

**REFLECTIONS PROJECT**  
**REP. TOM DeLAY INTERVIEW**  
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**LINDA DOUGLASS:** So describe for me the very beginning of when you came to Congress in the mid 1980s. The place was still dominated by Democrats. What was your first impression and what are some of your memories of those early days?

**TOM DeLAY:** Well, dominated by Democrats is a gross understatement. They controlled everything, they had a huge margin; I think at the time I came in in 1985, it was only 185 Republicans. I mean, we were absolutely useless. And I recognized that, so most of my time was spent in working with the Republican conference. The only thing I ever wanted to be was to be Whip. Course at that time I thought I'd always be the Minority Whip for the—my entire career. So I immediately, I was working the politics, the internal politics of the Republican conference. I as a freshman, I became what is the only thing to be as a freshman, and that's the freshman representative on the Committee of Committees, which is the committee that makes the committee assignments, and I won that seat and immediately served with the senior members of the conference because the seniors were on that committee. So it was... that's what I spent most of my first few months doing, and then after that, I continued to work within the politics of the Republican conference.

**DOUGLASS:** You did go right for the position that would give you the most influence over the direction of the party at the time, even as a freshman, that's definitely where you concentrated your energies. Why was it more interesting or important to you to start moving in the direction of leadership than it was sitting around, writing legislation?

**DeLAY:** Well, I had served 6 years in the, in the state legislature in the Texas House as a Republican, we were also a minority there. It became quite evident to me that during that period of time, that if I came to Congress, I needed to get involved in leadership or I, there was no reason to be here, because, if you were going to get anything done, even in the minority, you had to get it done through the leadership, and that's why I focused on that.

**DOUGLASS:** What were the Democrats like to you? I'm imagining what they might say you are like today, how would you describe them at that time?

**DeLAY:** They were very accommodating, very friendly; I had some very close friends as Democrats. As long as we stayed in the minority and didn't raise too much hell, they were... they worked with, they worked with me. I had worked with the Democrats in the Texas legislature, so I had sort of a talent of working with the Democrats. And some of my closest friends were Democrats, golfing buddies were Democrats. Had some close personal relationships. Those ended after we became the majority.

**DOUGLASS:** **Let's talk a little bit about the Republican Revolution. I mean, clearly, some of you made a decision to start engaging in much more confrontational tactics, and you were clearly frustrated with the way that your leaders had been handling your status in the minority. How much tension was there within the Republican Party right then?**

**DeLAY:** There's quite a bit of tension. We had the Conservative Opportunity Society, which was a rebellious group that didn't take minority as a life long career. I joined the Conservative Opportunity Society, there were people like Newt Gingrich, Bob Walker, Ben Webber, those, I was very excited that there was an aggressive group of Republicans that were gonna work very hard to gain the majority, and I became a part of that group. It was a group that didn't sit well with the senior members of the Republican conference, or the leadership. The thought we were just a ragtag group for a while, and then, the group starting growing, the Republican leadership didn't like it. The Republican leadership was very comfortable in their minority status, and we firebrands, we Reagan babies weren't comfortable at all.

**DOUGLASS:** **When you succeeded, so famously, to become, all overnight, the majority after nearly half a decade, a century, were there tensions within your own ranks of Revolutionaries? How did you all get along with each other in those early days, as you tried to get used to having the power yourselves?**

**DeLAY:** Well, first of all we didn't get the majority overnight. We worked very hard to get that majority. I became Republican—chairman of the Republican study committee and for my whole time, I mean 5 or 6 years before 1994, the Republican study committee was working towards the Majority, and the way we did it is, the study committee would offer an alternative for every bill that the Democrats brought to the floor. That took a lot of work and a lot of effort, it was the Republican study committee that defeated Bush 41 when he wanted to raise taxes in the first vote in the House and we were still in the minority, we were standing on principle, and that took a lot of work. So, it, it was a pleasant surprise. I'm not sure a lot of us believed, we hoped and things were looking good for us, but not a lot of us believed that we would gain majority in 1994. But we did, and that was rather sudden. So when we took it, we got along quite well at the beginning. The leadership worked very well together, we uh got a lot of things done. As you

remember, the Contract with America was to be done in 100 days, we did it in 93, and in 93 days, and after that we had some issues, not the least of which was balancing the budget and welfare reform, that were really important to get done quickly, and so we were really focused on that. It was after that that things started fraying and fracturing within the Republican leadership.

