways or roads that I can recall. The projects were not as well designed and planned as they should have been. There was a tendency to construct housing units as economically as possible. Many of them have become blighted because of inexpensive construction. Very few were actually single-unit dwellings with parks and recreational facilities and the other facilities in connection with them. Some of them had their own roads and so forth.Access to them has not always been carefully planned; they were somewhat isolated from the rest of the community so that they originally stood out as sort of an erratic project. With passing time, they have become more a part of the total community in that they are no longer isolated or they no longer look different from the rest of the community. They usually take on the character of the community and begin to look like the community. If the community's going down, they go down too; if the community is improved, they enjoy the same improvement, so that in time, the relationship of the project to the rest of the community is somewhat diminished. But I think it's still a good idea, let me say, and there are some areas that should be replaced, and replaced with much better housing.But in doing so, we should do better planning than what we've done. Some have been disgraceful. There have been places that drug dealers and prostitution have been afforded an opportunity to operate without public notice or without public scrutiny, and I think that's most unfortunate. Some have been located in the areas near schools and yet have become what I would not call desirable places to live. We didn't change the community influence in too many areas. We didn't plan the transportation; we didn't plan the health facilities; we didn't plan the gardening and the other features that make for much better living; we didn't put recreation in; or we didn't provide shopping near the project and things of that nature, which would stabilize that project as a better place to live and would attract ordinary people, possibly the working, lower-income groups, who still have some income to lead better lives.

Woods

Yeah, I worked on a couple of projects with some of the tenants in Nickerson, and it was basically their ideas about how to redesign. They knew exactly what was needed. One of the problems identified was the lack of funding for maintenance that started- I guess some of them went back as far as [Dwight D.] Eisenhower. They said that the maintenance funds weren't available, and that ever since then there had been these constant attacks on public housing. They haven't been kept up, so they're in the state they're in now. I think some of the tenants now are divided just on this Kemp program. Some of them want to get into ownership and some of them don't; they don't want to own a unit that has all these structural problems. Very complicated.I also had a question about Juanita Terry [Barbee]. You had mentioned that she was a key person early on, that you asked James Roosevelt to allow her to come on your staff. Maybe you could tell me a little bit more about her knowledge of the community and who she was.

Hawkins

Well, Juanita Terry was brought up in the community. As I recall, her family lived on East Adams Boulevard just off of Central Avenue. Her mother, Jessie [Sayers] Terry, was very prominent. She was one of the first state appointees to a state commission. I suggested her name to Governor [Culbert L.] Olson. He named her on- I don't recall the name of the commission, but it was a housing commission. I think Commission of Immigration and Housing was the name of the commission. At least it was a housing commission. She was the first commissioner that was named, if I can recall-certainly the first black woman ever to be named to a state commission.Juanita's dad [Woodford H. Terry], Mrs. Terry's husband, was a contractor. They had a nice two-story home on Adams Boulevard. We used it frequently for civic meetings. My first political meetings were in the home of the Terrys. Mrs. Terry was quite a devoted woman, devoted to her family, devoted to community activity, and it was a center where youth were always welcomed. She had two daughters. Juanita was the one that I knew best. Juanita had a sister [Beulah L. Terry]. Her sister was younger and involved in music.But Juanita came and worked for me in Sacramento, one of the first minority clerks that we had in Sacramento, and she was a very able individual. The opportunity came for her to come to Washington when Jimmy Roosevelt was elected to Congress, and then I recommended her to Jimmy Roosevelt, and she came to Washington and for a

long time was his principal staff person. I think she enjoyed the title of administrative assistant to James Roosevelt, and the Roosevelts were quite prominent at that time. She became very experienced. When I was first elected, I naturally turned to Juanita as a person I wanted on my staff, and I persuaded Jimmy Roosevelt to let her come over to my staff and work. She worked for me until her retirement-it was a period of, oh, possibly fifteen or twenty years at least-and then she retired and passed away some years ago.There were only a small number, really, of minority staff people at that time. Congressman [William] Dawson was the first one to have one in Washington, and [Adam Clayton] Powell [Jr.] was the second. I think I was perhaps the third individual to begin employing minority staffers. Juanita was by far one of the top ones and developed quite a reputation.

Woods

Okay. You mentioned in your biography that you were close in [John F.] Kennedy's- That during the election- Well, you were elected after his first administration, but you ran on a platform-

Hawkins

No, I was elected after Kennedy, but I had a great amount of support from the Kennedy administration and from John F. Kennedy himself. It was actually with his support that I was running and first got elected. Obviously I was a staunch supporter of Kennedy, and unfortunately he passed away too early, which I think possibly changed the course of history somewhat. But the relationship was a very cordial and professional one.

Woods

What type of support did he provide to you?

Hawkins

Some financial support, but primarily the use of his name and open statements. And some of his people were involved in my campaign-in other words, they were campaign workers.

Woods

Some of his people from Los Angeles?

Hawkins

In Los Angeles, his people in Los Angeles.

Woods

Did you ever work with him in terms of legislative agendas or-?

Hawkins

We discussed them, but his passing away came very, very early in my own congressional career. My relationship was stronger with his successor, Lyndon [B.] Johnson, than it was with Kennedy himself. I recall visiting him two or three times in the White House and discussing plans about putting parts of his program over, largely employment and training programs. But they never really were pushed because there just wasn't time during his administration.

Woods

You mean with Kennedy.

Hawkins

Kennedy, yeah.

Woods

Well, how did you get your committee assignments? Which committees were you first assigned to?

Hawkins

I was first assigned to the Education and Labor Committee [House Committee on Education and Labor]. It was my relationships with some of the veteran Californians in Washington- At that time, the Ways and Means Committee [House Committee on Ways and Means] was a principal committee that named members to committees. I made it known to that committee that I wanted the Education and Labor Committee, because I was interested in jobs and the schools. And because of my seniority as a member of a group that was elected-that is, seniority at the state level-they recognized my interest and felt that I could make a greater contribution to that committee than other committees that some people were seeking because they had political appeal. That is, they were committees that offered greater political support than

Education and Labor. But I was assigned to that committee and came on the committee during my first term in Washington.

Woods

Who was chair of that committee at the time?

Hawkins

At that time it was Clayton Powell.

Woods

And what was your relationship to Adam Clayton Powell?

Hawkins

We were friendly, but I wouldn't say it was a warm friendship. But I was on the committee because of my interest in the issues and not because of Powell. His style was quite different from my own. I wouldn't say there was a distinct conflict, but he operated as one who was confrontational, and I was never one who wanted to pick a fight. I was ready for it, but I wasn't trying to necessarily engineer a sharpening of issues between myself and others, whereas Powell was an outspoken militant who really wanted to have a confrontation. There's room in the Congress for that type of an individual, obviously, but everyone would not gain if everyone had the same idea. At the same time, those of us who were more inclined to work out arrangements to get results benefited from what I would call the people who were loud-mouthed politicians who were outspoken or confrontational. So you need both. But as I say, there was always somewhat of a conflict in personality between his style and mine.

Woods

A lot has been written about him lately. I guess there's a new book out, and he seems to be being brought back in terms of reviews of his career. What was his personal agenda? And what was his agenda for the committee?

Hawkins

Well, Powell had a tremendous ego, and he always felt the need to feed his ego. He was, at that time, in a great position, I would say as strong a position as any individual could want. He had a reputation; he had a background; he had a great base in his church in New York; he was smart; he was very, very

aggressive as the chairman of a committee at a time when we had a Democratic majority and a Democratic president. So the opportunities were there.I think Powell took advantage of it in many ways to the betterment of other people. At the same time, I think that Powell enjoyed being known as a flamboyant leader. He liked the flair, he liked the public acclaim. This fed his personal ego, and he enjoyed it and capitalized on it both personally and for the benefit of others, for that matter, because many of the accomplishments on the committee were done as a result of his leadership. Everybody, you know, looked upon Powell as the great messiah, and this he enjoyed. I think it was both his strength and his weakness-his strength because he was able to get things through the Congress that otherwise we might not have accomplished. But at the same time it led to his downfall, I think, the smugness and his attempt to do things that other congressmen would not have attempted to do had they acted with a great deal of common sense.

Woods

So was his legislative agenda similar to yours?

Hawkins

Yes, yes. On issues our views coincided. It was not a matter of a difference of issues; it was a difference of methods. At that time, Powell was authoring what came to be known as the Powell Amendment. On every bill that passed through the Congress, or every bill to which it was appropriate, he attempted to amend it with what was called the Powell Amendment, which simply prohibited discrimination based on race, color, creed, etc., in that particular activity. If it was the housing bill, as a rider it would obviously prohibit any type of discrimination in housing. If it was a health bill, it prohibited any federal funds being appropriated to a hospital, to a clinic, or whatnot, as a result of the receipt of federal money. The objective of the amendment was very commendable, very supportable.However, the amendment eventually became a means of reactionary forces using it to defeat good bills. If they [Congress] actually supported the amendment, reactionary groups, in order to get the opposition of Democrats- southern Democrats mostly, who controlled committees-would get them to oppose the whole bill to which the amendment was attached because of the Powell Amendment, so that, in effect, we were then defeating vocational education, elementary and

secondary programs in the schools of education. We were prohibiting good labor bills because of the Powell Amendment. We were defeating many of the civil rights bills to which this amendment had been attached and so forth.It was at that point that I suggested that rather than handling the issue on a piecemeal basis-that is, trying to fight it out on every issue that came up-why not have one major amendment and put that into the statute so that the individual would vote up or down whether or not the prohibition against that type of discrimination in whatever federal activity existed? That that would be the proper way. That was what became eventually Title VII of the Civil Rights Act [1964] prohibiting discrimination in employment as a general rule. Later, in the other parts of the Civil Rights Act, we prohibited discrimination in places of public accommodation and so forth. So what was once the Powell Amendment became an omnibus bill, the Civil Rights Act, that dealt with discrimination directly and not as a part of another bill. That way the southern Democrats had to vote up or down on that one amendment, and that determined it for the rest of the session-and permanently, for that matter. And that was somewhat of a conflict between Powell's approach and the approach that I thought more desirable.

8. Tape Number: IV, Side Two December 22, 1992

Woods

Okay. We just finished talking about Adam Clayton Powell and the Powell Amendment. What were some of your impressions of Congressman Dawson of Chicago and Congressman [Robert N. C.] Nix [Sr.] of Philadelphia?

Hawkins

Nix of Philadelphia had a good legal mind, was an unassuming, hardworking individual of the old political school, went home rather frequently to his office in Philadelphia, and provided a community service to his constituents. He was a very devout follower of the idea that as a leader in your community, political leader, you were supposed to deal with the individual problems of your constituents. And he followed that idea, so that much of what he contributed was not publically known or didn't make much of an impression on the public because he provided a service rather than gaining a reputation of being an outstanding leader otherwise, and certainly not one outside of his district. He

was respected in Washington because he had a good legal mind, and he was also involved in many foreign relations programs and a frequent traveler overseas.Dawson was a politician's politician in that all of his life-at least his public life-was devoted to the idea get the ballot and use the ballot as power to get what you want. As such, he campaigned throughout the country, in the Deep South. He often came to Los Angeles. I sponsored him many times, even before I became a congressman. I was in the state assembly at the time; I sponsored him as a speaker and as one to get a greater number of blacks registered to vote and to get out and vote. So we campaigned together through several national campaigns with that idea in mind.In Washington he was highly respected for his organizing ability. He was an official of the Democratic Party and campaigned for many of the congressmen and, in that way, committed them to doing certain things legislatively that they would not otherwise have done. And at least some of these were southerners that he was able to really convince to support some of the bills that we felt were badly needed but which had a great civil rights implication in them. But Dawson had campaigned for them and was able to deliver some of them, at least, so that we cut into that southern lot.His office was well organized. He was the first black, I think, to have a black administrative assistant on the hill. He fought for the appointment of blacks to important positions in the Democratic Party and in the federal complex.He was not one known to rock the boat-that was a sort of vernacular way of describing his approach. He never rocked the boat as such, but he believed that through the ballot one could exercise the power that another individual would obtain by militant representation. Dawson, in my opinion, did a lot of good for his age. I think that one must remember that for several years he was the only elected black official, federal official, in the country. And he followed in the tradition of his predecessors, but he was a pioneer of the new black congressman. However, by reputation, by his own particular ideology, he would be considered, I think, out of step with current feelings among blacks throughout the country. I think they would really put him aside as a compromiser and as an individual who is too mild in his approach to get anything done. But for his age, I would say that he was indeed a real pioneer in that quietly he did things that were, at that time, a complete break with the past.But he would never be the one, let us say, that would break the tradition by being construed as one insisting on his rights, standing up for his rights. The restaurant facilities, for example, in the Capitol at that

time were segregated. Blacks did not use the members' dining room even though they were members of Congress. Dawson would never be the one, let's say, to open up that dining room. That to him would be incidental. It would be considered incidental. At the same time, the right to vote, to have decent housing, to have jobs would be accomplished by him through negotiations, through alliances with individuals that would produce perhaps the same result but in a less, quote, "offensive" way.

Woods

How was the dining room desegregated?

Hawkins

It was understood that blacks just didn't go in, and they never did.

Woods

When did that change?

Hawkins

Well, that changed, I would say, in the mid-thirties. I would say '35, '36, it began to change.

Woods

In the House dining room?

Hawkins

In the House dining room.

Woods

'Thirty-five?

Hawkins

Yeah.

Woods

Well, Dawson was elected much earlier.

Hawkins

What?

Woods

Dawson was elected in the thirties?

Hawkins

Yeah. He had been in office, oh, at least five years when I came to Washington.

Woods

Okay.

Hawkins

In other words, he was elected to- You had first [Oscar] De Priest, then [Arthur W.] Mitchell in this century, and then Dawson.

Woods

Okay. You mentioned southerners controlling the chairs of major House and Senate committees. What was the process of civil rights legislation actually passing through them? Did they change the language of the bills? Or just filibuster?

Hawkins

Well, they just didn't consider the bills.

Woods

How did that eventually-?

Hawkins

If the bill got out of a committee, it had to go to the Rules Committee [House Committee on Rules]. The chairman of the Rules Committee at that time was a southerner from Virginia [Howard W. Smith], and he just didn't bring the bill up. We had the experience of this man putting a bill in his pocket and going away with it. They just didn't consider the bill. It was just the same as if the bill had been thrown out the window.

Woods

Okay. And when did that start to change?

Hawkins

That started to change during the Kennedy-Johnson administration and the late part of Johnson's administration. New leadership was obtained on the Rules Committee so that we began to get people on the Rules Committee who brought bills up regardless. So the chairman became less important because he just didn't have the votes, and eventually the whole complexion of the chairmanship changed.

Woods

Okay. How were you, as a relatively new congressperson, able to sort of organize support for Title VII of the Civil Rights Act? What is some of the legislative history? And what alliances were pulled together?

Hawkins

Well, when I came to Washington, I introduced certain bills, pretty much the type of bills I'd introduced in the [California] State Assembly. Among these was an employment bill to provide jobs, a certain number of federally financed jobs. Jimmy Roosevelt had a bill that was very similar to mine based on a state fair employment practices act [from the mid-sixties]. The two of us got together and we joined in sponsoring a bill prohibiting discrimination in employment, somewhat, as I said, based on the Powell concept, but applied in a general rule, not attached to another issue. And we got the bill out of committee successfully. But then, at the same time, the Civil Rights Act was being considered. And even though the Kennedy-Johnson administration was supportive of our idea, they did not want it in the Civil Rights Act originally because they thought that it would load it down with too many things to overcome and it would bring on powerful opposition. The unions were mild in supporting it, but the special interests-manufacturers, chambers of commerce, and so forth-were very much opposed to the idea. And we then had to persuade the Kennedy-Johnson administration or the attorney general-at that time I tnk [Nicholas D.] Katzenbach was the attorney general-to accept this as a part of the Civil Rights Act, including it in the original bill, so that it would not, let's say, be offered as a separate amendment but would be a part of the package deal.Eventually we were able to do it. We did it with the

support of individuals in the House that we knew. I had all of the Democratic congressmen from California, which was a large delegation, as sponsors of the bill. Jimmy Roosevelt had supporters in the East and also at that time was very close to the Kennedy-Johnson administration. So we were just fortunate in being able to persuade them that unless this was included, the civil rights groups would not think too kindly of the Civil Rights Act, and we eventually got it in.

Woods

So were you and civil rights groups communicating about the inclusion of this-?

Hawkins

Yeah. We went to the individuals who then acted in civil rights. A. Philip Randolph was helpful in convincing the unions that although the bill would affect them, they had to cease discrimination in their trade unions and so forth. We had Roy [O.] Wilkins of the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People]. We had the Urban League that came out with us. We went to the religious groups, the Jewish community, and got their support. We got the support of the [American] Catholic Conference, and we had obviously the support of the different ministerial alliances among minorities throughout the country. So we lined up pretty well the type of support which had to be recognized, because these were the ones who really were responsible for bringing up the Civil Rights Act.

Woods

Was Martin Luther King [Jr.] involved at all?

Hawkins

Not at first, but obviously he came aboard and was very helpful. But it was not in conjunction with him or with his activity. I don't recall that he was active at that time at that level.

Woods

So I guess the bill, it was originally introduced in 1963 or early '64?

Hawkins

Well, those were the separate bills, but it was in '64 and '65 that the battle took place.

Woods

Okay. So it was considered the longest debate-there's a book about the civil rights bill, and it's called *The Longest Debate: [A Legislative History of the 1964 Civil Rights Act,* by Charles W. Whalen]-in that there was a lot of conflict not only in the committee but also on the House and the Senate floors. Can you talk about how intense that was and-?

Hawkins

Well, it was very intense, but it was bipartisan. Fortunately, the bill was handled by the judiciary committee, and the ranking minority as well as the ranking majority, or the chairman of the committee, were the ones who presented and handled the bill. It was a bipartisan battle which was helpful all the way through. Emmanuel Celler of New York was a principal sponsor of the bill, a very respected lawyer and very able one. It was largely his judicial manner of approaching the issues that I think led to its adoption. And as I say, there was no partisan bickering as such because we had a cross section of the Congress-leading ones, depending on the appropriate committees dealing with the issue. Various amendments were offered during the passage but were rejected. There were attempts made to sweeten the bill in order to destroy it-that is, many wanted to put in a lot of the women's issues into the bill so as to create opposition to the bill. The bill, however, was placed primarily on constitutional rights, and the gender issue did not cause any separation because they were just simply rejected out of hand, and the bill passed with a great deal of clarity and stuck primarily, as I say, to the constitutional issue of how you interpret the Constitution as being the basis on which the bill should be adopted.

Woods

Okay. There was, in establishing the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the question of enforcement. How was that resolved?

Hawkins

Unfortunately we were not able to get the best enforcement procedure that we had wanted. We had wanted from the beginning to have a bill that would allow the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to issue cease and desist orders of its own, so that it would be able to enforce its orders. After its findings, it would issue orders, and these would be enforceable in the courts. We were not able to get that into the bill. We were not able to get just a general prohibition. We had to confine it to a certain- We had to exempt employers of a smaller number of individuals-I believe that at that time it was fifteen or fewer. These were just simply compromises that we made to get the principle adopted, on the basis that we could come back and amend the bill in succeeding sessions to even strengthen it. We got, I think, at least as much as we could possibly get and possibly more than anyone expected we would get. Just having the Title VII in the bill itself was quite an accomplishment.