**DOUGLASS:** Well, talk about balancing the budget a little bit. You have often been quoted as saying that one of your regrets was that when the Republicans made the decision to shut down the government in the budget dispute with President Clinton ultimately a deal was made and the government was reopened, and that was not what you would have done. Do you still feel that way, that the government should have stayed shut down?

**DeLAY:** Oh, that was a horrible Sunday evening. I was cooking steaks for 5 members Sunday evening and we had the televisions on and out walks Bob Dole and opens the Senate. It was Bob Dole, the majority leader of the Senate, that cut a deal with Clinton, unbeknownst to the House, without consulting with the House, and then, that was the beginning of the end of that effort, if we didn't—has been revealed since then, if we'd, if Bob Dole had stayed tough like the House was for the next 1, 2 to 3 days, we'd have won. Clinton would have given in. But the Senate and the Republicans in the Senate didn't like our way of doing things in the House. We were aggressive; we wanted to get what we promised to the American people done, no excuses. And, they never did like it.

**DOUGLASS:** Government shut down wasn't particularly popular at that time. Did that matter?

**DeLAY:** It... no it didn't matter, we knew that there was incredible, incredibly important fight to win, particularly with the Clinton administration because it set the tone, it would have set the tone for the rest of the Clinton administration, and I think it would have been very, very popular after we had won. Unfortunately, nobody knows that because we didn't.

**DOUGLASS:** Now you acknowledged that things did begin to fray within your own party. There were efforts made at one point, unsuccessful efforts, to push Newt Gingrich out of the Speaker's office before he ultimately decided on his own to leave. What happened there?

**DeLAY:** I think it was it was a frustration. The Speaker, the leadership was also frustrated. Newt is a brilliant mind, he has his mind is full of ideas, and he spits them out about every 10 minutes, a new idea. Well if you're going to run a huge ship like the House of Representatives, you can't do that. You gotta set your agenda, and you got to execute your agenda. Unfortunately Newt changed directions about every 15 to 30 minutes and that was frustrating to the leadership, it was certainly

frustrating to members. And it manifested itself in the so called coup, where members gathered together threatening to bring Newt down. Unbeknownst to those members, the leadership had already had 2 or 3 meetings with Newt about this very problem. We were working it out with him to get a more manager, manage... and more accommodating management style so that we could actually accomplish things.

**DOUGLASS: Was Newt a good Speaker?**

**DeLAY:** He was a good general. He was... he was just, he was a great leader in bringing us into the Revolution, he was, as long as he was disciplined about what our agenda was, which frankly in the first 2 terms was already set, he was, he has a lot to be proud of, in what we were able to accomplish under his Speakership, but he did only last 2 terms.

**DOUGLASS: Now the time in which you left was a very volatile time because that was the time after the '98 elections when the Republicans lost seats, which many at the time blamed on the efforts to impeach President Clinton over the Monica Lewinsky affair. Now you are famously to have run a war room at that time to push impeachment, your office was shaping a message, you were keeping track of which members were where. Why did you press ahead so aggressively with that given that it seemed that it wasn't what the country wanted?**

**DeLAY:** Well, I thought it was... I felt we were in a Constitutional crisis. We had the President of the United States, who had perjured himself, lied not only to the American people, but lied to a Grand Jury, and if you believed in our Constitution, in our rule of law, you cannot allow the President to get away with it, for many, many different reasons: sets terrible precedents, it shows the weakness of Congress not assuming the responsibility of holding the Executive Branch accountable for breaking the law. The message it sends to future generations that lying doesn't matter, undermining our judicial system, undermining our rule of law. I just felt strongly within myself that we had to hold this President accountable; we could not let him get away with it. And frankly that's what turned out happened. There wasn't a whole lot of stomach within the Republican leadership to do it, we found out later why...

**DOUGLASS: Why?**

**DeLAY:** Well it's a personal thing, historians will be able to find that out personal with the leaders, there wasn't a whole lot of stomach within a good portion, not a majority, but a good portion of our Republican members of the House, but I just felt it was incredibly important to the future of this country. And, and I pushed it as hard as I could.

**DOUGLASS:** In spite of the fact that you just said it: that the polls were against it and some in your party, many in your party, even your own leaders were against you. You pressed ahead anyway.

**DeLAY:** That's correct. I believed in it. I carried the Constitution around in my pocket everyday to remind me that there still is such a thing. And I just felt so strongly that the President of the United States had to be held accountable. And I did it out of principle as far as I'm concerned.