Woods

Given the fact that there were a small number of African American congresspersons at that time, what were some of the impetuses or motivations for different people in Congress, in the House and the Senate, to actually pass the legislation?

Hawkins

I think it was just a moral imperative. The March on Washington [1963] which had taken place had pretty well set the stage for action. And the country at that time was fearful that if something wasn't done that there would be uprisings in the inner cities and that riots would break out. There was a very, very strong feeling that the country just had to do something along this line if it wanted to maintain its leadership. It was pretty much that patriotic fervor, that religious or moral imperative, that I think motivated the act. And with the support of every denomination, the bill was just something that individuals, in spite of their individual biases, felt they just had to support. It was the thing to do.

Woods

Were there any events in particular, either in the South or the inner cities, that sort of shocked or motivated or created a sense of urgency?

Hawkins

No, not that I can recall. The outside events were such that people- It was a time when people came together and did something that was morally right. And they felt that unless they did this, we somehow internationally would lose out. Nations were beginning- Change was being felt everyplace. Winds of change were blowing, and it was what we had boasted about as a nation but had done very little about.There obviously were incidents at local levels: blacks kicked out of first-class accommodations and transportation on the railroads; discriminatory signs were throughout the country, which were embarrassing to a nation that was standing up for human rights elsewhere but not providing them at home; colleges and universities were discriminating against black students applying to the universities; health facilities were segregated, completely segregated, so that blacks who probably were better doctors or surgeons than some of the whites in the area could not even go into a hospital to follow their patients. There was an accumulation of all of these things. Unions that were trying to avoid being attacked and trying to avoid the use of strikebreakers were themselves discriminating against blacks- not opening their union membership to blacks and so on. And we had the great separation of the AFL [American Federation of Labor] and the CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations], in which the CIO made quite an issue of the discrimination in the different trade unions because of discriminatory passages, which were becoming an embarrassment to the unions, who were trying to avoid blacks being used as strikebreakers. You had all of this sort of converge. A lot of events converged, I think, to cause support for a Civil Rights Act. And then you had a friendly administration. Kennedy had campaigned on this basis, and as a president who was Catholic, it was embarrassing to him not to be able to do something about it.

Woods

Maybe you could also talk about the origins of some of the poverty programs in the early sixties and how they differed from some of the Roosevelt programs. What new type of initiatives came up in the early sixties?

Hawkins

Well, the most outstanding one was the Office of Economic Opportunity [OEO], generally called the War on Poverty, which was, I would say, primarily led by Lyndon Johnson. We had many groups at the local level organizing to

develop what were then known as community action agencies, agencies that were formulated out of low-income people fighting for their own rights, organizing to get better jobs and to get training and such opportunities at the community level. They were the ones who operated under the OEO, the Office of Economic Opportunity. They operated the projects of the community groups. And there was a concept developed, we called it "maximum feasibility participation," a concept that programs would be run by the people themselves, by the so-called victims, and that maximum feasible participation was widespread. It was opposed by many of the elected officials who wanted to run the programs, but under the original concept they were turned over to the actual individuals who were the recipients of assistance themselves. It was quite revolutionary. We had a lot of good people, good ordinary people. I would call them secondary leaders in the community. They were not necessarily the top leaders, but they were the ones who were more active, who did the work, who were highly motivated. And they operated some good programs throughout the community.

Woods

So the OEO funds became available first in 1964?

Hawkins

Yes, I think that was true.

Woods

So you formed, early in '65, the community antipoverty committee in order to pry lose some of the funds that were being sent to Los Angeles but-

Hawkins

Yeah. We were being denied a lot of the benefits of the program, because at the local level we didn't have a friendly city hall connection, a mayor who actually was sympathetic to the people themselves benefiting, but a mayor [Samuel W. Yorty] who wanted to use the money politically himself to build a little power machine and who for that reason held out and didn't want to name a committee to receive the funds. So we organized a public committee, broadly based, representative of both the Hispanic and black communities, as

well as supportive, well-meaning whites, and we operated in order to try to change the situation.

Woods

So what was Yorty's response?

Hawkins

Oh, very hostile. But the thing got so hot that there was very little that he could do. We were making our appeal to the federal government to go around him to get the money. And in many instances, we did. That would have eventually supplanted him altogether if he hadn't made some compromise. He did compromise some but never really did a good job. But we were getting some of the money anyway as best we could.

Woods

So what role was R. Sargent Shriver [Jr.]? Did he come to Los Angeles?

Hawkins

Sargent Shriver made trips to Los Angeles and was very active with us. He helped us to open our housing clinic in South Central [Los Angeles] on 103d Street, which was the beginning of what is now the Watts Health Foundation. They just celebrated their twenty-fifth anniversary this year, presented me with this statue. That was the beginning of it, and Shriver was the one who laid the cornerstone, as it were, of the first program on 103d Street. I think they have moved twice since then to that present location and are still functioning. It was the same group that out of this health interest laid the foundation for the hospital as well, and for the medical center in South Los Angeles [Martin Luther King Jr.-Charles R. Drew Medical Center].

Woods

I've read several descriptions of that incident which mention you and Yorty. I think there was one book, *The Choice,* which talks about that and several others in terms of it being- Well, one, the rebellion [Watts riots] was not too long after that, and, two, that there was this inherent conflict in the anti-poverty programs where the mayors looked at it as an alternative source of patronage, and they tried to prevent it from the very beginning. And eventually they were appeased in terms of having some control over how the

program ran and there was some kind of negotiation. I guess Vice President [Hubert H.] Humphrey [Jr.] was also involved. What kind of role did he play in this whole-?

Hawkins

Oh, he played a very active and supportive role largely through his friendship with the Kennedys, with Sargent Shriver. Sargent Shriver was the spirit and the moving force behind the entire thing. He was very practical. And Humphrey in the civil rights struggle was obviously a moving force in the adoption of the Civil Rights Act and a cog in the wheel with respect to the War on Poverty.We never accomplished in the War on Poverty all that we set out to do. Maybe we were too ambitious. Maybe we felt that the millenium had arrived and that this was going to solve all problems. Unfortunately, a lot of heat was generated. There were feelings on both sides that were pretty strong at times, and the spirit was not one of cooperation. And if it hadn't been for, I would say, Humphrey and people like Sargent Shriver, we would never have been able to accomplish our goal. But we had influence in Washington where it mattered, and we had influence at the community level, where both Shriver and Humphrey were well respected, and their names meant a great deal to us in organizing at the community level.

Woods

The Office of Economic Opportunity, I guess, was an executive initiative.

Hawkins

Yeah, it was the actual name given under the act, the title of the act which was popularly known as the War on Poverty. But it was through the Office of Economic Opportunity that the actual structure, the delivery system, was put into place. This assumed that local communities would have an agency that would deal with that office and receive the funds and distribute them as the act intended.

Woods

So the OEO was attached to the president's office-?

Hawkins

Yes. It was a part of the executive branch.

Woods

So what were some of the backlashes against the OEO?

Hawkins

Well, the backlash came primarily from city politicians, city halls. They wanted to control the program, to take it over. And in most cities, they did. But that's where they were friendly, or let us say a lot more progressive than the city hall in Los Angeles at that time; they just happened to be out of step with the concept. But in some areas, the city controlling the program made it a more effective program. Shortly thereafter, the whole control did shift to the elected officials, and they made such a mess out of it that it shifted again from those local officials to what we now know as private industry councils, a combination of the local officials and business interests. So we've had that transition.

9. Tape Number: V, Side One December 22, 1992

Woods

We were talking about the Office of Economic Opportunity [OEO], of the changes it went through, some of the reactions of the mayors, and how it eventually evolved into the private industry councils. You'd also mentioned a little bit earlier that some of the funds or just the whole activity around creating these new programs generated a lot of activity by what you called second-level or second-tier leadership. What impact did that have on the community?

Hawkins

Oh, I think the community benefited. I think the community was improved. I think the services that they provided in terms of education and training, the placement of individuals in jobs, helped very substantially. And it was then construed to be a power that others wanted. They were doing so well that others, particularly the public officials, wanted to take over the control of it, and eventually they got the control of it. Now, when they got the control of it, they just messed up on the program, because they began to do what we had tried to avoid-that is, political appointments, using it merely in election campaigns. They had people on their staff actually being placed into some of

these positions in which they were being paid to do political work rather than community work.As a result of that, scandals developed across the country and made the program seem- We had then what became known as the community [Comprehensive] Employment and Training Act [1973]. That's the CETA act. But CETA became somewhat scandal-ridden, although we passed amendments to the act to clean it up and to make it stronger. I think CETA was a good program. It came out of the committee that I chaired, and I authored the CETA bill, actually. CETA became a good program, but because of lax administration-that is, this takeover by local politicians-it developed a bad name.That was what [Ronald W.] Reagan faced when he came in in 1981, and he used those scandals, which were terribly overplayed, as a means of just eliminating the program by edict-not through the Congress, but eliminating the program-which was the ending then of any jobs program that we've had. We haven't had one since then, except a Job Training Partnership Act [JTPA, 1982], which is the nearest that we have to a program. But it's a very small program; it affects less than 1 percent of the population in need of a program, and it's concentrated on those who are the most critically disadvantaged. But there's no training for those other individuals-for, I would say, the vast majority of individuals-in need of jobs or in need of further enhancement of their skills even when they're on the job. So we really don't have any jobs program today. No employment policy.

Woods

So what was the goal of the Manpower [Development and Training Act, 1962] and what were some of the types of projects that were initiated?

Hawkins

Well, the whole idea was to develop the human resources in order to get more production, that is, to increase the gross national product and to make them more productive so that we would not have to use machinery in order to do jobs. We would have individuals doing what later is automated, because we were not as productive as we should have been. So the whole idea was to make our human resources as important as our other resources, certainly more important than machinery. Machinery is only a part of a productive society. Unless you have the human resources, you're not going to have an increase in the growth rate and you're not going to have people being used

productively. That was the idea. It was a part of a full-employment concept: that you fully use your resources, and that those resources that you deem, perhaps, not employable, you just train and develop those resources so that you then end up with a productive work force. And around that productive work force, you're able then to organize your work in such a way that you can compete in the open market.

Woods

I guess in some ways the early sixties was very similar to the present period in that you had a question of automation. You had people being maybe redundant because of automation, and then you still had a large need for job training and a large unemployed population. So how big an issue was automation at the time? And what were some of the jobs?

Hawkins

Well, in the sixties, automation was the objective primarily, the main force that you had to work around in order to make people more productive. We started out with a Manpower Development and Training Act, MDTA, in the sixties, and gradually we brought in a whole list of programs that followed in that vein. But it started out with automation.The fear in the sixties was that automation was going to replace most individuals in the work force. It never really did quite that, but it is true that it did have an impact on replacing many individuals, particularly in the automobile industry. We have today, obviously, the global competition that we didn't have in the sixties, so that in addition to automation we now have global competition in that capital moves wherever capital can get people to work for lower wages and produce goods faster and cheaper than elsewhere.

Woods

So what was the strategy of Manpower in terms of realizing that automation was a big push? Some of the criticism of CETA and Manpower was that it was make-work.

Hawkins

Well, that was the old idea or the accusation made against the New Deal programs. That was from a much earlier period. That was a period during the

[Franklin D.] Roosevelt administration when we had a deep recession and people were employed on Works Progress Administration-WPA-and such programs. But then the war came along and everybody was able to get employed. We demonstrated, I think, during World War II that we could employ everybody, that we could prepare individuals, even domestics that have worked all of their lives in domestic service, that they could become welders and assemblers and handle the tools to turn out ships and build planes and so on. After the war was over, we had the problem of what these people would do then, and we turned to reconversion as a means of trying to reconvert to peacetime activity.We never completed that reconversion program because we really didn't have much of a policy. We're now in the throes not only of trying to transition from a wartime economy to a peacetime economy- Other nations have probably done a better job than we have of doing that, of building better products which are outselling our products. We invented a lot of things that have now become foreign-made successful products. The recorder, the VCR, the fax, and all of these things were largely developed in this country but are now Japanese products. We developed a very successful tool industry, but now the Germans are able to make better tools than we are able to make. We were the pioneers in the steel industry, but others are doing this. So the whole thing has shifted now to a global competition, with our country having pioneered, but now [our industries] are threatened with the loss of leadership.All of this had to be a accompanied by employment and training programs. But we're not investing in training as much as the other countries. Our training is largely for the elite. It's largely of persons who are managers and executives and skilled technicians. Three-fourths of the work force are receiving no government assistance in terms of training.

Woods

So getting back to President [Lyndon B.] Johnson, some people are still wondering how a southerner, an east Texan, could have been so supportive of so many social welfare and civil rights types of programs. What distinguished him from some of the other leaders of the Congress who were also southerners and more conservative? And what do you think his overall vision was? Or did he have a vision?

Hawkins

Oh, yes, I think he was a very visionary leader, there's no doubt. It was his background, I think. He was an individual who came up in education, as a teacher. I think he really believed that education was the most important function of government. This was his belief. I think he was the one who supplied the inspiration for the rest of us, because as a southerner, not expected to be as liberal, he was very, very liberal. Now he, at the same time, had a very practical technique in that he was also a dyed-in-the-wool politician. He was able to get things accomplished by being able to use his political goodwill to some advantage and to get others who were conservative to go along with him. He didn't believe in a radical restructuring of things. He just simply believed that education was the most important function. And to him, that superseded anything else.Now, of course, the belief is that financial interests-that is, the budget-are more important than investing in education. That typified [George H. W.] Bush and [Ronald W.] Reagan. That differentiated them from a Lyndon Johnson, who just believed that human beings needed to be developed and that we were not doing a good job of doing it. He wanted to do something about it. But I think it came from his background as a schoolteacher in a rural area in the deep South.

Woods

Before getting back to President Johnson, you mentioned Bush. There's some debate about whether he opposed or supported the civil rights legislation. Did you get a chance to meet him at all?

Hawkins

Yes, yes, yes. I don't think it was ever a part of his makeup. I think civil rights to him was incidental. I think he paid lip service to civil rights, but he was not a supporter of it. I would not say he was a racist; I just think it didn't matter to him. It was not part of his makeup.

Woods

When he was in Congress?

Hawkins

When he was in Congress or when he was president. In Congress, it was not an issue that was an important one to him. I don't think he went out to fight- I

can't recall that he fought us on civil rights. He was just not involved in the struggle one way or the other, as an opponent or as a supporter.

Woods

Okay, getting back to Lyndon Johnson, I guess there were a lot of Big Six meetings when he met-also during the Kennedy administration-with the leaders of the civil rights group.

Hawkins

Yeah. As the vice president, he was really the civil rights contact in the White House. That was a part of his assignment, and he handled it very well. I think he truly believed in it. It's just one of those things that is part of an individual's makeup. It was natural. It was also, obviously, a political asset of his and also he was very useful to the Civil Rights movement. Being a southerner who believed in civil rights was what we needed. We needed that image. And he helped. It was mutually beneficial.

Woods

Did you have much contact with Johnson?

Hawkins

Yeah, well, we had certainly- He had an open-door policy as far as I was concerned. But it wasn't really necessary for me to convince him or to go down to the White House to seek his support, because his support was a natural one. We felt that we were fighting shoulder to shoulder and not as one who needed to be convinced. He provided leadership of his own.

Woods

In terms of the first EEOC [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission], can you describe that and how it got started?

Hawkins

Yeah. Well, he was active in that. That was a part of his assignment. He was active in the selection of the personnel and campaigned throughout the country for its creation and for its funding and was constantly championing the cause of the agency, which meant that the agency was able to enforce the law, because the one up above they knew felt that way about it. So while we

later had EEOC commissions, we didn't get enforcement, because the people at the community level or in the regional offices and in the headquarters of the EEOC knew that they were working for an agency when the president, vice president, and those in charge up above didn't believe in the agency. So for at least a decade we've had no real enforcement in EEOC, because that was the program. The program was to keep it; don't repeal it. Pay lip service to it. If there's any discrimination, widespread discrimination, just look the other way.

10. Tape Number: VI, Side One June 20, 1993

Woods

What I'd like to do today is to maybe talk about your legislative record and then finish that up tomorrow, and also get into some of your personal history in terms of your family and the foundation [Hawkins Family Memorial Foundation for Educational Research and Development]. Specifically, I noticed you had, among your major fields, an intense focus upon education and labor, under those general categories. It's a long history, so I was wondering if you could walk through different bodies and different issues from the time you came into Congress all the way up until the time that you left. I have several-One would be the full employment bill [Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act (1978)], and then there is a lot of other related labor legislation.But maybe we could start with the EEOC [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission] from 1964 up until the present. What were some of the problems in terms of discrimination that were affecting African Americans or minorities at that time? And what were some of the problems that the legislation was trying to respond to over time? What were some of the alliances-who favored who or opposed who at different periods of time? And also a discussion of efforts to dismantle it and your efforts to resist that and to reform the organization. Then maybe at the end we could get into some of the heads of the commission like Eleanor Holmes Norton and Clarence Thomas. But for the beginning, to get your idea on the evolution of the body and major events and your role-

Hawkins

Well, let me begin with the early sixties, when I came to Washington in 1963, which was the first session. I had obviously been elected in 1962. At that particular time, there were several dominant issues that I would say we were concerned about, one of which was the employment situation in the Los Angeles basin. For the most part, blacks were contained in ghettos that at that time presented the usual ghetto problems based around unemployment, a high degree of dependency on welfare, widespread discrimination in both the private sector and the unions and so on, and also housing discrimination as well, which more or less confined them to geographical areas. One of the principal things that I was concerned about was the fact that so much poverty and unemployment existed in islands in the middle of an otherwise relatively prosperous economy. So we started out with an attempt to get concentrated help in these areas as opposed to widespread economic development. In other words, the county of Los Angeles or the Los Angeles basin was somewhat prosperous, but even in spite of that you had areas where blacks and other minorities were experiencing widespread suffering.We started out with ideas such as model cities, bringing together all of the federal and state programs and concentrating them on a particular area. It was for that reason we looked at the job training programs. At that time the Manpower Development and Training Act [1962] [MDTA, 1962] was in operation, but that was primarily to protect employees who were being laid off because of automation. But we used that technique in order to amend training programs-in MDTA and those that succeeded MDTA-in a way that we could create special councils based on any census tracts where there was high unemployment. And we were able to get provisions into most of the legislation that was passed in the early sixties that addressed areas of high unemployment. So that, in addition to supporting economic development- We also had the idea that you had to address areas that would be neglected, because they would not qualify otherwise, [by making] unemployment the factor on which federal aid was given. That would eliminate an entire county or an entire number of counties. So we were able to get provisions that indicated that areas of high unemployment would be given prior consideration. Most of that went through and succeeded in addressing it, and model cities was one of the ideas where you had all the federal programs addressing such areas as Watts or South Central [Los Angeles], or whatnot, throughout the county.The changing administrations, however, meant that

there was an evolution developing in the field of manpower development and training, and one idea led to another. After the MDTA we had the Emergency Employment Act [1971], and then following that we had the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act [1973]. I was the author of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act in the late sixties, early seventies, known as CETA, whereby we developed the idea that people in the poverty areas or the high unemployment areas would have some voice in the development of their own programs. And for a long time, in my opinion, CETA was very helpful. It later developed some problems, but these problems were primarily due to local administration and not to the act itself.Under the act we were able to get individuals employed in the private sector, and if not in the private sector in the public sector. So, for example, in the schools we were able to get aides into the classrooms. This was revolutionary, because up to this time only thirty-five employees were in the classroom, which meant that one had to be certified as a teacher to be in a classroom. Well, for the first time we were able to get parents, for example, in the schools where they worked in security positions, as assistants to teachers, and so on. And the same thing was duplicated in other fields. We had housing aides in the public housing projects. In health, we were able to get orderlies put into career positions whereby those who emptied bed pans were able to be trained to become practical nurses. Later they were able to become graduate nurses, and many of them even went into other medical fields. So there was a line of progression there. I think this broke down a lot of the discrimination. It did get individuals employed, and for a long time, I think, much was done.Now, because it was successful, many public officials began to bad-mouth the program because they were a little afraid that this whole program meant that they were losing control over the appointment of these individuals, and therefore they demanded a voice in the program. They were not successful until the [Ronald W.] Reagan administration. When Reagan was elected, the whole idea to him was contrary to his philosophy, and by edict he just discontinued the CETA program altogether, or the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, based on a few disclosures erroneously reported about how the program was being mismanaged, and a few horrible stories were used to discredit the program. So he eliminated the program so that we didn't have anything, and it was at that time that we had to develop a program to replace it. The program to replace it was the Job Training Partnership Act [JTPA, 1982].

Woods

Can I ask you a brief question about CETA? How many people did it employ at its height?

Hawkins

Locally or nationwide?

Woods

Nationwide.

Hawkins

Oh, nationwide, at one time we had approximately a million persons. And I would say in Los Angeles a very substantial number. I wouldn't be able to tell you offhand, but it was a substantial program, and it did employ, in addition to persons at the lowest levels-aides such as I was talking about-many professionals. We had accountants and supervisors and persons at that rank as well as those in the lower level.

Woods

Also related to CETA, I remember when it closed down or- It was, I guess, just before Reagan was elected. It seemed like there was a sharp recession at that time. Do you think that part of the opposition came from whites or people who were already in the work force who saw this emerging group as competition because they were getting skills that they hadn't had before?

Hawkins

I think the opposition came from public officials primarily. Nationwide, of course, there were those who opposed it on ideological grounds, because it obviously depended heavily on public service employment. That was always a bone of contention; it still is. The philosophy was built on the theory that the job should not be subsidized and that the private sector could employ and do a better job than the public sector. So that is an idea that still continues with us.

Woods

So CETA was sort of eliminated at the height of the recession that was-

Hawkins

Right, yeah, before the recession had really ended. But there was still a need for something to be done. Consequently, Reagan pushed the idea of the Job Training Partnership Act, for which, incidentally, I introduced the first bill. And it was my bill that eventually passed, but it did not pass in the form that I introduced it. When it eventually passed, there was a prohibition in it against public service jobs.Also there was an opposition to the type of training that I envisioned. The training ended up being a very limited amount of training directed at training individuals for jobs which I felt they could obtain without even being trained-in other words, car wash jobs, dishwashing jobs, jobs in fast-food places. Now, they were still jobs, but they were not jobs that meant careers. They were dead-end jobs that were primarily geared to the minimum wage and those where they would not compete with others. Now, there was, of course, some opposition from labor, from unions, that we shouldn't train individuals to compete with union members who were not employed-that is, union members whowere on lay-off or they were looking for some of these jobs too, because there were not jobs otherwise available. A good example would be in the textile industry. Why would you train women as seamstresses or to go into needle trade occupations when there were a lot of union members laid off who were veteran and who were already trained but who didn't have jobs? So that opposition obviously developed as well.But the major thing was that suddenly Reagan had abolished the only job training program. We didn't have anything, so we were forced into a position of having to compromise to get something through. The Job Training Partnership Act ends up being the thing that we got through. At least it did provide some training after twelve or fourteen weeks, but it also eliminated another important fact about job training programs, that is stipends. It eliminated stipends, so that individuals who went through the training period had no source of income. So the only ones who could obviously benefit from the training were those who had some source of income for several months until that training was completed.

Woods

Usually credit for passage of the bill is given to Senator [Lloyd] Bentsen, to [J. Danforth] Quayle, or to Senator [Edward M.] Kennedy. What role did they play in-?

Hawkins

The major role on the Senate side was really played by Republican [Orrin G.] Hatch, Senator Hatch, who had lines directly with President Reagan. It was he who did the negotiating between the White House and the conferees on the joint committee between the House and the Senate. After I had introduced the bill and it was on its way, Senator Quayle introduced the bill on the Senate side, but it was not his bill that we dealt with, although he was involved and participated in the negotiations. He did not play a pivotal role. Senator Kennedy was active and did play a role on the Democratic side, but our problem at that time was getting something through that the president would sign. So the major role had to be played, in effect, by a Republican. And Senator Hatch made some concessions and was, I would say, a very reasonable negotiator up to the point of his ideological differences.I was surprised that when Quayle was selected for vice president, that this was about the only thing they felt that they could use to dignify his background to give him some credibility. They said that he was the author of the act, which was absolutely untrue. He was a supporter of the final version, but certainly I don't think that it was a great contribution that he made to the subject.

Woods

What were some of your impressions of him during negotiations for the JTPA?

Hawkins

Oh, I would say very mediocre. But I think he was thoroughly unsuited for the selection. I don't think there was anything vicious about him; I looked upon him rather as a person with a sense of immaturity rather than anything else. Very easy to get along with, very pleasant, but not aggressive. I think he too was rather surprised to have been selected.

Woods

Since we're on the Job Training Partnership Act, how did it evolve from its passage in 1982 to the present as-?

Hawkins

The Job Training Partnership Act? There have obviously been quite a few amendments over that period of time. In my opinion, the act has not evolved

the way even we felt that it could have evolved. Even though I was not satisfied completely with the way it turned out, the act did offer some possibility, under the right administration, of being helpful.One of the difficulties about the act is that the act has been narrowly targeted. Now, personally I benefited from the targeting process in that one had to be critically disadvantaged in order to benefit from it, which meant that those who were most in need of some help got the help, that's true. However, that made it politically unacceptable to other individuals, who felt that it was an act that benefited, possibly, minorities, and only a small number even of those, and the most critically disadvantaged. So politically, we could never get the amount of money that we needed in order to support a larger program. So politically, it was not a very good vote for the average member of Congress. Even a liberal Democrat who did not have, let's say, a large number of minorities in his or her district would not benefit from the act. And that targeting has always evolved into a smaller and smaller group. So that, in addition to being unemployed, one had to, let us say, be a dropout, or one had to be somehow discriminated against on the basis of disability, etc. In other words, one had to have several factors that qualified an individual, and that's the way it is today. Now, I think the people who qualified were certainly entitled to the help, but I would have made that a title all of its own.But in addition to that, I think there are individuals who work, who are not unemployed. One of our biggest problems today is the fact that we have about 20 million persons who work every day of their lives but who are still poor. They would be disqualified under the Job Training Partnership Act because they already have jobs. Now, these jobs don't pay them enough to get out of poverty. These individuals are certainly entitled to consideration, but the Job Training Partnership Act does not apply to them. There are kids who don't drop out of school now. Now, if a dropout qualifies under the Job Training Partnership Act, what about the kid who stays in school desperately trying to complete a high school graduation? I think that kid is entitled to some- What we need is a comprehensive training program that would help people, regardless of the reasons for their disadvantage, who still need training. There are many individuals who work, let's say, on ordinary jobs who are working beneath their potential skill. We need to help them. Otherwise they're going to become unemployed eventually or they're going to have problems as well.In other words, we've never had, as other countries have

had, an overall training policy. Our policy is simply as a last resort to train the most critically disadvantaged. Consequently, it isn't geared to the times in which we live in which we have global competition. There's too much competition among people, all of whom are deserving of some attention but who don't get it because they are not critically disadvantaged.

Woods

I see you're reading Robert [B.] Reich's *The Work of Nations: [Preparing Ourselves for Twenty-First Century Capitalism*]. Some of the preliminary discussions with the administration were campaign promises related to a comprehensive retraining emphasis for high-wage, high-skill manufacturing jobs. What do you think is going to be the future in JTPA? And what type of labor policy on job training programs do you expect to come out of the-?

Hawkins

Well, the Job Training Partnership Act as we know it today is just obsolete. I think the idea of private industry councils that control the operation of the Job Training Partnership Act is probably a good idea. But I think these councils that operate in various labor areas should be broadened. They should be made more comprehensive. And I think that all the other services should be combined and put under the jurisdiction of a council.In other words, there is no reason for the employment service to be independent. There should be closer collaboration between the Job Training Partnership Act, or the business management side, and the education side, so that community colleges and the universities should be heavily involved in the training. I think there is no reason for, let us say, services such as child care to be in a different department. Child care today is very important to women, particularly single women who must work. They have no possibility of advancing unless their children are going to be taken care of. Yet we have our child care handled as a welfare agency in a different department from the Department of Labor. These services should be comprehensive. They should be brought together. And I think that these labor councils, or private industry councils, which are controlled today largely by business, should be broadened to include these other services and these other departments. That's the direction in which we are moving or should move, I hope, under the new administration, and certainly Robert Reich as secretary of labor has really advocated this idea for a

long time. And if he has anything to do with it, I think that's the direction we will move in. However, it is pretty difficult to get different departments together to even talk to each other, let alone to cooperate.And it's pretty obvious also that, in terms of child care, we don't have a decent program at the present time. It's not an educational program. Child care should be an educational program. It should be, in my opinion, a part of the school system. We may as well use the facilities of the school system to reach young kids before they get to kindergarten. And child care would be a very attractive incentive for women to work. If they were assured that their children were going to be educated and to be brought up able to become independent and self-sustaining, this itself would be an attraction that could be used to provide an escape for women on welfare, an escape from their current condition.But all of this has to be coordinated, and I think the Job Training Partnership Act could be used to do that, if we get away from the idea that it's only for a very, very small number of individuals. The number reached on the Job Training Partnership Act, if every eligible person was somehow served under the Job Training Partnership Act, would be less than 3 percent. So that we're talking about a very minor program at the present time.

Woods

One of the things is that there is a lot of general unemployment being created now, and you have more and more families applying for food stamps. Why don't you think that there is this demand coming up for job training or job creation?

Hawkins

I don't think the public has been sold enough on training in this country. This notion is prevailing today that our problem is largely a big deficit, and that we have got to reduce the national debt, and we've got to balance the budget before we can do these other things. People somehow have an idea that if we don't do it, they are going to pay more taxes, and nobody wants to pay more taxes. And I think the whole thing is phony.There is no way in the world that we are going to get out of our present situation unless we become more productive and take care of the individuals that we are now forced to take care of who are unemployed. The unemployment figure itself is played down. We look at the official unemployment rate, and people have an idea there's

only 7 or 8 million people unemployed, and that's the extent of our problem. But the actual fact is that, if correctly counted, we have over 15 million unemployed people. And then we have, as I say, about 20 million people who are employed but who can't make ends meet. So you add all of this up and you're talking about-and I'm not counting the functionally illiterate people-at least 35 or 40 million people who are in what I would call the subclass of America that, for one reason or another, cannot make ends meet now and live decently. They certainly cannot take care of their children. It's impossible.And the problem is becoming greater, not smaller, because in addition to the internal problem, we now have a problem of global competition, and jobs are going overseas. More and more money is being invested overseas because they can get a much better return, rather than investing it in this country. And we have also a more liberal immigration policy that allows-even legally-more immigrants to come into the country only to compete with the people who are already finding it difficult to find jobs. Now, I'm not saying anything about the illegal immigration into the country, which is a tremendous number. So the problem is becoming more severe, and the need for a policy to stabilize the situation and to train people to become productive citizens is even greater.

Woods

Okay, that was a pretty good review of the Job Training- If we could go back to some of the other components of your work on labor. I was just wondering, could you similarly go through the history of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which you were heavily involved in?

Hawkins

Well, my interest in equal employment opportunity began, I would say, even in the thirties, but certainly in the forties we were fighting for a state Fair Employment Practices Act [1959] at the same time that other states were moving ahead. The state of New York really established the leadership in adopting fair employment practices acts. We began to campaign for an act in California in, I would say, a very serious manner in the early forties. And we began to introduce bills that were bitterly opposed-opposed originally by Earl Warren when he was governor and also by other Republican administrations at the state level.But a part of it was geared to a national campaign led by A.

Philip Randolph, the president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. On the West Coast he had a number of active officials of his union, including C. [Cottrell] L. Dellums, the uncle of the Congressman [Ronald V.] Dellums today, and in Los Angeles such people as Clarence Johnson, who was head of the [Brotherhood of] Dining Car Cooks and Waiters union, and others throughout the state helped out. So we conducted hearings throughout the state in the early days when I was in the [California] State Assembly to try to get an act through. We kept pushing for the adoption of an act, trying to get one through, even sponsoring an initiative on the ballot which was not successful because we didn't have the financial resources to conduct a statewide campaign. But we picked up a lot of support which was helpful eventually in committing Governor [Edmund G. "Pat"] Brown [Sr.], the first Governor Brown, to make a commitment during the campaign that, if elected governor, he would sign such an act, which he later did.But it was at that level. Originally we had very little support. Even the unions opposed us, because they were covered, and we still had discriminatory unions that did not want to admit blacks into the union. So we got mixed support from the unions and complete opposition from the business community.Now, the business community took the position that California should not have an act, because it would mean that they would be regulated and other states surrounding them would not be, and therefore jobs would be attracted into the other states. It was sort of a strange situation for them to take, because later, when I was active in a national campaign- Then they objected to a national campaign, which they originally opposed as a state act- But when we got to Congress we found out that they were opposed to a national act as well, so we didn't have very much support. The biggest support we had came from churches-from religious denominations-and from minorities, but there were not enough of them, obviously, to do the job. But when we were able to commit Governor Brown as a candidate, and later as governor, to sign such an act, we had no trouble putting one through. The legislature was Democratic by that time, so we were able to get one adopted eventually, setting up an equal employment opportunity commission [California State Fair Employment Practices Commission].

Woods

Okay. What about the federal commission?

Hawkins

Well, the federal commission followed pretty much-

11. Tape Number: VI, Side Two June 20, 1993

Woods

The federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. You issued a new bill in 1964-

Hawkins

Yeah. When I came to Congress, one of the first things I did was to introduce an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission bill. I selected a committee that included jurisdiction of the bill. In other words, I selected the [House] Education and Labor Committee because it had jurisdiction over employment discrimination, over job training, over a lot of the education programs and so forth. And we actively fought for it.At the same time, Jimmy [James] Roosevelt-in the adjoining congressional district and a friend of mine-was on the committee, and we joined together in pushing for an act. Jimmy Roosevelt was very helpful to me in reaching some of the old-timers in the Congress, particularly those who had served while his dad [Franklin D. Roosevelt] was president. It made it very helpful.When the Civil Rights Act [1964] was being considered, we felt that this would be a good time to put the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission into a title of the Civil Rights Act. At first the people in the [John F.] Kennedy administration didn't like the idea-not that they were opposed to what we were trying to do, but they were afraid that it would be too heavy a load for the civil rights bill to carry. It was sort of a touch-and-go situation; they weren't so sure that a civil rights bill could be adopted because of the southern Democrats. But I insisted on it, and they had the support of Jimmy Roosevelt, and we convinced them to put it in as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. Eventually the act was adopted and the Civil Rights Commission was established.

Woods

Briefly, before you go on, what was Jimmy Roosevelt doing at that time?

Hawkins

He was a member of Congress.

Woods

Okay.

Hawkins

Oh, yeah, very active, and he was representing a district in Los Angeles. As a matter of fact, he represented part of the district that I inherited. The district that I got was a combination of half his district and half the district of Clyde G. Doyle in the adjoining district. Clyde Doyle at that time represented a district stretching from South Gate to Long Beach, and Doyle wanted to consolidate his area in Long Beach rather than have in it South Gate and Huntington Park. So he gave up Huntington Park and South Gate to help me form a new district, and Jimmy Roosevelt gave up the eastern end of his district. He withdrew to Beverly Hills, so he represented the Beverly Hills district thereafter. So we put it together. But it was out of a friendship, a longstanding friendship, that the Twenty-ninth Congressional District-it was the Fourteenth at that time-was carved out. It was a district in which I was reasonably safe in running for an office without having to spend a lot of money. It was an area that I had already represented for several decades. So it was that type of friendship that ended being exploited for what I would call a public good.

Woods

So the EEOC came directly out of the fair employment practices movement.

Hawkins

Yes, absolutely.

Woods

And who was it going to defend? What type of groups was it going to protect from discrimination?

Hawkins

Well, the main groups that would benefit would be those who were discriminated against. That would include persons discriminated against on the basis of color, race, national origin-I would say Hispanics as well as blacks-and originally, although not as they were later more closely included, women,

and so forth. In other words, the act was later extended to broaden its coverage so that many more were included, and eventually even the disabled also benefited from it. So out of the original act grew the coverage which extended anti-discrimination penalties to others based on race, color, national origin, gender, and disability.

Woods

So where in Congress was your support coming from for the Title VII?

Hawkins

At that time, as a part of the whole Civil Rights movement, which was at its zenith- The March on Washington [1963] had culminated in a broad coalition of support which came from labor, primarily led by [Walter P.] Reuther of the United Automobile Workers [UAW]. We had the church leadership of all denominations: Protestant and Jewish and even some Catholic support. And we obviously had the Southern Christian Leadership Conference group, which was very helpful, and students. Students were beginning to organize on university campuses throughout the country. It was as broad a coalition as I've ever seen. And it tied in with the women's liberation movement. So things just seemed to come together at that particular time as they've never done before and as they have not since been able to coalesce.

Woods

I know that it was a general approach to employment discrimination, but did you see particular sectors of the economy really needing a push, like manufacturing or-not agriculture, but-services or professions? Or did you see it like maybe it was a southern bill to really change relationships in the South? Or was it to really affect the northern employment patterns-?

Hawkins

Well, I think all sections of the country benefited. I would say that the most stubborn resistance came out of craft unions, largely, and small businesses. The craft unions were the most internally organized, and they were the ones that were the toughest to overcome, particularly the building trades, where you had a lot of discrimination against blacks in such fields as carpentry and ordinary labor work, and electricians, plumbers, and so forth. There are still

remnants of that discrimination prevailing. Then a lot of small businesses were sometimes family operated and saw no reason why they should have to employ anyone except members of the family, those who were close to them. So originally we had to exempt most small businesses where fifteen or fewer employees were selected, and that was based primarily on political considerations. The larger companies did not offer much resistance because they could absorb minorities a lot easier than anyone else, so in large industries we didn't run into too much of a problem.Of course, the National [Association of State] Chambers of Commerce and manufacturers associations opposed the bill just on the basis that they opposed any regulation whatsoever. It was not just a racial matter with them; they just didn't want to be told that they had to do anything in terms of employment policies. So on ideological grounds they opposed us.

Woods

What was the response of state and local governments? Did they support-?

Hawkins

Oh, primarily they, I would say, were more supportive than they were opposed. They were not originally included in the bill. We added them later through an amendment, so that at first the act did not include them. They had no particular reason to oppose us because the state fair employment practices acts primarily regulated states that had them-and most states by that time did have state employment practices acts. So they were not originally opposed to the act.