**DOUGLASS:** Again, I won't use quotes, but I did talk to some members at the time who said that you were also encouraging them to go look at the evidence in the evidence file, which was less about whether Mr. Clinton lied under oath nor about what might be called as moral conduct. Do you think that—

**DeLAY:** More about his character.

**DOUGLASS:** Right. Do you think that that was also relevant?

**DeLAY:** Absolutely. When a criminal breaks the law, his character has everything to do with the case. What kind of person he is, did he really break the law? And why did he break the law? What was the reason? That's all part of the case, when you when you hold somebody accountable or you prosecute someone. And I think it was incredibly important, particularly those members that really didn't spend a whole lot of time looking into this and was more interested in politics than in the principle. I thought—whether, however they decided to vote was up to them, but I thought it was incredibly important that they have all the information that was available to the members of the House before they voted.

**DOUGLASS:** Now the Senate, of all the many groups that had a very small appetite for this matter, had one of the smallest appetites for going ahead with the trial, to remove Mr. Clinton from office, and they had a short trial, they wouldn't let the managers call witness, they wanted to get it over with as quickly as possible, and they did. Do you think they undermined the House, sort of kicked their legs out from under them?

**DeLAY:** I think it could have been handled better. The real reason the Senate didn't have the stomach for it was it took 2/3 of the Senate to remove the President from office. And they knew from the beginning that there were enough Democrats who would never vote to remove him from office. So they knew it was not a, it was it was not winnable, so why go through it all? Was sort of their mindset. I felt that it was incredibly important, even if they could not remove the President from office, and you know I, removing him from office may have been more uh than what the case justified, but the process of being impeached by the House and being tried by the Senate, because our system is so great, is probably proportional to the

offence that the President had. He was punished. He was punished by being tried and impeached by the Senate. He wasn't removed from office, but he got his punishment.

**DOUGLASS: Do you think he got what he deserved?**

**DeLAY:** Yes, he got what he deserved.

**DOUGLASS: What do you think about him today?**

**DeLAY:** I've never disliked the man; I think he's rather charming. I think he's fun to be around, although I haven't been around him a whole lot. He seems to be, I don't know, he's you know, he's Bill Clinton (chuckles).

**DOUGLASS: Do you think that the matters that arose during the impeachment of President Clinton are going to come back to haunt Mrs. Clinton in any way when she, if she does run for President? Will those matters resurface do you think?**

**DeLAY:** Well, I don't know... Yeah in the nastiness of campaigns, and they all are. Yeah, it'll come back to haunt her. How she handles it, would dictate as to what her future holds. So far I think she's handled it pretty well, and certainly in her popularity and her home state of NY and her popularity in the Congress and in the Senate, she's handled it pretty well. I think if someone tries to use Bill Clinton against Hillary, I think Hillary will handle it, unfortunately (laughs).

**DOUGLASS: So let's talk a little bit about how Congress has changed with Republican control, because Republicans have made a number of changes in a way that Congress is run. One sort of general question I want to ask you, is you were quoted the other, I saw you actually, say this, as saying that Republicans have changed the culture of this town, Washington. What do you mean by that?**

**DeLAY:** I'm very proud of that. If I have a legacy that's it. Well first of all, the culture of the Congress. When I came here, it was all about liberal politics. All you got was liberal bills on the floors of the House and the Senate, everything started from the Left and moved to the center. Now, after 12 years of Republican, majority, everything starts from the Right and moves to the center. That's a total change of culture. You don't, 20 years ago, people like me and Newt Gingrich and Dick Armey and others were laughed at as Right Wing crazies. Today, the Right, other than the liberal media, the Right is accepted in this town as legitimate, and accepted as a force to be reckoned with. And, everything starts from, any discussion in this town starts with the conservatives or the conservative point of view first. Secondly, we changed the culture of what's called the K Street, which I'm very proud. We built one of the largest political coalitions that I've seen in my lifetime, remember K Street was controlled by the Democrats as Congress was controlled by the

Democrats for 50 years. So there were, the lobbyists in this town were all Democrats, by and large. Oh, they'd hire a Republican here and there, but the people who ran the lobby shops of this town, or the associations, were all Democrats. Well, that's no longer true; the vast majority of K Street is run by Republicans. And that changes the culture. Absolutely, I'm very proud of it.

**DOUGLASS: How'd you make that happen?**

**DeLAY:** We developed a strategy called the K Street strategy and we encouraged people to hire Republicans. And, when jobs came open and we also would recruit people that could fill these jobs, some of them from our staffs, some of them others from outside, people that we knew, we would make suggestions and recommendations to the people that were doing the hiring, to hire Republicans.