Woods

So the original EEOC had cease-and-desist power.

Hawkins

No, no, it did not. One of the problems that we always tried to get into the act was to give it the power to enforce its own orders. That is still somewhat of a problem with us. It's a public policy that an agency that investigates and administers an act should not also enforce it. The enforcement should be elsewhere. That has always been a problem that we've had with it. Now, there are agencies that obviously do enforce their orders, and I think that the EEOC

should have that power, and I think that's one of the things that we still must contend with.But I would say that the biggest difficulty as I see it with EEOC, and with civil rights in general, lies elsewhere today. I would actually say that education happens to be, in my opinion, the new plateau for civil rights, because if hiring is going to be on the basis of fairness and of merit, as many people believe that it should be, individuals are going to have to qualify on the basis of education. And education has become much more of a problem with us than just outright discrimination. Forty years ago, an individual could drop out of school and still be able to make a decent living. That is absolutely untrue today. If one were to say that an individual could be disqualified on the basis of not having graduated, let us say, from high school, that alone would practically disqualify a third, if not a greater number, of blacks from jobs that are currently unfilled. And if you were to raise the education qualification to high school graduation or some college work, you could practically discriminate against three-fourths of blacks without any problem. You wouldn't even have to, let's say, be bigoted or an outright racist to insist on such a qualification. That's why I say that I think education has become much more important and discrimination, as such, less of a problem over time. Not that it's not a problem. I'm not saying that it's not a problem. I'm simply saying that it's possible to exercise discrimination now on grounds that are fairly acceptable to the general public. And to simply say that it is on the basis of education alone that we are going to employ or not employ individuals, you could practically discriminate against, I would say, three-fourths of blacks on that basis alone.

Woods

What were some of the problems faced by the EEOC during the [Lyndon B.] Johnson administration?

Hawkins

During the Johnson administration?

Woods

Right.

Hawkins

Well, the only problem was to really get good people on the commission who really believed in it and who were aggressive and would use it, let us say, to protect large classes of people without having to go through lawsuits on an individual-by-individual basis. Class discrimination has always been the most efficient and least costly way of ending a discrimination, rather than by private lawsuits which- During other administrations where you didn't have a friendly one-during the Reagan administration, for example-an individual could be discriminated against, the EEOC would wink at it, not do a damn thing about it, and consequently the individual's only resort was to sue. But suing is a very expensive situation, and many times it's time-consuming, and an individual can go on and on and on trying to get redress without any success whatsoever.But during the Johnson administration, obviously we were able to get fairly decent administration and to use the agency in order to publicly embarrass those who wanted to discriminate, and that was very helpful at times, particularly in departments and in the larger businesses: IBM [International Business Machines Corporation], General Electric [Company], AT&T [American Telephone and Telegraph Company], and the groups like that. Many of them just kicked in and said, "We will cooperate because we have a friendly president." But in other administrations where we didn't have a friendly president or had one who was opposed to the EEOC, we got nothing out of it.

Woods

Clifford [L.] Alexander [Jr.]: Was he ousted from his position in the EEOC as director of the commission during the [Richard M.] Nixon administration? Or did he resign?

Hawkins

No, no, he just withdrew because he wasn't going to be named, anyway. But he was a good administrator, and I think did a good job-very bright fellow and very principled, and a fair but strong administrator. He did a good job.

Woods

What about William [H.] Brown [III]?

Hawkins

William Brown was a good one. I would rate them both as being very good. Brown was even more persistent, I think, than Alexander.

Woods

Okay. What about Eleanor Holmes Norton?

Hawkins

Oh, she was a good administrator and a very knowledgeable one and made a lot of improvement in the act. She was able to get negotiations settled more rapidly than the others and to try to reduce the caseload. I thought she was a very good administrator. She and I locked horns at times, not because I thought that she was in any way wrong, except that our idea was to always keep heat on the agency to make sure that it engaged in broad programs to settle things on a class basis and not fool around just with individual cases and waste a lot of the resources of the agency-which it didn't have-on private lawsuits.In other words, systemic discrimination was what we were trying to get settled. They could move into broad industries such as the communications industry or the railroad industry or the steel industry and get redress for grievances that had long been ignored. We felt that this presented a good breakthrough for the largest number of individuals who would benefit from it. It happened that many individuals benefited across the country. This, I think, helped to break down discrimination in its most pervasive sense, because you are helping the largest number of people, and you were doing it without any regard to friendship or in regard to any parochial interests or whatnot. It was the best thing for the entire country.

Woods

So she took more private suits-

Hawkins

No, she was better at what was called the rapid processing of cases, at getting them closed quickly and satisfactorily. Now, you can close a lot of cases without settling anything, but she actually negotiated many settlements, I think, very well, because she had a lot of good, efficient people working for the agency. The agency was not just loaded down with bureaucrats who had no particular interest in what they were doing, as later happened in other

administrations, where individuals sat around, held the jobs, but didn't really believe in what they were doing.

Woods

Did you object to the constant reorganization of the EEOC? It seemed like there was- I read some material-

Hawkins

Well, I wouldn't say I objected as such, except that we conducted regular hearings even during friendly administrations. For example, Eleanor Norton was up before my committee at least once every month to report to us. [tape recorder off]

Woods

I guess you followed the career of Eleanor Holmes Norton.

Hawkins

She is rather popular now, I'd say. Now, if she were to run [for mayor of Washington, D.C.], I think she could win. I don't know the current mayor [Sharon Dixon], and I have no personal dislike or anything like that, but I think the people are sick and tired of all of the beefing about statehood and yet they won't manage the city efficiently. The best way to get statehood, in my opinion, would be to say that you've done a good job in the city. Law enforcement in the city itself has been very, very bad. There are too many homicides. There are more homicides here than in Los Angeles.

Woods

That's hard to believe.

Hawkins

That's hard to believe.

Woods

So the EEOC under the Reagan administration- Did you notice an immediate change in-?

Hawkins

Oh, yeah, yeah, it was distinctly bad; there were no bones about it. Reagan didn't believe in it as part of his idea of deregulation, and that permeated the agency. People in the agency knew they weren't supposed to enforce the law, so they didn't. And that included [Clarence] Thomas. Thomas's record was very bad. Even the opposition to civil rights used his statements to justify what they were doing.The hearing on his confirmation should have been on his record. It had nothing to do with Anita [F.] Hill. That was the most mishandled issue I've ever seen. That may seem to be around who was telling the truth. Was Thomas or Anita Hill? Well, what about his record? He had been head of an agency for a long time and had done a very bad job. We got to the point where we stopped having hearings, because it simply meant that they gave him an opportunity to talk against the agency, the very agency he was head of. And he didn't believe in keeping statistical records on who was discriminated against or who wasn't. He had no idea of having any numerical goals whatsoever for the agency. Everybody was just shocked at the way he testified.So what are we doing here? We're going to make a judge out of this guy. That was sort of a joke. [laughter] And in truth, that's what we were doing. We were just giving him an opportunity to do what the opposition wanted him to do, and we knew they were pledging to do something for him if he lost out.

Woods

How did he get through the confirmation hearings?

Hawkins

Well, it was just a matter of whether or not Anita Hill was telling the truth and-

Woods

I mean to become chair of the EEOC.

Hawkins

Well, I guess it's because they felt he would be a good lackey. They didn't want anyone who really believed in civil rights.

Woods

So the Democrats weren't controlling the-

Hawkins

No, no, he was a presidental appointee.

Woods

Right, so it went through the Senate.

Hawkins

Uh-huh.

Woods

So did you have many conversations with him?

Hawkins

With Thomas? Well, I didn't know him or- None of my experience with him was on a personal level except through correspondence, but he talked one way on a personal basis but quite a different way in his official position.

Woods

You said that at the beginning of the Reagan administration they had a clear-cut philosophy of deregulation cuts. In their approach to the EEOC, were there systematic delaying actions? What was part of that package?

Hawkins

Well, the package was really to, if not eliminate, to render the agency for all practical purposes inoperative to do the job. They at times eliminated staff. They put people on as commissioners who they knew were sympathetic to their point of view-that is, making the agency time-consuming. They insisted on everything being done on an individual-case basis, which meant a lot of time. In a year's time you could handle two or three hundred cases and consume all the time and still not accomplish anything. You might help a few of those people even if you were sincere, but it would be a small number. And people in the regional offices were told that their cases could not be settled until they had sent the cases to Washington to be settled. They would send the cases to Washington, and that was the end of it. So the agency became demoralized and it became some kind of a joke, that's all.

Woods

Okay. Well, what's the current status of the EEOC?

Hawkins

Well, of course, a change of administration- I don't know that we have any indication as yet of what its program is or what it intends to do. I would say that it will go back and pick up where Eleanor Norton left off, I think follow pretty much the style and the policies that she left it with.The biggest problem now, though, is availabilty of jobs rather than job discrimination. There is still job discrimination, but people are losing their jobs now largely because of cutbacks and the general economic conditions.

Woods

Given the fact that there was so much change in the administrations and the failure to quantify a lot of the flow of cases, was there any way to tell whether these EEOC complaints were increasing or remained the same over time from administration to administration or-? You said that they added, I guess, disability and gender-

Hawkins

Yeah, well, disability cases have become a big load for the agency, and I think they'll do a good job on disability cases. Age discrimination is becoming also important for the agency. Age discrimination, gender discrimination, disability discrimination, these three I think pretty well dominate the agency now.

Woods

So is it that racial discrimination has gone down? Or is it just not-?

Hawkins

It hasn't gone down. I don't think it's as flagrant as it used to be. It's more subtle. Those who discriminate have become more sophisticated, and it's harder to get the documentation on them. But when you're laying people off, you can really discriminate against those who have less seniority, which is true in the case of minorities, and justify it without incurring any legal liability. So the biggest problem right now is job creation, not discrimination.

Woods

Your [House] Subcommittee on Equal Employment Opportunity, you also had oversight over the Federal Contract Compliance [Program] Office?

Hawkins

Yes.

Woods

Could you-?

Hawkins

That's never really been enforced. They just ignored the rewarding contracts. A company can have a history of discrimination and yet get a contract, and that has been pretty typical all the way through. You have very few instances where a company has failed to get a contract on the basis of its past record in discriminating against minorities. A large number of them happened to have been defense contractors where they discriminated against with impunity and got away with it.

Woods

So did you have any discussions with some of the contractors in Southern California about-?

Hawkins

We conducted a number of hearings, and I personally met with several- I tried to go through the entire list but obviously didn't have time to do that. But we developed a technique of calling in the chief executive officers of companies and discussing with them how they could best use their EEOC offices to work out some arrangement to employ more minorities. And I would say offhand, unofficially, we did some good. At least we let the chief executive officers know that we were watching them, that we didn't want to punish anyone, that we just wanted to work out good relations and get things done. That way, I think we protected quite a few individuals and probably got some employed who otherwise would not have been employed. It was all done in a strictly unofficial manner. We did not advertise our meetings with the individual. We just felt that we could, through goodwill, help out.And we assigned staff. I had a good attorney [Edward Cooke] at that time employed by the committee, who worked with the different ones [companies], who would go out and visit

plants and observe what was going on as well as talk to the ones officially in charge within a company about doing the right thing, sort of a public relations type of campaign. And many of them responded. I think they felt that if they didn't respond that we might instigate hearings and embarrassment.

Woods

Did they provide statistics on the-?

Hawkins

Yeah, yeah, we kept up; we let them know we would keep up with their commitment to employ more reasonably according to the population in the area. If the minority population, let's say, was 20 percent of the total population, we used that as a guideline to say, "Well, look, it's up to you to locate and to train. Where they're not available in the skills that you want, you can institute training programs." And some did institute training programs.

Woods

You also had hearings on minority employment in Hollywood.

Hawkins

We had one or two. We didn't concentrate any more on that than we did on some of the industrial firms. No particular reason. We just never got around to all the things that we wanted to do. The NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] and some of the other groups sort of singled out Hollywood, and we left some of that to some of the other agencies. We were trying to fill in where agencies were not operating. And Hollywood was always a little more difficult. It's sort of an individualized field where we just didn't have the staff. Our staff was pretty well geared to industrial production rather than to artistic performance.

Woods

Okay. The last major section today relates to the Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act of 1978. Could you talk about the origins? I know you've been introducing full employment measures since your days in Sacramento.

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Woods

Okay, the Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act of 1978.

Hawkins

We had, on several occasions earlier, introduced bills to provide for substantial appropriations to stimulate and employ a certain number- For example, at one time we had a bill to provide for the employment of somewhere in the neighborhood of a million persons in various occupations to be trained and employed- In work training, subsidized employment, youth employment, in various ways of comprehensive employment programs, the idea being to reduce the unemployment rate among certain groups that were suffering from chronic, long-term unemployment.At the same time, over on the Senate side, Senator [Jacob K.] Javits, a Republican from New York, and Hubert [H.] Humphrey [Jr.] had what they called a planning bill-bills to extend the Employment Act of 1946, I think it was, into long-range planning. Senator Humphrey and I happened to be out to several different affairs-I have forgotten exactly what they were; they were more social than anything else-and we began to talk to each other about maybe putting it together to have an outright and direct employment program connected with long-range planning. Out of that arose the concept of "balanced growth," how you stimulate the economy in such a way as to increase productivity and get some job creation so as to make a major employment program to fit in with the employment program, which meant joining the two bills together.So-I think it was in '78-we introduced a bill with that intent, and we wanted to get it more specific than the old Employment Act of 1946, which was often called the "Full Employment Bill," but which wasn't- To put them together in such a way that we would have some way of measuring whether or not public officials were doing the right thing. So we conceived the idea of specific goals, timetables, and we thought the best way to do it was to use the official unemployment rate as a way of judging how much progress we would be making. We started out with making it 4 percent overall, 3 percent in terms of adult unemployment. Then we said that it had to be done within five years. That was just an interim target; it was not an eventual target. Our idea was that every person should, as a matter of right, be entitled to a job at decent wages. And that's the way the original bill was introduced.But then, in the [James E.] Carter administration, we had to deal with primarily- He objected to

making it a legal right, because he felt that it would lead to a lot of lawsuits. We had to amend that out of it so that we provided that it would not be a legal right but that it would be a target that had to be reached within a period of time.Then we put into the bill a number of programs which we felt would achieve that goal. Those programs were such things as the youth employment program under CETA [Comprehensive Education and Training Act], a youth title under YEDPA [Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act, 1977], a transition program so that young people who graduated would be able to go into industry upon graduation and serve as apprentices and so forth. We also provided that every group would have to disaggregate the data so that every group would likewise have a reduction in their unemployment. In other words, you couldn't reduce the overall unemployment rate and still keep the rate for minorities-blacks or Hispanics-at a high level and then average it out. We provided that that cannot happen. Then we also provided for a rate for inflation but also prohibited the use of unemployment as a means of fighting inflation; both had to be reduce at the same time. All of these were in the act, and pretty much then, as we negotiated our differences with the Carter administration, the act finally passed and the president signed it.Now, after he signed it, then he began to ignore the act. Starting with the Carter administration, the act has simply been ignored. Unemployment is still a major means of fighting inflation, and the so-called trickle-down policy still prevails. That is, administrations have still used the tax code to give tax relief. [tape recorder off]The bottom line is we got together. We began to commit ourselves to push for a joint bill, which we succeeded in passing, but which has not really affected economic policy for the country, largely because of a lot of talk. Nobody seems to be that concerned about full employment-you know, a lot of lip service, and that's as far as it goes.Now I think it's worse in a way, because we've gone international, so we either have the controlling interests of- The interest in this country among the so-called intelligentsia seems to be in international agencies rather than domestic. Capital and brains and everything else move across geographical boundaries. That leaves the lower two-thirds out on a limb because they are competing with low wages worldwide now, not just in domestic scenes. So I'm not so sure that the full employment approach is relevant to what really is happening now. Not that I've given up the idea, but it certainly has got to be given a new spin and a new

meaning in order to get the support we need, even from a new administration.

Woods

Well, how would you restructure the full employment proposal or rephrase it or-?

Hawkins

We have to get something that people will unite around. And I don't see anything that they will unite around unless they see some personal benefit. The business people have to be sold on the idea of why they need to support good schools, for example-why it's in their economic self-interest to support education reform-and they're not quite in that position at this time. Even [William J.] Clinton is talking about deficit reduction. Now, does that mean that we've got to postpone any improvement for the average wage earner until such time as the budget is balanced? And you get no indication that minorities are that much concerned about employment and training and education the way they should be. Now, if not, it simply means that blacks are competing against low-wage people in Asia and in South America and in Mexico.

Woods

You said that you had these initial discussions with Senator Humphrey. This was in the early seventies?

Hawkins

Yeah.

Woods

'Seventy-three or-?

Hawkins

See, I'm talking about twenty years ago. Now you've got to approach that whole situation in a little different way, because we don't have the leverage now that we had then. And there are business interests now that are willing to import cheap labor from abroad into this country in preference, let's say, to training and employing the people native to this country. Crossing

geographical boundaries no longer means anything to them. They'll do it. They will do it. So that means that unless we can develop the skills and the expertise among those who are with us across town, rather than going overseas, they are going to be set back.Now, for individuals to be wanted today, they have got to have the skills that are in short supply. Where do they get the skills? We've increased the number of kids who graduate some, but they are still not going into college and they are not completing college work.

Woods

So in your initial discussions, were both you and Humphrey committed to full employment?

Hawkins

Yeah.

Woods

I came across an event in one of the archives about a national full employment conference which had some labor and civil rights groups. So was there sort of a movement that was generated as the bill progressed between '73 and '78? Did you try to generate support among different constituencies and things like that?

Hawkins

Well, that has to be put into a different setting now. It has to be put into the worldwide situation that we are facing now rather than what we faced then. And I see now the great need is to improve the marketable skills among all groups, not just one section, which includes, obviously, improving the marketable skills on a high level among minorities.I worked with the College Board on a commission called Equity 2000, and the objective of that program is to make sure that minorities are schooled in math and science in the earlier grades, particularly in the middle grades, so that they can get into college and successfully complete it. We find there are no problems about job opportunities among those who do that. Now, having said that, the future seems bleak when you consider that minorities are disproportionately represented among the dropsouts, that even in preschool programs, minorities are not obtaining the benefits because of cutbacks.And there is no

unified movement among minority leaders to improve the educational situation among minorities. There are efforts being made by other groups, but not by minority people. We seem to get unified on the basis of personality but not on the basis of program. The failure of Clinton to follow through on [Lani] Guinier's appointment aroused blacks like the [Clarence] Thomas appointment to Supreme Court. Blacks got somewhat unified around even supporting a Thomas. Now, why a program such as getting blacks better represented in the number who complete a college career doesn't seem to attract the same type of support- And yet, that's more basic than being united around a personality. You know, the unfortunate thing is that when blacks were segregated we seemed to get together and do things better than what we've done when we had more civil rights.I'm not saying that such concepts as full employment should be given up any more than civil rights should be given up. What I'm saying is that we need to update them and to attract more support for the ideas than what we seem able to do. Even our leadership is very weak when it comes to unifying around positive programs.

Woods

You had mentioned one of the reasons why the Carter administration was opposed was the fear of lawsuits. Was that because full employment was mandatory or guaranteed or-?

Hawkins

Well, as long as we had a provision in the bill that an individual by right was entitled to a job, they would not support it. We had to strike that provision out. Now, that provision would have allowed an individual to sue the government for not implementing full employment. So full employment was not implemented, but Carter did nothing about it. He was defeated, but that didn't accomplish the objective.Today what I'm saying is that we are now dealing with an entirely different type of economy than what we were dealing with twenty years ago.

Woods

Do you think it would have made a difference if your bill had teeth? It would have been a totally different-

Hawkins

Yeah, well-

Woods

And was enforced? In retrospect.

Hawkins

Well, one would have to truly believe in the concept whether you had the law or not, if one had the belief. But we find it difficult to get the same type of support today behind a program that we did twenty years ago. What's happening is that you have a worldwide situation in which a corporation is more allied with an international alliance, with others overseas, than they are locally. AT&T [American Telephone and Telegraph Company] isn't making telephones in this country any longer. They first went to Taiwan, and now they are over in other countries, over there to manufacture what they used to manufacture in this country.Now, in such a situation as that, to still talk merely in terms of racial discrimination is somewhat irrelevant, because it isn't important to them. They don't see the same thing. If they can employ people at lower wages by going across the border into Mexico, that's what they're going to do. So if you make it tougher on them in this country, you drive them into doing it elsewhere. You've got to change somewhat now and show them why it is important to employ people with the qualifications to do the job.At the same time, however, what I'm saying is that from our point of view we have got to be damn sure that we have people that they need, and that means that they have got to be more highly qualified than what they used to be. We can no longer tolerate dropouts. We can no longer tolerate kids who are graduating from high school who can't do critical thinking. We have got to concentrate on the highest possible qualifications among the people that we are fighting to get employed and to get into the mainstream. So that places a much stronger obligation on us than we've ever had.Now, are we rising to that occasion? To do that, we've got to start with kids from birth. We can't wait until they're grown before we begin to do something about them. That means that we've got to be pushing preschool programs; we've got to be pushing for remedial programs in the elementary schools; we've got to be pushing for kids to go into math, to master algebra and geometry, and make damn sure that they are going into technology and into these fields.

Woods

So you had no bitterness against some people in the Carter administration or Carter himself in terms of him watering down the bill or-?

Hawkins

Well, yes, they watered the bill down. There is no doubt about that. And we had to accept the watered-down bill. The bill still was in a position to do some good at that time. But now the question of qualifying people through education has become much more important than it was then. It was a matter that we had a lot of blacks who worked in the post office who had Ph.D. degrees. Now we seem not to get enough Ph.D's graduating as we did then. But those who do graduate are in demand. The only problem is we don't have enough of them.

Woods

I think maybe part of the problem is school funding.

Hawkins

Yeah.

Woods

Some of the schools in Carson [California]- Part of the learning proposal is that they are proposing a breakup. At least they are talking about a breakup. And some of the people in the [San Fernando] Valley want out. And then, on the other hand, some of the dominant black schools, like I think Carson, may want out because they haven't had any maintenance in twenty years and-

Hawkins

Well, all these are threats, which make things worse than ever. But that should unite us. They are talking now about the choice initiative on the ballot, which, if that passes, will simply mean we will continue the two-tiered school system in which the schools in the black community will become worse. They will say to black parents that you will have the choice of sending your kids to a better school. But there won't be room in those better schools for them, even if they can take advantage of it, even if they have the means of sending them to the better schools, where they will have to pay a lot more than what they are able to pay. But that's what will happen. We should be more concerned

about full funding of the programs that will qualify more blacks for the type of jobs that are developing.

Woods

One of the things that recently came up, I guess in Texas, but also it was occurring when I was in Mississippi, is equalization of rural and suburban and then also innercity and suburban funding. Even though you could just say it was based on property tax, the courts wouldn't recognize- In Texas, I think the plan is that some suburban school has to adopt a rural or Latino school, Mexican school. But there really are a lot of different school systems even within one school system, because one group of schools may get a lot of support from parents in terms of equipment, or companies- In Baltimore you have very different quality schools within the same district.

Hawkins

Well, any inequities within a state from one district to another are very obvious, but they are in violation of state law, too. And in those states where parents have gotten together and sued, they've won their suits against those states. We have the same thing existing even in California, even though it is unlawful under state law and the courts have so ruled. However, in the L.A. [Los Angeles Unified] School District, where are the schools that are-? The worst ones are in the minority communities. Where are the most incompetent teachers? They're in the black community and also in the Hispanic communities. This is existing, and it is going to continue to exist.Well, as long as that's true, then a full employment bill or civil rights will not be that meaningful, because you won't have the individuals who are able to show that they're qualified to do the job as well as someone else. That's why the whole thing has become somewhat out of date and must be updated. I'm not saying that there is anything wrong with it, but the world has changed, and one has to change with it. Full employment has to now be thought of in terms of qualifying individuals equally with each other, so deficiencies in educational things have to be eliminated. That's why one has to update it to make full employment a reality. So that the whole struggle now shifts to a new field, and we've got to shift. Our organizations have got to shift.

Woods

I think that there are a lot of sort of built-in inequalities that you don't really see in terms of- When you're experiencing them, you experience them through work experiences, but nobody's really put them together. Like the last time I worked with freshmen from all around Southern California, most of the students from South Central [Los Angeles] don't qualify for a UC [University of California] school because the UC's kept on putting on more and more requirements for drama, music, and physics, just when drama and music and sciences were being cut back. Also, you might have some kids come in there with 4.3 averages, 4.5 averages, because they have these advanced-placement classes in some of the suburban schools. Even if you were the top student in an inner-city school and you had a 4.0, you are still competing with a lot of kids who, because they have advanced-placement classes, have much higher GPA's. So it seems like the inequality is reproducing itself on so many different levels that it hasn't really been understood as a whole package of how it's all operating through the Cal[ifornia] State [University] system, through the UC system, through the high schools.

Hawkins

Well, those movements have got to shift now to adjust to worldwide conditions. We haven't shifted yet, which for me is a real challenge these days. I've tried to get more individuals involved in the congressional process, because we have certain committees there that are now marking up bills that will determine the whole progress for the rest of the decade. We used to have several lobbyists: the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People], the Urban League- These groups had lobbyists over- There are no lobbyists over on Capitol Hill now. There's no approach to even black representatives over there to get them on the right committees and to get them activated to do the thing. We have problems getting even the few blacks that we have on the Education and Labor Committee [House Committee on Education and Labor] involved in the legislative process-not that they don't want to be, but the few who have were overworked. They can't do the job alone. They've got to have outside support. So we need to really get much more support mobilized on a national basis.

Woods

So the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, they are not as active as they used to be?

Hawkins

They're doing, let's say, about the only job of any group over there, but they're poorly supported, getting durn little outside support as compared to what they used to get.Everybody now, I suppose, is waiting on Clinton to do the job. Well, Clinton can't do the job alone. It's a matter of whether or not we have enough top-notch people in the administration to really- There are some whites, but I don't see too many key blacks in the position to do the job that has to be done. In education, for example, we don't have but a handful of people even in education. And in the Labor Department. I don't know of an important black in a key position in the Labor Department at this time. Now, I think that Clinton is approachable. And I think that he just hasn't worked with some of them and he doesn't even know them. But I think it's important to get some blacks in some of these key positions. So that's what we should really be doing at this particular time.

Woods

I was going to ask you about Clarence M. Mitchell [Jr.]. Are you saying that the NAACP no longer has that lobbying position?

Hawkins

No, the organization has been weakened tremendously. Conventional civil rights no longer attracts the type of support that it once did. When I was first elected, lynching was a big issue. Well, it's never mentioned now. But take housing, for example. There is no housing program; it was a big issue when I first went to Sacramento. That's why we passed the first public housing bill, whereby we got the Pueblo del Rio, the housing projects in the district, including Nickerson Gardens and those projects. They were built then because we felt that these housing projects would help out. Well, we have nothing recent in the field of housing to provide better housing for low-income people. There hasn't been a housing bill passed in the last ten years.

Woods

So let me just go a little bit further. Why don't you think that blacks or other ethnic groups or unions or women's groups are really a part of this economic development in employment, restructuring industry debates? They seem to be real marginal to this new agenda.

Hawkins

Well, values seem to have changed. The idea that individuals, as such, can solve their problems has meant that we have broken down all sense of community unity around these programs. Once upon a time we had a demon to blame; we had that threat and we couldn't do things. We had restrictive convenants on housing so blacks could not move into better neighborhoods. Then the restrictive covenants were declared illegal so that they could move. And what did they do? They moved out and solved their own problems. So our professional people, our business people, they moved and solved their problems and that was the end of it. There was no thought of helping those who were left behind.So in a sense we need to define ourselves now in better terms than what we once did. I believe that the only thing that now we can do in terms of trying to define ourselves is to make education our number one priority, and to make education for the nation our number one priority. There are groups with which we can form coalitions to do that. That should be our major concern now, not deficit reduction, which is going to take us away, because deficit reduction today is defined in terms of "What programs can we cut?" The programs that are going to be cut are the very ones on which we have to rely if we're going to change economic status among minorities. That's in employment, in training, in technology, communications, transportation, in these fields which will be the only thing that we can rely upon. Otherwise, we can only compete with other low-wage people in other countries, is what it amounts to, or illegal aliens in this country.

Woods

So you would be opposed to the North American Free Trade Agreement [NAFTA]?

Hawkins

No, I would not be in favor of it. I think it would simply mean that we would get a lot of cheap labor moving into this country is about what it amounts to. I

think cooperation with other countries is wonderful, but I think it has to be done with a lot of conditions set down and not a movement of cheap labor across boundaries. I think the high-level jobs will simply be the only thing left, and we don't have enough of our people qualified for those sophisticated jobs. So the only jobs that would be available would be those in low-wage occupations where we dominate. If we have to compete with low wages in Mexico, I don't think we can compete.

Woods

Just two more questions. Do you see the Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act as your crowning achievement?

Hawkins

I think it was one of them. I would say that my connection with federal aid to education and child care would be equally important. I participated in 1965 as a coauthor of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, leading up to what I would say is to me the thing that I feel is most relevant today: the [Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary] School Improvement Amendments of 1988, which I was the author of, which I think-

13. Tape Number: VII, Side Two June 20, 1993

Hawkins

-and show how implementing that act-which is the law today, but which is not implemented at the local level-would do more, I think, to change the economic status of minorities in this country.

Woods

And just one last question: Today you've seen the rise and transformation of the shadow senator Jesse [L.] Jackson. You've mentioned personality politics. He's been considered the best exponent of that, and he's crossed a lot of your specialties on many occasions. What has been your experience in terms of working with him?

Hawkins

Well, it's a difference between rhetoric and reality. The time for talking has long passed. We can't talk our way through any longer; we have to actually produce. I don't think it's a matter of simply engaging in rhetoric. We seem to enjoy getting together to talk, and I think that may have some entertainment value, but that's not enough.

Woods

Okay, thanks a lot.

14. Tape Number: VIII, Side One June 21, 1993

Woods

I don't know how big the summer jobs program has been over there the last couple of years, whether they have their infrastructure-

Hawkins

Well, it's going to be scaled back, regardless of what it was. But I recall that several times in Los Angeles recently the city didn't use all the money it got.

Woods

For summer jobs?

Hawkins

Yeah. And that to me was criminal.

Woods

Well, maybe we can start there. I just have some questions on some of the labor issues. Maybe you could talk about the evolution of the Summer Youth Jobs Program. I know that you've been interested over a long period of time in youth employment and- What happened to the summer jobs program? It came up as part of the OEO [Office of Economic Opportunity] Model Cities [Program].

Hawkins

Yes, originally it came out of the OEO program, and the idea was, to begin with, a matter of just simply keeping young people busy during the summer

months. The fear was that kids out of school, out of jobs, with nothing to do, would obviously get into trouble. And that's about right. It's just natural that shopping around the summer with nothing to do you begin to think of the craziest things in the world to do. So the idea was simply to keep them busy.But then we decided that just keeping them busy wasn't enough. You don't give kids jobs in the summer merely to cool things off to prevent disorders; you try to make it worthwhile. We tried to put into the program an educational component so that kids who were, let's say, in remedial classes the year round in chapter one and chapter two of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [1965], if they were not doing too well, this was a good opportunity to remediate, and if they were doing all right, the experience was that many times over the summer they lost the gains that they had made. So it was programmed in order to keep their progress moving without any interruption- That the summer job would be the best idea.Now, in addition to summer jobs under the OEO program and later under JTPA- It's one of the titles under the Job Training Partnership Act [1982] which we were able to save. It's a carryover from CETA [Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, 1973]. CETA had summer jobs as well, but we carried that over, and there wasn't too much opposition to the idea, even from conservative Republicans. So we carried the idea over. Now, in addition to JTPA summer jobs, there have been other proposals that are equally good, I think, or better. You had the Job Corps for the severely disadvantaged. We also had what is called Youth Build. This is a program whereby a lot of the youth are put into light construction work, even into parts of the building trades. They become apprentices. They work with the journeymen, the union people.

Woods

This was during the seventies?

Hawkins

Well, this is even more recently; during the eighties we continued the program. It was never a very big program. And also the Civilian Conservation Corps is available, which is a rather good program. San Francisco has utilized it to great advantage. These young people go out and they work on projects, especially public projects, in parks and playgrounds and settlement houses, and so forth. All of this is in addition, now. But the one program that is

seasonal is obviously the Summer Youth Jobs Program, and there you have the idea of picking up the big slack in the number of youth during the summer recess who wouldn't have anything to do otherwise.A lot of the money comes from the private sector. The private sector participates, and business people make jobs available. They set a quota, and they usually meet their quota. Right now-I know for myself as part of an advisory committee to the National Alliance of Business-business people have a certain number of jobs available, and they are waiting for the Summer Youth Jobs Program to be put into operation. And they will meet their quota, but the federal government hasn't put up the money to put the program into operation.And that's largely the fault, I think, of Congress not to do something about it. My best information is that the [William J.] Clinton administration is supportive of the idea, but nobody seems to be putting it together. And I'm a little surprised that I haven't heard more of an outcry on the Hill, especially from the Congressional Black Caucus, which I think should be concerned, because their districts, more than almost any other districts, are the areas where the Summer Youth Jobs Program will be operating. And why something hasn't been done is, to me, amazing-that here it is summer and we still don't have the money.

Woods

Do you know why the money for the programs in L.A. was returned or-?

Hawkins

I tried to find out two or three times, but my best information is that they just hadn't planned ahead of time. They were waiting for the money somewhat like this, except that the money was more assured than what it is now. It invariably happened that the money did come through. But it was always a little late, so they took the attitude that until they were definitely assured of the money, they would not plan and they would not set it up. Consequently they waited for the last minute, the money came through, they were slow in putting it into operation, and the summer was just over before they really got fully operative.Now, it's difficult to place blame. One could say that the federal government was slow. But the city took the attitude that they were not going to put their money out until such time, or they were not going to put their program into operation until they actually got the money and they were not going to be left holding the bag. So they were not willing to take a risk, and for

not taking the risk, they were not able to spend the money. It seemed to me that it's just a case of a lackadaisical attitude with respect to the problem.I would blame the city if you're going to blame anyone, although, as I say, there was some justification they had because of the slowness with which the federal government operated. But that's natural. The federal government is much slower to operate than any other level of government.

Woods

One of your bills passed that you originated in 1977, the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects [Act]. Was that along the same lines as-?

Hawkins

It was along the same line except in that bill, 1977, we had- [Edward M.] Kennedy coauthored that bill. He had the same bill on the Senate side, and we put it into operation as a demonstration program. It contained several different programs, a variety of programs. What we were trying to do was to identify what worked the best. Would it be best to provide incentives to the private sector? Would it be best to undertake public service jobs? Would it be best to have some method of reducing the dropouts and incorporate it as a part of the anti-dropout program and whatnot? So we had a variety of programs.The program was supposed to operate for about four years. Unfortunately it did not go the full cycle; after two or three years the money wasn't made available, and we never really completed the demonstration. So the demonstration, which was supposed to show what would work most effectively, just didn't work out in that we didn't prove anything. The only thing we did prove was that the program did provide some increase in earnings for those who benefited from the program. However, in the matter of dropouts, it did not reduce the dropout rate. In other words, it was a mixed bag that some good items- So what we really should have done was to pull out the things that did work and push them, but by that time we were through the [James E.] Carter administration and into more conservative administrations that had their own ideas.Every time a new administration comes in, there is a change in policy. This means that you go back to zero, you start anew, and what you have worked on is terminated and you go into something new. This sort of stop-and-go attitude that develops is one which is wasteful, really, of money, and you end up not successfully funding and going forward with the

programs.The Job Corps is a good example. The Job Corps has proved itself time after time, and yet we have had no luck at expanding the program. We have pretty much the same service level today that we had twenty years ago. There has been no expansion. The program has proved to be successful. No one dares to touch it or to repeal it, and yet they will not expand it. That's the same with most of these programs. We have a number of effective programs in education, in employment, in training and whatnot, but there is no expansion. They just won't put the money up.

Woods

All of a sudden, after the rebellion, there seemed to be a lot of advertisements for the Job Corps, and I didn't even think that it was still alive. They seemed to have tried to recruit a lot more. I don't know if there was any additional money available; it was just a-

Hawkins

No additional money has really been put up. There is a plan afoot, and both the House [of Representatives] and the Senate have endorsed the idea of expanding the Job Corps, to at least double it within a decade. One or two more additional Job Corps centers will be established in the Los Angeles area. Compton has been mentioned for one. [Mervyn M.] Dymally, for example, worked on getting one for Compton and was a very strong supporter of the idea of expanding the Job Corps and was pretty well, I think, assured that if the money was put up that the Compton area would be one that would receive an additional Job Corps.But we've had several very successful Job Corps in the Los Angeles area. For example, out at Castaic [Lake State Recreation Area], on the way to Bakersfield, there was at one time a large area that was city-owned; the city actually operated a Job Corps out in that area. And it was a very successful one. A lot of it was dormitories, but they also had many kids from the city who went out there on a daily basis. Why that was closed up I have no idea. But for some reason it was closed down, and I think at one time they must have had four or five hundred kids out there, so that number of opportunities was just completely lost.Their placement rate is very good. They have had a very high placement rate of those who have gone through the Job Corps. In the meantime, families are helped because the Job Corps members get a monthly stipend, and they can

send some money back to their families. So, all in all, it has been one very successful program.So it isn't that we don't have some effective programs that are cost-effective, but we've always had the problem that they were token programs. Not enough was put into them to make a big difference. In the meantime, the problems accelerate. We have more people in poverty now than what we had during the War on Poverty. So instead of expanding, these programs are cut back while the need keeps expanding, and at that rate we will never solve the problem. The ones who suffer are really the disadvantaged, because they are the ones who need the programs, and the money that we save from them is put into other activities.The big theme right now is if you save money you put it into deficit reduction. And if you put it into deficit reduction, obviously it is not going to help the people who need the programs the most. They're cutting back on domestic programs at the same time that we are putting more money into defense, more money into international obligations. We are helping other countries. We are even defending other countries. So the money that is being saved from the fact that we are no longer in a cold war with Russia, that peace dividend isn't being used to expand Job Corps or Head Start or to help the schools or to put more individuals into training programs. That money is not being so used. The big picture is we've got to reduce the deficit, and obviously we do, but you don't reduce the deficit if you eliminate these programs that will help create more productive individuals, put people to work who will then pay taxes. That's the way you are going to reduce the deficit, but that's not the current policy, unfortunately.

Woods

So the youth programs, I guess, were originally under the OEO, and they moved to the Department of Labor-

Hawkins

It came out of the OEO. As a matter of fact, there haven't been any recent initiatives advocated. Most of the initiatives that have some merit are twenty and twenty-five years old.

Woods

So it is now under the Department of Labor? The Job Corps-

Hawkins

I don't know of any new initiative promoted by the Labor Department. Now, I would certainly think that the opportunity does exist. I think the secretary of labor [Robert B. Reich] is a good man. I think that he is very knowledgeable. And I would think that things like the Job Corps and more money into the training programs would certainly be supported by him theoretically.Now, at the same time, I think the administration is also talking about deficit reduction as our number one priority. That means that we have a favorable administration-we can say politically favorable-and yet deficit reduction still seems to be the priority. And that's what we've got to change. We've got to change that priority. That's going to take a lot of public education, in order to get people to support a change in the priority for the nation. It's going to take a lot of support from the business interests, because the business interests are in a position to cause change to happen. Those are the people who have the means of promoting public education. If you have Fortune 500 executives talking about a program- Let's say they talked about fully funding Head Start, we'd get a Head Start funded, because they would have the influence that is needed. It takes more than just minorities or disadvantaged people crying out for help. It takes more than that. They don't have the political power to make the change. The change, if it's going to come about, has to come from those who are directly affected, and the most, let us say, affluent among us have got to decide that it is in their enlightened self-interest to do something for the downtrodden. That's where we've got to work on convincing them, and that's going to take real long-term statesmanship to do it.

Woods

I'm thinking about writing a book on social policy in South Central [Los Angeles] after 1965, and I guess one of the areas, to really understand how things change, would be to look at policies towards youth. Education, Job Corps, recreation- You could really see how summer youth programs- Because in a lot of ways they were targeted towards the black community. You can really learn a lot about the whole policy process just by sort of focusing on youth programs, Head Start, how they were funded, things like that.

Hawkins

Yeah, it would make a good story. It would make a very good story. But it takes a lot of digging, really, to get into it, because there are a lot of facets to it, and we are losing some of the sources of information. For example, with the change of administration, the [Thomas] Bradley people will be scattered. How will you get their views about what happened ten and fifteen years ago and bring it up to date? You soon will lose them altogether. You won't have the people available to cooperate. You will have a change of administration, and I don't know what will be done by the new mayor there. He'll have new people coming in, and these new people may not be the type of individuals who have had the background or the experience.

Woods

Yeah, they've even threatened to close down some of the jails. The L.A. county sheriff [Sherman Block] said that because of budget cuts he just closed down the jail for a day. Because some people had thought at one point the cutbacks in the youth policies- The flip side of that was the increase in expenditures for incarceration and the juvenile justice system. But now that even seems to be at its breaking point, and even that won't contain the problems.Just one last question on the OEO. I came across a quote from [Richard M.] Nixon after the 1972 election, and he said that he wanted to discontinue the Office of Economic Opportunity because it was anti-family, anti-American, wasteful, harmful, and promoted riots. So not long after that- Well, it was extended for two years in the 1974 budget. But not long after his statement in 1972 there was created the Subcommittee on Equal [Employment] Opportunity of the House, which you chaired, and I guess part of your agenda was to preserve some of the programs-public service employment, neighborhood youth programs. The subcommittee was created in 1972 or '73, and I think OEO funding was actually ended in 1974 and was replaced by the general revenue sharing and the [Community Development] Block Grant [Program] system. Could you tell me a little about how that subcommittee on equal opportunity came about and the whole battle over saving OEO, and then the whole emergence of the block grant system and your opinions of general revenue sharing?

Hawkins

Well, as I recall, there was no real specific committee in the House-and I think the same was true in the Senate-that dealt with these pieces. In other words, the interest in the poverty programs-when I say poverty programs, I'm talking largely about OEO-eventually became a very narrow interest. And there was some discrediting of the program by the opposition. They dug up every horrible story they could, regardless of where it was or how long ago it happened, and that made the headlines. There were some of us- And I know that in particular I was very much concerned with some of these programs and tried to get them in other committees, but most of the committees were not too interested in taking on this problem because it was a hot political issue. It was something that was unfavorable in most districts, although it was perfectly good politics in my particular area. So it wasn't a matter of being unselfish or being social-minded that led me to want to continue some of the programs and to expand them, but it was good politics at the same time. So the committee, then, was created in order to handle some of these so-called hot issues and take them away from the other committees. Everyone on the Education and Labor Committee [House Committee on Education and Labor] knew of my interest in civil rights. There were darn few individuals who could deal with civil rights from a political point of view and gain anything from it, or at least not lose. The chair of the full committee [Carl D. Perkins] was a southerner who got no particular advantage out of handling them and who had no great interest in them or knowledge of them.

Woods

What was your opinion of Carl Perkins? I guess you worked with him-

Hawkins

Good man. Carl Perkins is a good man. As I say, I was in a sense describing him as not taking the initiative in certain areas, because these issues were not issues in his area. He was very parochial. To him, everything- Kentucky was first, and that meant that the poor people of Kentucky loved him, and he catered to them. But these were individuals to whom civil rights were of no concern whatsoever. But Carl Perkins, I think, was much above, in moral integrity, even his constituency. He looked at things in a broader light, and he certainly was a very good friend of mine, supporter, and everything I suggested to do, he went along with it. Even though he didn't initiate it, he

gave me the support. And if I wanted jurisdiction over something, he carved it out, and I got the jurisdiction. It was just that simple. I just wish we had had more Carl Perkinses. We just didn't have enough of them.

Woods

So the responsibilities of your committee were the Office of Economic Opportunity, Model Cities [Program], youth employment.

Hawkins

I got all of those because I made a specialty of trying to push those issues, because they were of vital importance to the very people that I was trying to help. I was just fortunate to be on a committee and with a chairman who was supportive to be able to do what we did. Now, a lot of the things we did were a matter of saving the programs. We went through almost a decade in which the main thing was to save the program. We couldn't make much progress, we couldn't expand the program, and our biggest problem was saving it, to keep it from being eliminated.

Woods

That was beginning in '72 or '68?

Hawkins

Well, that was primarily in the early seventies, but I would date it maybe as having started in '68 or '69, just after [Lyndon B.] Johnson left office.

Woods

So Shirley [A.] Chisholm and William [L.] Clay were on that committee.

Hawkins

Yeah. They both were good people. Shirley Chisholm, in particular, in education was an outstanding legislator, and she and I worked together very closely. We organized one of the first education teams on the committee to lay the groundwork for many of the bills that later were expanded and some new initiatives that came about. She was very, very helpful.Clay was more on the labor side than on the education side. But one of the things that he worked hard on, as I recall at that time, was the minimum wage issue. He was very good at that. Together we worked to get the minimum wage increased,

which didn't happen at first-or, as a matter of fact, we never got it increased to the extent we wanted it increased. We did get some adjustment. But there again it was a matter of almost too little, too late in most instances. And it still is too low.

Woods

Wasn't it attached to the inflation rate at one time or cost of living-? About the fifties or-?

Hawkins

I'm not so sure. I'm a little vague on that. I'd rather not comment because I am too vague, I suspect.

Woods

So OEO was ended in 1974? Broken up?

Hawkins

Yeah, I think that's about right.

Woods

So they had to create a separate legislative authority for legal services.

Hawkins

Yeah, it was broken up into pieces, and that, as such, ended any systematic approach to the problem, almost as if we had solved the problem, no longer needed an agency, and went on to something else.

Woods

What impact did Nixon's revenue sharing-?

Hawkins

Revenue sharing, I thought, did a lot of good, especially for cities. Revenue sharing, the Community Development Block Grant Program, some of these programs for a while did a lot to help the cities. Right now that issue is coming to a head because the cities are suffering more than any other entity-cities and towns-because the states have cut back, the federal government has cut back, and consequently the aid that formerly went to cities and towns is no

longer available, or certainly not in the amounts that they need. And they are the ones that are suffering because they are unable to have a broad taxing base. Their main source of revenue is the property tax, and property owners are pretty well organized to oppose any further tax on property. California, for example, has taken the initiative in that regard, and it is almost impossible to do anything if it is aimed at increasing property taxes. But without being able to tax revenues or sales, cities are in a tough position. They get some sharing of sales taxes from the state, but that's by the generosity of the state, and states are not that generous any longer.

Woods

Okay. So what happened to the subcommittee?

Hawkins

Well, the subcommittee really continues but under different leadership. When I became chairman of the full committee, somebody else bid for the committee that I left, and I would say the old committee now is primarily broken up in that the new chairman is not as interested as I was in these programs.

Woods

Who is the chairman?

Hawkins

[Matthew G.] Martinez was the chairman last year. So the committee doesn't have the same jurisdiction. It lost some of its jurisdiction and it lost some of its interest in these programs. They are scattered among other subcommittees now.Now, this does not mean that I'm trying to condemn the chairman of the subcommittee, whoever he happens to be now, which I don't know offhand. [Pat Williams] But it means that a member has interest primarily in those things that are of interest to his constituents. And if his constituents don't have the same interests that I have, for example, then the chairman of that committee is going to be a different individual.

Woods

Talking about your becoming chair of the House Education and Labor Committee, that was 1983?

Hawkins

Yeah, yeah. Let's see now. I served for almost six years prior to 1990. I retired in 1992. It was '85 or '86, yeah.

Woods

So were you the first black American to become head of-? No, [Adam Clayton] Powell [Jr.] had been head of the-

Hawkins

Oh, yeah, Powell was chairman of the committee years ago.

Woods

But at that time you were one of the few heads of a major-

Hawkins

One of the few heads of a full standing committee. Now, there were subcommittees or special committees, but Powell was the first- He wasn't the first chairman of a standing committee. [William] Dawson was the first chairman of a standing committee, and then Powell soon thereafter. He was chairman of the Education and Labor Committee and worked very effectively with Johnson during the sixties, when we made a lot of progress.

Woods

It was one of the most powerful committees in Congress. I guess it has made an impact on a lot of lives. It was also when you assumed the chairmanship- Well, a lot of education and labor issues were under intense attack by the president [Ronald W. Reagan] and parts of Congress. What was your agenda when you assumed the chairmanship?

Hawkins

Primarily to expand the programs that we had enacted throughout the sixties. Beginning in 1963, we enacted a number of education programs that are still existing, and in my opinion the list is rather impressive. For example, I was sending this the other day to a group to show what we accomplished in the sixties when we changed the federal role in education. Prior to that time, the federal government's role had been sporadic but nothing systematic. There's

always been some federal interest in education, but primarily it was not one of supporting actual money going into local school districts. But between '63 and '66 we passed a higher education act, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [1965], the Vocational Education Act, the Adult Education Act, we expanded the teachers core, we launched the Medicare program, and we launched Head Start, and the Civil Rights Act [1964]. Now, all this was done in the mid-1960s. Every one of these acts is currently on the statute books. During the [George H. W.] Bush administration, obviously, they were eroded or cut back some, but it is significant that even Bush could not in any way diminish the program. And they are still on the statute books.Now, when I became chairman of the committee, what we attempted to do was to go beyond merely trying to save the programs. We wanted to expand them, to improve them and to expand them. And that was the principal thing that we did.Now, at the same time, Reagan, and Bush later, had their own programs that they were trying to enact, but their programs were in direct opposition to these programs. These programs are designed to benefit all children, for example, all persons. Their programs were primarily targeted at the most affluent groups. In other words, elitism. I think the distinction would be whereas we were concerned with equity as well as excellence, they were concerned only with excellence. Excellence for a few. Whether it reached out to others made no difference. They were not concerned with other groups having access to these programs. So that was a clash of philosophy and a clash of programs. That was the principal role of the committee: to protect and to safeguard these programs and to oppose those programs of the administration that threatened-

15. Tape Number: VIII, Side Two June 21, 1993

Hawkins

-school systems, one for the elite and another system that will be underfunded and cater only to those that we feel are not really entitled or worthy of being educated. It's too expensive to educate them; they are too disadvantaged; their background is such that they are not going to profit from education. That was their attitude, whereas we took the position that education in general- That is, unless all children were educated, this would pull down the quality of education for the other children as well, and that

nationally we could not afford other countries educating all of their children as opposed to us educating only a few and then not having a productive work force. So that was a real thing.And all this led up to our attempts to get something new going, and that led to the [Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary] School Improvement Amendments of 1988. What we did, we took the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which had been on the statute books since 1965, and made all the improvements in it that we thought would expand the program and make it acceptable as a core of a new education policy. That act simply said that every child in every school across the country had to show annual improvement in order to get the federal money that we made available. And if you didn't improve every school and every child in every school that you then were not entitled to the federal aid. That, in effect, was the philosophy of the improvement act of 1988.

Woods

Did you always have this intense interest in education? Or did it really become your focus once you became-?

Hawkins

I've always had some interest, but I would say that I have worked primarily-when I first came back to Congress-on employment and training. But I soon found that you can't train one who doesn't have basic education, and that without a basic education training would be meaningless. It would be preparing individuals for deadend jobs. One has to have a mastery in math and communication skills. One has to have an analytical mind and be able to work out problems. These are some of the higher-order skills. Just reading, writing, and arithmetic in the old style is no longer acceptable in the type of world we live in today, so that you can't leave school without the more critical skills and expect to make it any longer. You just can't do it. You can do routine, repetitive tasks, but such jobs no longer pay anything, and they are exportable work. That type of work can be done across the border or in Southeast Asia just as well, because we work with a different telecommunications system now. So computer operators in Asia do a lot of the bookkeeping for American corporations because it's easier and they're cheaper.

Woods

So for the school improvement act of 1988, what were some of the responses from educators?

Hawkins

We were able to get good widespread acceptance of the idea. We built it around accountability. We said no longer can we afford to have our schools merely operating in the old-fashioned way as assembly lines with kids going through without benefiting from any exposure to a challenging curriculum. We cannot afford to have schools where you assign teachers who are incompetent to teach these kids. You've got to have staff development, and you've got to have competent teachers who care about these kids. All of these things have to happen. Now, we don't care how you bring it about, but you've got to get results.And under the school improvement act, you have to show what your mission is. What are the desired results that you are trying to achieve? You've got to put this into a plan, and it has to be formalized, put it into a plan, and then filed with the board of education, and then that district plan has to be filed with the state education agency. All this has to be done, and it has to be on paper, and you have to consult with parents, with the teachers and others in doing this when you do it. Then we're going to give you a time limit within which if you don't do it, then a higher level of government can step in and participate in seeing that you do it. So it goes from the school to the district and then to the state educational agency; each in turn has to come in with additional plans. Then the national standards are supposed to be worked out by the secretary of education in Washington after he has consulted with a group of practitioners to say what the national standards really are that are acceptable. All this is put into the act.Now, at the same time, the act mandates that the amount of money available has to be increased on an annual basis also. Along with this accountability, the amount of money has to be increased by half a billion dollars each year up until the sixth year-in the fifth year, actually- In the fifth fiscal year the program should be fully funded. Now, that part of the act has not been kept, it's obvious. It's obvious that the annual improvement has not been kept.It has not been kept because the federal officials involved during the Reagan and then the Bush administrations were not concerned. They looked the other way. They were not concerned with improving schools. Their idea was that we are going to make a few good schools available, and parents can send their kids to those

schools, and those are mostly private schools. We are going to give money to the private schools and to parochial schools, and it's all going to be based on what school is performing the best. And then we'll give to the parents the opportunity to send their kids to the schools that they desire to send their kids to. There's nothing in their proposal, however, that says that these select schools have to accept them. And obviously the few good schools that they promoted would not accept kids who had problems or kids who couldn't read too well or kids that had disciplinary problems or kids who came out of broken homes. The good schools didn't want them because they could not maintain their record, their reputation, if they accepted kids who were disadvantaged. They wanted to select the kids that they wanted. That was what the choice proposal was all about. Here we have a choice proposal on the California ballot in November, but that's what it's all about.

Woods

So you're saying that the improvement act, although it's on the books, is not really-

Hawkins

It's not being implemented.

Woods

Is it part of the reality of the school districts in terms of what they are striving for?

Hawkins

Well, most of the school districts have been under fiscal restraint because they couldn't really get the money to do the job. So they've been looking to the federal government for some assistance, which has been fruitless. The federal government has, from twenty years ago until today, reduced the federal aid to education from about 10 percent of the share down to about 6. So the federal share has been declining. The states were hoping that the Bush administration, which bragged about being so much involved and supportive of education, would make federal money available. So the districts have been shy to implement the school improvement act on the basis that if they bought into the Bush program of choice and the so-called new American schools and

so forth, they would get a handout, a federal handout. So they have tried to chisel the money.Well, there just wasn't that much money available. But they knew darn good and well that if they tried to implement the school improvement act, they weren't going to get the money either, or they were less inclined to think that they were going to get the money. So it's been that type of a deal, whereby the goodies that were available meant that they would have to go along with the Reagan-Bush program in their expectation of getting some. Well, the expectation just didn't develop.

Woods

So you think of the school improvement act as one of your major pieces-?

Hawkins

I would count it, to me, as a major thing today, thinking of what we are faced with today-that the major emphasis should be placed on developing our human resources in such a way that the skills coming out of improved education would make minorities attractive to the business community and would make them more self-supporting, would increase the revenue base, because we would have individuals who are completing high school, who are going on to college, who will develop the skills that are in short supply and needed by everybody. This is the only hope now. It sounds simple. But to me it is axiomatic that the people with the skills that are needed to compete domestically and with foreign countries are the ones that are hoping to be helped. They are the ones who are going to solve the problems, the ones who are going to deal with them and be able to do something about them. It's the only hope that we have. Ignorance is not going to solve any of our problems, it's just going to make them worse, because cheap labor is available everywhere.

Woods

There were a lot of other bills you introduced or passed around that same time dealing with education. I was wondering if you could say a few words briefly about a few of them. The Child Nutrition Amendment of 1986 was the extension of school lunch programs, school breakfasts-?

Hawkins

When I say education, it is a complex subject, and I am thinking of education in a comprehensive sense, not just formal education-kindergarten through high school. I'm thinking of supportive services. Education to me includes adequate nutrition, health care, and things of that nature. Education includes child care. I think our child care should not be custodial but educational in nature. A kid who is left by its parents in a day care center should receive good nutrition, education, and health care. That's one of the attractions. Education certainly includes counseling. It includes help to the family. It includes social services. It may be that there is a mental health problem involved. It could be that you have a breakup of a family unit, and parents should be involved in the education of their children and in their own education.So I group all of these under the term education. That, to me, is the means whereby you make these other services available. We have no way of reaching families except through the schools. The schools are compulsory, they're free, and consequently, if we build the help around the school, we have a way of doing it in the way that we have accepted education or schooling in America as being American.We invented in this country mass compulsory education. It was invented by us in this country. And other countries found out that we succeeded in becoming a superpower because we did have mass public education. They adopted what we had, but they went beyond us and put much more into it than we're doing, and consequently they are outperforming us. Illiteracy has been reduced much more in the other countries. School completion is much higher in the other industrialized countries. So they are really profiting from our success. In the meantime, we've slowed down. We didn't change. We haven't become worse, but we haven't become better either.But it's been through this broad education, reaching out to an ever greater number of people. Now, we didn't start out including everybody in education. For a long time blacks didn't go to school if there was cotton to be picked. Up until recently, the disabled weren't in schools. So we've added more and more groups. We've added even immigrants now who must be educated in our schools. Constantly, as education evolved in our country, we've added other groups. So we added the idea of equity along with excellence gradually over a period of time, so that now, I would say, we accept the philosophy, but from a practical point of view education is not our top priority. We have shifted now to so-called debt reduction as being the principal thing. Consequently, the school improvement act, which is terribly underfunded- It should be fully funded under the law

itself as of 1993, but we're way off. Only about 40 percent of the target population enjoys the benefits of the school improvement act. And a smaller percentage are in Head Start. Only about a quarter or less of kids who could benefit from preschool programs are actually in those programs. What we need to do, in my opinion, is to concentrate on fully funding Head Start, fully funding the school improvement act, and making college available to every young person who can benefit from going to college. There are some who, at the end of high school, could go into technical or trade schools and benefit, but they would have the option of going either to a technical training program or into college, depending on their desire and capability. But they would have that option because they would be trained. They would be prepared to do that. And whether they did it or not, they still would benefit us.

Woods

You introduced a number of education-related bills in 1990. I'll just read a list: the Regulatory Impact on Student Excellence Act, the Twenty-first Century Teachers Act, Equity and Excellence in Education Act, Work Force 2000, Employment Redress Act, the Fair Chance Act-which will equalize per-person spending in states-and the Child Development and Education Act. So this was the general thrust of your last year?

Hawkins

Yeah, we tried to deal with education in a comprehensive way. It's obvious that we should have a competent teacher in every classroom if we expect education or schooling to be really first-class. So while the school improvement act mandates that every child in every school must be improved, it's obvious that you must have teachers to teach them. So that is simply a part of that general thrust. So we said, now, look, it's all right to say that every child should improve, but if you want a child to improve in math, you've got to have somebody who's competent to teach math. You have to have teacher training programs to do it. So we introduced that.Now, introducing the bill doesn't mean that the bill has to pass in order to do something. We've tried to approach the teacher training component even without passing a bill, because the Dwight D. Eisenhower Mathematics and Science [Education] Act on the statute books provides money to universities that can be used in developing math and science teachers. That's one of the purposes. After Sputnik was

developed by the Russians, Eisenhower rushed out and said that we've got to do something about math and science and languages.So we got that act through, and we can use it today and make money available to schools of education to do something about developing math and science teachers. We approached the University of California, Los Angeles, [Graduate] School of Education with this idea, and they're interested. But the problem is that the funding of that act, again, is very underfunded; there is not enough money going into the act. Yet we're talking about competing with other countries in math and science when we don't have even the teachers teaching our students, even in college, in technology and in the sciences and in math and-Well, basically in math.But it begins not in college necessarily. They should begin in high school, and kids in high school should take algebra and geometry. That's where they should learn their math. And even if they didn't go to college they would be prepared, then, to undertake the type of training that will lead to high-level training, to high-level jobs that pay adequate wages. And without that you could have the Civil Rights Act adequately enforced, but they would be lost unless they are prepared to undertake-Unless they are prepared with the skills to qualify, they are not going to be able to do it. It's just as simple as that.

Woods

I have one last question on education. Do you see a constituency building around major educational reform? I know that Bush called himself "the education president," and Clinton has also said that he initiated a lot of reforms-some controversial, such as teacher testing and things like that-in Arkansas, but beyond the presidential position, do you think that there is a constituency building around your approach to these educational issues? Or does the constituency exist, just the money isn't-?

Hawkins

Well, let me say this: I don't see people rushing to accept most of the ideas that I have expressed. However, I am optimistic that some are beginning to accept it. Some people are beginning to accept it that heretofore did not even think about it. I have not talked to a business person along this line who didn't agree that something has to be done. And I am optimistic that eventually, when we find out, after a year or two, that this approach to trying to solve our

problems by talking about reducing the deficit, the way we're trying to do it, is going to fail, and we'll have to turn to something else, then we would have available the approach that I personally accept and support.And I'm not alone. I'm confident that the people who are, let's say, closest to being the decision makers in this country are going to eventually decide that you can't balance the budget by not investing in the infrastructure, in education, in skill development, and investing in domestic research, and, on that basis, be competitive. The world is moving ahead regardless of whether we want to or not. And regardless of what we do, we're not the only superpower around here. Japan and West Germany have greater capability today to take advantage of technology than we can. And our business people in this country are beginning to wake up to the fact that they can't compete. They can't compete on an equal basis, and they're losing out. And I don't think that they are foolish. I think that they, in their enlightened self-interest, say-I can see that they see us losing in one industry after another. We've lost every industry that we've invented: the automobile industry, the steel industry; we've lost even the textile industry. West Germany and Italy are producing more clothing goods than we are, exporting them. We are down to one industry that's remaining, and that's commercial aviation. It's the only industry we have left. And yet we have only two big companies, Boeing [Company] and McDonnell Douglas [Corporation], and McDonnell Douglas is shaky. So we're likely to lose McDonnell Douglas if we don't do something about it.So eventually, I think, out of sheer necessity we're going to accept the idea that we need to get busy, and we need to be in the lead and developing new technologies that are ours and improving our products and improving the process of manufacturing through new processes. That's going to take sophisticated workers to do it. You can't do it if you don't have people who are trained. We have no need for custodians who can't think. We have no need for cooks in the kitchen who don't know new technology. So even the ordinary production workers have to be trained.

Woods

It's clear that part of society is willing for educational levels and employment levels to fall just as long as it doesn't affect them. It's a question of how far will they allow these levels to fall before they feel impelled to take some form of action. Do you think that there is some type of greed that's involved where, as

long as they were to provide for themselves and their children, then the rest of the country can go to-?

Hawkins

Well, the people who are-oh, I hate to refer to them as the- I don't know how to refer to them. The affluent families or the most educated families, let's say the top 5 percent families that are pretty independent and control the majority of the wealth in the country, have in effect separated themselves from the American society. They have their own special communities, their areas. They enjoy the best housing, the best universities, and their own private clubs, etc., etc. In effect, they've separated themselves completely. That means that they're not really interested in the public schools, let's say, because their kids don't go there. They're taxed for them, but more and more they are trying to avoid being overtaxed, even to take care of the public schools, because they are supporting private schools, so it's double taxation for them. So they are no longer interested.Now, the big problem for the future is trying to convince them that they cannot completely separate themselves from the rest of the American society, that it is going to catch up with them somehow, and it is going to affect them eventually, whether they support the public schools or the rest of the population. The rest of the population is going to be on welfare because they can't get jobs. The schools will not prepare children to be self-sufficient and whatnot. They have to go into criminal activity. In other words, there are problems that develop as a result of this. So whether the upper 5 percent like it or not, they are still going to have to pay it. They are going to have to pay the bill. There is going to be a bill that they are going to have to pay. Consequently, it is in their enlightened self-interest to become concerned about what is happening to the others and-Now, that has to take place. Otherwise we are just going to be going on the way we are. The inequality gap is widening. It's been widening for twenty years. Let's say the lower three-fourths of the population, their wages have been declining, income has been declining, and the poor are becoming poorer and the rich are richer. And that thing has been going on for a matter of several decades. Now, how far that can stretch without something happening is a risk that we've been willing to take.We were able to get by with it when we were the only superpower around. But we are no longer the only superpower. We have competition now from others. Wages in this country are lower than in twelve

or fifteen other industrial countries. We used to be a high-wage country. We are no longer.So the possibility of recovering is very slim unless there is some accommodation whereby those who are best able to pay the bill are going to see their interest in doing something for the others that are not a part of their particular group. And that time is coming fast. That's why we're finding it difficult to pull out of this current recession. We name it different things, but we're not pulling out. And we're getting deeper into the hole.

Woods

Is there anything else you want to say on education?

Hawkins

No. As I say, I end up with the school improvement act being, to me, the core issue around which I think we can develop some unity. If we concentrate on implementing that act in all of its manifestations, making sure that the act also includes child care and health and these other issues that we've discussed, then to me that is the thing around which I think we can mobilize the greatest amount of support. And it's broad. It's not just for minorities, it's for everyone.

Woods

Okay. In terms of your relationship and role in the Congressional Black Caucus- I don't have it here with me, the year that you were chair.

Hawkins

I never was chair of- No.

Woods

In 1985 you wrote a letter to Mickey [George T.] Leland, who was the Black Caucus chair, saying that the organization needed to take more aggressive, collective, and militant stances. What were some of the motivations behind your opinion that the caucus was not exercising-?

Hawkins

Well, I've never thought that the caucus truly achieved the greatness that I think that it is capable of achieving. To me, group solidarity is the proper approach rather than trying to look, let's say, for a great messiah to lead us

out of the wilderness. It just doesn't fit into current conditions of the world today. No one or two individuals are smart enough to know everything about the many subjects that we are concerned with.Now, the caucus has the advantage in that you have a collection of people who are fairly independent because they are elected by their constituents. So as far as leadership being selected, they have every right to say, "We are the leaders," because somebody voted them to be the leaders. We didn't conceive out of our ego that we are the leaders, but we went out, we fought, we competed, we were selected. And you have in that group a number of- You have the expertise and you have the spread. In other words, you can have individuals in science, astronomics, individuals in health, individuals in defense, individuals in the banking of financial institutions. You have all the expertise needed from membership on the various committees, so you have them in key positions where decisions are being made, decisions that affect the policies of the country.That's how policy is developed. It's not developed by the secretary of the treasury down on Pennsylvania Avenue, but a policy is developed legislatively. It has to go through the process, be debated, and then end up with a bill being signed by the president. Then it becomes policy. They have six education goals which are not our education goals, because nobody in authority has formally approved them. They were approved by a group of governors who met with a president and decided these were what we considered to be national goals. But they were never submitted to the legislative process, and they have never been formally endorsed. They therefore are not federal goals; they are national ideals that have been expressed.Now, the caucus is in a position, therefore, to affect decisions. They have a number of individuals who can take responsibility in specific fields, enough to get all the pieces put together. They are fairly independent in the sense that as long as their constituents are the ones that they report to and they do a good job, they can get reelected and probably continue. They also have the capability of raising money. The Congressional Black Caucus raises, let's say, at least a million dollars a year, which could be put into a think tank to develop background material on the various issues affecting minorities so that when they vote on the issues, or when they speak in the Congress, they can speak with authority because they have someone helping them to develop the information that is needed. So, to me, it's a very unique set of things that make them the logical ones to provide the leadership, and I think that the

public would accept them as such.By and large, even doing an inadequate job, they are reasonably accepted. Nobody really condemns or speaks against the caucus. But they really could be even more respected if they did the type of a job that they are capable of doing, especially now since they've picked up additional members. When I started out, we had only four or five members. We didn't have enough to really do anything with, and we all wore our own personalities. We didn't even get together. We didn't speak to each other. Now I think you really have unity and, I think, capable leadership.In the matter of drugs, for example, nobody in the Congress is as capable as [Charles B.] Rangel when it comes to talking about the drug problem. He has developed that capability. He's a very able man and able to speak out. Unfortunately, even the current administration is not using that expertise as it should. But he's there in the caucus, so when you begin talking about the drug problem, you have an expert. You have [Louis] Stokes, who has developed an expertise in the health field. Now, when you get into health reform, Stokes is a type of an individual within the caucus who can lead the caucus into the proper position to take with respect to health reform. So we have that available to us, but I don't think we are using it or exploiting it as well as we should.Now, it's very difficult to say why we haven't. I found that in education it was very difficult to get some of the other members of the caucus to take the responsibility in education. And when I knew that I was leaving, I tried to get certain members to go on the committee and to take over some of the programs.

16. Tape Number: IX, Side One June 21, 1993

Hawkins

The [Congressional Black] Caucus presents, to me, the proper approach to dealing with our problems and mobilizing the support. I think that if they, as a group, called on minorities throughout this country to support a program that they enunciated, they would get the support. I think they would.

Woods

What is your opinion of the legislative weekends?

Hawkins

Oh, I think it's too social, not enough accomplished-a lot of talk, but very little follow-through. You can't do it in a weekend. It's a year-round job, and what is done on the weekends should be followed up on a year-round basis. But just to expect it to be accomplished in a weekend get-together, with as much social activity as there is- It just isn't going to be done.

Woods

You said that you were trying to interest them in educational issues. That would seem like a natural area of interest for some of the members, given the state of education in their districts. Why weren't they-?

Hawkins

I don't know, just some reason. I never seemed to reach enough who were willing to take on, let's say, education as a primary concern. There were one or two who showed promise but who didn't stay with the committee long enough to really develop and who went to other committees because they were- It was, from their personal point of view- It met with their concern.

Woods

You mentioned the Black Caucus not having a research institution. I know they established a foundation. Was that one of the goals of the foundation?

Hawkins

Yes, the foundation primarily sponsors the weekend activity and not anything beyond that. They should have a research arm. They encouraged the development of one, which ended up being the Joint Center [for Political and Economic Studies], which is independent of them. But they spawned it. I think that it should be under the control of the Congressional Black Caucus; that should be a center of their own. The Joint Center does a good job, but it is not the CBC's Joint Center. I think the Joint Center could promote its own research agency, and I think that's a missing link that needs correcting. They have the money, they can get the money, so there's no excuse for them not doing it.And they can put to work several individuals to lead it and call on others to assist without even compensation. I know that when I was chairman of the committee on education, I got all the staff people that I needed to help on the bills that I'd prepared. When we put through the [Hawkins-Stafford

Elementary and Secondary] School [Improvement] Amendments, [1988] with some of the best brains in this country and we got only- We got the bill through with-out of 435 members of Congress-only two votes against the bill. And we got [Ronald W.] Reagan to sign it, who didn't believe in it. But we had some of the best brains in the country that we asked to testify before the committee, and they were willing to do it. We never compensated them. You have all of this unused talent available that the Black Caucus could use, I think, if they called on people to use them.And why the [William J. Clinton] administration isn't using them is somewhat surprising to me. The reason we did so well in the sixties was that we had some of the best brains called on by [Lyndon B.] Johnson to do the job. You have a Francis Koeppel, who's commissioner of education out of Harvard [University], and we had Harold Howell, also from Harvard. We had people like that who put the pieces together. And we have the same quality available now to the country, to the administration, and to the Congressional Black Caucus.Now, the Congressional Black Caucus should be using a fellow like [James] Comer of Yale [University] or Linda Darling-Hammond of Columbia [University], the girl who's president of Spelman [College]-

Woods

Johnnetta [B.] Cole.

Hawkins

-Johnnetta Cole. People like that. [Shirley] Thornton in the Department of Education out in California. We have deans of education around the country-black deans of education, in virtually all-white institutions-who are available. We're not using this expertise, and I think they would be glad to be asked by the Congressional Black Caucus or by the administration to be used. And they are not looking for jobs. They would be most willing to contribute their services.

Woods

Maybe I can ask you about several of the Los Angeles congresspeople who you observed over time. Black congressman Julian [C.] Dixon: What has been your opinion of his service here?

Hawkins

Julian Dixon is a good man. I don't think he has developed all around as much as he's capable of developing. As a politician he's somewhat lazy, I think, but that's no great vice to me. It's an individual trait. I think that he's respected in Washington, and when he wants to do a job he can do it. He does his homework, and I think he's a good man.

Woods

Mervyn [M.] Dymally?

Hawkins

Well, Dymally is no longer there, but Dymally was a shrewd operator and worked hard and in a- But he's primarily concerned with international affairs. So we never did cooperate that much on some of the things, although he was very supportive of my ideas. I worked with him on the Job Corps, for example, and he did an outstanding job, I think, on that. When he sets his mind to doing something, he'll do it. As I say, his interest was somewhat foreign interests, and that was never my cup of tea. But I would say that he certainly was a capable representative.

Woods

Were you allied with him during the years in the [California State] Assembly?

Hawkins

Yes, we worked very closely together.

Woods

Did you continue to-?

Hawkins

He credits me with being his mentor, which I think is a little exaggeration, because he's an individualist. I never was a close adviser of his, although he gives me credit for having been.

Woods

I can't remember offhand the new representative from Compton, the former mayor of Compton who came here to Congress, who took Dymally's district.

Hawkins

Preceded Dymally or-?

Woods

No, recent.

Hawkins

[Walter] Tucker [III].

Woods

Yeah, I think so.

Hawkins

Tucker, I think, is representing Compton now. I don't know him. He has good background. He should be capable. I just don't know him. I really can't comment on him.

Woods

Yvonne Brathwaite Burke?

Hawkins

She was more interested, I think, in Los Angeles than she was in Washington. She was never satisfied. She is very capable and a very fortunate person. She has always been in the right place at the right time. And I think that she has a real challenge, because she is in a very key position right now. A lot is going to depend on her ability to really settle down and do a job where she is. I hope she's satisfied. If she's satisfied with being in the position, she'll be different. But she was never satisfied being in Washington.

Woods

Okay. Maxine Waters. I've seen some pictures of her. I guess she was visiting you early on in her career- I guess the late sixties, early seventies. Can you make an evaluation of her political evolution?

Hawkins

Well, there again, I don't know what her main interest is. She's very ambitious and very militant. I think her strength is in her unlimited energy, and I think she votes correct on all of the issues. She would vote the same way I would, I think, on almost every issue.I think her weakness-if I could be over-critical to try and select her greatest weakness-I would say is in getting public attention. I think she is the type who thrives on publicity and on getting some attention. I would hope that she learns to collaborate with others a little bit better and try to steer clear of confrontation. We need some confrontation, but sometimes it can be very destructive. Certainly she represents an area that has a lot of problems, and I think the main thing is in showing results from what one's activity- Just talking through it is not enough. We have to show results. Right now we have an area that is terribly in need of summer jobs for youths, and I think that what you do, you get out and use your energy in order to try to get those summer jobs and to get all-around jobs for youths. There is a crying need. I think it's going to require a lot more than just talking through it. But I think she has unlimited energy. She has the opportunity, and I would be very supportive of helping her in every way possible to look through these issues. What we need right now are programs, not talk. We need programs.

Woods

You say that a lot of your former staff is now working for her. Has she consulted you since she's been here?

Hawkins

No, I don't think that we've had a very close relationship, but I wouldn't blame her for that. I would say that my own time was so involved with education that unless people were heavily involved in education and in training, we wouldn't be involved that much with each other.

Woods

Okay, a couple of other people. Senator Diane [E.] Watson?

Hawkins

Diane is, I think, very capable. She's done a good job in the health field, but I never worked with Diane very much. I never had the occasion to do so. I know that everything that I was involved with she was highly supportive of. I am

very appreciative of that, but I don't know Diane well enough to really evaluate what her present role is.

Woods

And Mark Ridley-Thomas?

Hawkins

We have never really worked together that much. Very little, as a matter of fact.

Woods

There seem to be some ongoing leadership disputes among black political leadership in Los Angeles. Are these long-standing issues and conflicts and debates? Or are these-?

Hawkins

Oh, I think that they are personality clashes. I play them down as being somewhat involved with the egos that are involved. I think it's unfortunate that the fact that we seem to get more elected officials but less unity is regrettable. I think that someone should just say to them, "Come on, let's get together and cut this crap out" and try to do something to help the people who need the help and do it without necessarily having one big ego to carry them through.But that is somewhat indigenous, it seems to me, to what's wrong with minorities at this time. They are squabbling among themselves rather than identifying who the true enemy is. But that squabbling, I think, is somewhat petty. I know all of them. I get along with them. Most of them I have supported myself. But why they should be battling each other or going to the press to make comments- There are many people whom I don't get along with, but I don't think you need to make a public issue out of it. It's more a matter of style than anything else. [Adam Clayton] Powell [Jr.] and I never got along with each other, but I always enjoyed the fact that we had a Powell in the Congress. And Powell in his way helped me out because of the manner in which he confronted others. To create confrontational attacks helped me to get the cooperation from some of the same people. But without Powell I might not have gotten that cooperation. So he played a role. And as long as he played a role, the fact that we disagreed on form but not on substance made

him helpful. So why would I go out and attack Powell because we didn't agree on our style? And I think the same thing is true with individuals today. There are different styles of operating, and we have to respect that. But this squabbling among each other-you know, I don't think the public appreciates it.

Woods

Do you think that it's the same degree of-? Well, for a long time L.A. had as many black congressmen as the entire South. Do you think that the squabbling within the Los Angeles congressional delegation- Well, how would you compare the Los Angeles black congressional delegation to, say, Chicago or New York? Is it-?

Hawkins

Oh, in quality I'd say L.A. has always been better represented, I think, than any other area. I know that Dymally and Dixon and myself met constantly and worked out plans together, and we got along fine. Yet we dealt with different styles, but we had no animosity if one got more credit than the other. And we got together several times during Black History Month and had exhibits over at Exposition Park and brought in school children to see what blacks in the Congress had done historically. It proved to be helpful to all three of us. And we sponsored them. We didn't necessarily get along socially with each other, but we were able to develop some joint activity, and I think that's what some of the officials in Los Angeles could do now. They could get into some joint enterprises together, show some unity; that would be helpful to everyone, you know. And without, let's say, one individual being designated the superstar. We don't need any more superstars.

Woods

Do you think that's a product of Hollywood or media attention or-?

Hawkins

Well, it probably does- Hollywood does rub off. It's the glamour of the position, I guess, that seems to attract individuals. But if it doesn't show any results, I don't think in the long run it accomplishes a damn thing. And it leads to these little petty jealousies that every now and then pop up and don't do anybody any good whatsoever.

Woods

Okay, I just have about twenty minutes more, and then we should be finished. I just wanted to get your reactions to several events in the sixties and the seventies and the eighties. The first is the [Daniel P.] Moynihan report on the black family *[The Negro Family: The Case for National Action].* Some people consider that as a turning point in approach to social programs. Did you see that as-?

Hawkins

Well, it has some influence. I think it was unfortunate, and I don't think that Moynihan himself takes great pride in it. It was similar to the [James S.] Coleman report in the late sixties, the Coleman report which came out as a result of the passage of the Civil Rights Act [1964]. The Coleman report tended to say that the main determinant of academic success was family background and schools didn't really make that much difference. So regardless of the input, regardless of what you did, the schools couldn't turn things around and overcome the family background.But that was answered very well by a good friend of mine who was responsible for much of my success in some of the education- And that came out of the effective school process, which showed that, despite what Coleman was saying, there were some schools in the country that were doing well even though they were in minority areas and consisted of 90 percent disadvantaged children.Ron [Ronald] Edmonds was the fellow I'm talking about. Ron Edmonds started at Harvard. He went to Michigan State [University] and developed what is known as the effective school concept. Ron Edmonds and a group of researchers around him went out and they identified schools in the country that, despite the odds-that is being almost completely black and being, say, 90 percent kids who were from poverty areas, many of them adjacent to housing projects-that these schools were showing remarkable results. Then they tried to determine why these schools were succeeding and other schools were not. They ended up establishing the correlates or the characteristics of these schools. Around that they built these concepts, these characteristics that today are still being developed out at the University of Wisconsin. And these correlates that affect the school process are a part of the school improvement act. We adopted that, put it into the school improvement act.But the Moynihan and the Coleman reports were negative. They were really due to faulty methodology.

They were just individuals who were more concerned about showing that there was something genetic about the lack of success rather than looking at the facts.

Woods

Just a question I meant to ask earlier about Los Angeles: Did you have any relationship to the Black Congress in Los Angeles that-?

Hawkins

The what?

Woods

The Black Congress. It was an organization-

Hawkins

I'm not so familiar with an organization known as the Black Congress.

Woods

I guess it was Danny Bakewell and-

Hawkins

I don't identify any organization of that name, so obviously I didn't have any participation.

Woods

Did you work with Danny Bakewell earlier-?

Hawkins

I know him. I don't know that I can say that I worked with him, that he worked with me. He was never a part of any of my programs. Now, I know of him. My impression is that he's a capable and a decent sort of a guy. What I know about him is positive, and I just haven't worked with him.

Woods

The assassination of Martin Luther King [Jr.] and the poor people's march on Washington [1968] is also considered by some authors as a turning point in that the whole mass demonstration movement and approach to affecting

policy seemed to have ended there with the end of the march. How did you view the poor people's march on Washington?

Hawkins

Well, I viewed the march as well organized and very influential. I think it was very, very influential in getting the Civil Rights Act passed and in focusing the attention on the problems. It was well organized. I think that was due primarily to Aethol Brandoff. That's my opinion, that he was most responsible for the success of the March on Washington.

Woods

I was referring to the 1968 march.

Hawkins

Nineteen sixty-eight?

Woods

Yeah, the one that King was organizing just before he died. The SCLS [Southern Christian Leadership Conference] came-

Hawkins

Oh, I wasn't involved with that. I thought you were talking about the earlier march in '63. The later one, I think, was sort of an abortive type of march. I don't think that it had much impact.

Woods

There are a lot of discussions about the anniversary of Robert [F.] Kennedy, his death. Were you a supporter of him?

Hawkins

Robert Kennedy? Yeah, oh, yeah. John F. Kennedy was- I was closer to him than to Robert Kennedy. John F. Kennedy supported me in my election and we worked on programs. Of course, it was a very, very short period of time, but-

Woods

So you were supporting his campaign in 1968?

Hawkins

Yeah. Oh, yeah.

Woods

So who did you end up supporting in the convention?

Hawkins

When?

Woods

In the [Democratic National] Convention of 1968.

Hawkins

That was the one in-?

Woods

Not Atlantic City, but when [Hubert H.] Humphrey [Jr.] was running-

Hawkins

Oh, I supported Humphrey. Yeah. I'm trying to think. The one in Los Angeles was- There wasn't any fight, but I did support John F. Kennedy.

Woods

Nineteen sixty-eight was Chicago, I think.

Hawkins

Yeah, I don't think I made that one. The one in Atlantic City was the last one that I attended, I guess.

Woods

In the seventies, was it clear that [Richard M.] Nixon had a "southern strategy" to sort of reorganize the political bases of the Republican Party or-?

Hawkins

Nixon, to me, was a political animal, and I don't think the man was too based in principle, and I just rather discount much of his administration. I got along with him very well. I think we got public service employment out of Nixon

which we wouldn't have gotten out of a liberal. But he was ready to deal on a political basis with anyone, so that's why I say that I don't think he was too based in principle. I don't think his administration was nearly as bad as that of Reagan.

Woods

You were one of the first or one of the many co-sponsors of the impeachment bill.

Hawkins

I don't even recall whether I was or not. I suppose I felt that way and I felt that he had earned it and that it should go forward.

Woods

Was he supportive of California in general, or your district in particular?

Hawkins

I don't think that he ever did too much, no. As I say, I don't think he was a Reagan in the sense that he did any harm, but he was a fellow that politically you could do business with. That's all I can say. But an opportunist.

Woods

Also during that period around 1974, I think that you were one of the sponsors of the Mexican-American Rural Community Anti-Poverty Act, and you made a couple of trips to New Mexico. What type of things did you see?

Hawkins

Made trips where?

Woods

To New Mexico.

Hawkins

Well, I can't even recall.

Woods

Okay.

Hawkins

No, I don't even recall.

Woods

Okay. Do you remember who you supported in the 1972 election primaries? I'm trying to think-

Hawkins

Who were the candidates of the-?

Woods

[George S.] McGovern and Nixon were the final candidates.

Hawkins

Oh, well, I probably voted for McGovern, although I was not close to McGovern. But I would think that I certainly supported McGovern. I don't ever recall supporting Nixon, let's say, politically.

Woods

I mean then the Democratic primaries-

Hawkins

In the Democratic primaries?

Woods

I don't remember-

Hawkins

Well, I'm trying to remember who was in the primary along with McGovern. I probably rather ignored the primary, because I don't ever recall being a staunch supporter of McGovern.

Woods

And in 1976 I guess [James E.] Carter was running. Did you support him in the primaries?

Hawkins

I don't think that I gave any great support to Carter in the primaries. I supported him in the general, but in the primary I don't think that I was very supportive of Carter. I knew very little about him, and I don't think anyone in the caucus, except Andy [Andrew] Young, supported Carter. But I think that the approach in that election, if I can recall, was that Andy Young sold us on the idea of either supporting or staying out of it in order that- I think the fellow running against him was, if I recall- I'm trying to think of the racist from Alabama.

Woods

[George C.] Wallace?

Hawkins

Wallace! Defeat Wallace, I think. That was Andy Young's approach. We had to support Carter in order to defeat Wallace. Then after the primary I think Young became a staunch supporter of Carter on a positive basis. But in the primaries, if I can recall, it was primarily an anti-Wallace maneuver.

Woods

And when Carter ran for reelection there was a challenge from Edward [M.] Kennedy, I think, at the convention?

Hawkins

Yeah. Well, that fizzled.

Woods

Were you a strong supporter of his reelection?

Hawkins

Of Carter?

Woods

Yeah.

Hawkins

Oh, I probably just signed up but was not necessarily that enthused about Carter. We'd had trouble getting Carter to sign the Full Employment [and

Balanced Growth] Act [1978], and it was only because we almost hit him over the head with a baseball bat-not literally but figuratively speaking-that we got him to sign it. I was always somewhat reluctant about Carter and his basic instincts.

Woods

And then he also removed Andrew Young from the U.N. [United Nations] post somewhere.

Hawkins

Yeah. Well, I don't know very much about that episode, but Andy Young was a staunch supporter of Carter and really believed in him. But I don't think that the rest of us were that enthused.

Woods

Okay. The last question before I get to the personal issues: Reagan's new federalism, do you think that marked a distinct departure in sort of social policy in the-?

Hawkins

No, I think it was just a political ploy. It was just an idea that we were going to shift responsibility back to the states. I've never been that enthused about that idea that there is something wrong about the federal government being active in national policies and activities. "New Federalism" was just a ploy or catchword. I think that it was invented to attract people.

Woods

Okay. First, some of your personal background. Your second wife [Elsie Taylor Hawkins]: What type of activities does she engage in? Does she-?

Hawkins

Oh, I think-

Woods

I'm sorry I don't have her name right here.

Hawkins

Oh, you're talking about Pegga [A. Smith]?

Woods

That was your first wife. Oh, well, you know your wives better than I do.

Hawkins

Yeah, well, I would just as soon not talk about wives, because I think that that gets a little too personally involved.

Woods

Okay. The Hawkins [Family Memorial] Foundation [for Educational Research and Development]: It started in April of 1969, and it's a family foundation. Your brothers Edward [Hawkins] and Dickerson [Hawkins] and your sister Mattie [Pearl Jefferson], they were all involved. What were some of the original goals of the foundation?

Hawkins

Well, the original goals were built around economic development, and primarily the idea was to help small businesses get started. That primarily is what it was used for. And we worked out quite a few arrangements whereby we got small businesses helped. But then we, of course, had favorable administrations to work with. But then, when I came to Congress- We never used it during the time that I was in Congress. We just didn't want any conflict of interest. Subsequent to that, of course, we concentrated completely on education. We got away from the economic aspect altogether.

Woods

So what are some of the activities of the foundation now?

Hawkins

It's primarily catalytic in type. I use it as a means of participating with various groups. I've worked with Columbia University on spurring some activity to train more teachers, primarily minority teachers. I've used it also in connection with the College [Entrance Examination] Board. The college board has a program called Equity 2000. Equity 2000 is a program to get more minorities into college and to successfully complete college. Equity 2000 is built around a demonstration. There were six demonstration sites to show

that if we can get all kids in particular school districts in the middle grades to take up algebra and geometry and complete those subjects successfully, that they're more likely to enroll in and to complete college. With most of the sites we're in the third or fourth year, and we have not completed the cycle, but we hope to prove that those who do complete algebra and geometry are going to complete college in greater numbers. I'm chairman of the advisory commission. That is one of the activities that grew out of the foundation.We are also working directly with some school districts to get the implementation of the school improvement act, especially chapter one-to use chapter one effectively. Prince Georges County [Maryland] is one of the school districts that I worked very closely with. I work with the Montgomery school district. And we are now making some overtures to work with the L.A. Unified School District more closely, in order to see if we can't turn that district around.The foundation works with the National Alliance of Business to form business partnerships. We have an idea that if we can get more partnerships built between businesses and school districts that we can work with those districts in getting the type of support from the business community in order to make the school district more effective in its operation. We have worked with the National Council on Educating Black Children. We've helped to sponsor five national conferences on an annual basis that are held at Hunt Valley-that's Hunt Valley in Maryland-in which we bring together about five hundred educators from around the country who work in workshops on different techniques or different strategies for helping to promote academic achievement among black children. We've had five such conferences.In other words, we work with other groups, we work through conferences, we organize seminars, all with the idea of implementing some of the initiatives that I was responsible for when I was in Congress. I also worked with the University of Wisconsin at Madison on the effective school concept. We're trying to get that concept into school districts.

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Hawkins

Most districts know little about what the foundation is all about.

Woods

So that's the University of Wisconsin? You work with them?

Hawkins

Yes.

Woods

Effective schools.

Hawkins

Yes, the effective school process at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. They furnish training experts who work with local districts in how to get involved in the effective school concept. And as I say, it's built around five correlates. We find that the schools that are successful have strong leadership; there is a strong principal. Secondly, they have high expectations of success. They believe that all children can learn, and that if they don't learn it's because they are not taught. A third concept is that they must be given the opportunity to learn-that is, they must have strong curriculums. There is no need in trying to teach kids how to tap dance or play football. The idea of a school is to teach them the essential skills, and you have to concentrate on that. It's good to have the other activities, but that is not the main emphasis. That's not what school is all about. Another one of the concepts is parental involvement. You've got to get the parents involved in the education of their children. If not, you've got to have someone standing in for the parents. And the fifth is constant monitoring. You have to monitor the progress of the kids and not just let them drag along in the school system on a weekly or monthly basis. You have to have a way of assessing their progress to keep up with what they are doing. This helps in the teaching of the kids. If they are not learning, then you find out- Is it because the teaching is failing? We're failing to really teach them. So these are the concepts that are the correlates that identify effective schools as opposed to ineffective schools.

Woods

How often does the foundation business take you out to different areas of the country?

Hawkins

Well, it's very difficult- I would say that I spend fully about a third of my activity on the foundation- on meeting with groups, speaking to groups, or in committee meetings with them. The College Board has had two meetings this year, one in New York and one in Washington [D.C.], and I was active in both of those meetings. We meet with different members of the commission from time to time between our national meetings. I meet with the Prince Georges County school people about twice a month, and those are primarily in staff training programs. That's where the teachers and counselors are trained. The National Alliance of Business meets about every other month-advisory council. But between council we keep in touch with each other and work on different papers. We're working right now on a welfare-to-work proposal by the National Alliance of Business to try to see if we can agree on a recommendation to make to the administration on the best means of getting welfare recipients into useful job situations. That is our present project. I would say that I spend roughly two days a month on the project. It's sort of a bird's-eye view. I'm not trying to exhaust the activity-

Woods

I see that you have a computer and a lot of current books-

Hawkins

Yeah, we have a computer, we have a copier, and in the other room we have a fax machine. So we do a lot by fax. We find that faxing material will keep us in touch with different people on the commissions that I'm on, for example. The fax material here you see is a letter, for example, from the National Alliance of Business concerning a business approach to welfare reform. I just finished reading their proposal and so the president of the National Alliance has asked for my comments on the proposal. And I will submit to him by fax my comments and will get other views from other members. We're having a meeting of the advisory commission in July in order to discuss it among the commission members. It's that type of activity that the foundation permits me to become involved in on a formal basis, and I keep it alive for that reason.

Woods

Do you have any intentions on slowing down or-?

Hawkins

Well, everybody says that I should. My wife [Elsie Taylor Hawkins] is my warden who says that I slowed down to seventy miles an hour and I should slow down more, but I enjoy doing this. It's something to keep my mind occupied. No need [to be] sitting around. You know, otherwise I'd be worried about medication and diet and going to the doctor's and whatnot. But I find that having something on my mind is less stressful than having nothing to do.

Woods

So do you still have your place on the eastern shore? And do you go there often?

Hawkins

Yeah, but I haven't been able to spend much time there. I have a workshop there, both a manual workshop, a physical workshop, and a library that I spent- I would love to develop that property a little bit, but I'm currently more involved in stimulating much more activity in Los Angeles. That's my corporate headquarters. I have an office in conjunction with the Hudson of [Broadway Federal] Savings and Loan [Association]. He's retired, Elbert [T. Hudson].I'd like to do more with the L.A. Unified School District. And my conversation yesterday-during the time that we were running the machine here-was with the University of Wisconsin out at Madison. The effective school person [Barbara Taylor] is very much interested in doing something with the L.A. Unified School District. I would also like to possibly establish L.A. as a satellite of the College Board Equity 2000 program. We have six sites now. The only one in California is at San Jose. They have developed these six sites and funded them. I don't think that they would want to fund another site at this time, because the six they are concentrating on should receive the lion's share of what financial support is available. But I think that L.A. could probably raise its own money and tie into the program. I've talked to the dean out at UCLA, and I probably would like to- I probably can get USC [University of Southern California] involved and Cal State [California State University] at Los Angeles is also interested. A Dr. [Jewel] Cobb, who is in the city now, she called and left a message. I'm going to try and talk to her while she's here, because she is dean of education out there. In other words, if I can get five or six of the local higher ed groups interested, I think we can establish Los Angeles as a satellite of the College Board program.That will concentrate primarily on emphasizing

mathematics in the school system. Now, mathematics is not the only subject that you end up having in the curriculum, but it is a sort of a gatekeeper course. If you're strong on that, you're going to be strong on the other subjects as well. So that leads into a higher-order curriculum in a school system rather than dealing with just basic simple skills. But it's rather intriguing, and it has a lot of research to back it up.

Woods

Well, I'd like to thank you on behalf of myself and the Oral History Program for making available all of this time and all your-

Hawkins

Well, I'm sorry to string it out, but really I'm not much at reminiscing and going back. I'm so damn busy right now trying to look to the future that I try to hold down interviews and things like that. I have three or four requests every week from somebody that's working on a dissertation who wants to get into some of the stuff that's happened years ago. A lot of people are interested in the anti-poverty issue, for example. But, you know, we're talking about something thirty or forty years ago, and I've forgotten. I've forgotten more than I remember. You can't keep dates that straight.

Woods

You seemed to keep them pretty straight, though.

Hawkins

Well, you strive. But I feel that I owed an obligation to UCLA, and I wanted to go through with it.

Woods

I appreciate it.

Hawkins

Okay, and I appreciate your patience.

Woods

No, it was definitely an education for me.

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Augustus F. Hawkins . Date: August, 2003