**DOUGLASS: Lobbyists are seen in minds of the public as people who represent financial interests, the interests of companies, the interests of business. So why is it important to have those lobbyists be Republicans?**

**DeLAY:** Well, first of all, lobbyists are... and you're correct, lobbyists represent interests, not just business interests. There are lobbyists for the Sierra Club, there are lobbyists for Common Cause, there are lobbyists for ACLU, there are lobbyists for every leftist organization including the Trial Lawyers Association. There are, there are lobbyists that are hired for leftist organizations and Democrat organization, as there are lobbyists that are hired for conservative organizations and people that support our point of view. Pro-business organizations. The reason that we are tainted, if you would, with having changed K Street is the people that are the losers (laughs), the Democrats and the Left, hate it, that we're the winners. And so they make it sound like, I look at it is as lobbyists are people that support our point of view, lobbyists that we support are people that support our point of view, our political agenda and help us accomplish it. There is no way in this world, as big as this country is, or how complex this Congress is, that you can just send a congressman up to Washington and have him accomplish all the things that need to be accomplished. There has to, you have to have organizations, you have to have people, you have to have *the* people of the United States coming together through organizations to convince the American mindset that we need to be moving in that direction. And frankly we were very good at it.

**DOUGLASS: Well, and again, it's been widely reported that you involve the lobbyists who support your general political philosophy in the writing of legislation that might affect their very industries.**

**DeLAY:** As do the Democrats. They have trial lawyers in, they have the union members in writing their legislation, consulting with them. It's part of how you get legislation done and people on board to support to legislation to make it happen.

The Democrats have the same people, the same kind of people, uh coming in and helping them with their legislative agenda, too.

**DOUGLASS:** There's been some talk this year about something called lobbying reform, rules having to do with travel and relationships with lobbies and so forth, which doesn't to be going anywhere, at least in this Congress. Do you think the public really cares about that?

**DeLAY:** No, no. They don't. The public in general has a low opinion and always have had a low opinion of politicians, except their own. They think, I mean, we're just above lawyers and car salesmen on the scale of, how you feel about people. But everybody loves their own congressman and their own representative, or the person they voted for. But the things that are going on in inside the Beltway, as its said, minutiae, the average citizen out there doesn't care about that. They just, they want a good representative, they want to see things happening, hopefully they want to see what we're doing as accomplished and hopefully we're making them happy about that because they keep returning us as the majority.

**DOUGLASS:** Let's go back to the way some of the changes that have been made and the way the Congress has won under the Republican majority. Speaker Hastert has implemented a policy from time to time on major pieces of legislation which calls for getting the vote of the majority of the majority, in other words, the majority of Republicans, not just the majority of the House. What is the theory behind that?

**DeLAY:** It's not a theory, it's a way that you survive on very small margins. You had, we've never had more than I think a 17 vote margin. Democrats enjoyed 30 vote margins, 40 vote margins, 80 vote margins, we haven't had that luxury. So when you, when you have those smaller margins, I instituted as Whip, what was called Row the Vote, which means it takes a lot more work, but what you do is, you have your agenda set out and you work on issues early on, so that as you work your way towards the floor of the House, problems are worked out before you get to the floor. I wouldn't... I know Speaker Hastert doesn't have a rule that says "the majority of the majority." What he does have is that he's not going to bring anything to the floor that the Republican conference would rebel against. He's not going to bring to the floor a bill that has all the Democrats and a few Republicans. He might as well turn over the floor to the Democrats and say "have it!" he's gonna bring, and he has, in the 8 years that he's been Speaker, much longer than most, certainly the longest serving Republican speaker, he understood that in order to keep these small margins together and keep the Republican conference together, we had to move together. And we couldn't do anything to drive wedges through the middle of the conference or he would lose his ability to drive an agenda.

**DOUGLASS: Why do you think that the number of moderate Republicans, Republicans who call themselves moderate is shrinking, and is that a good thing?**

**DeLAY:** I don't know if that's a good thing. I think the reason it's shrinking is the House is incredibly, it is a House of Representatives. It's very representative of where the country is. And I believe that the country is very polarized, particularly on issues, there's very little middle ground on many issues that are important issues that that need federal focus. So I think that's what you're seeing in the House of Representatives, is what's being reflected in the nation, and you're having, now, I do qualify that a little bit with the Democrat party. I think the Democrat party in the House at least, has allowed the most liberal of their members to be their leaders, and that is moving their party more and more to the left. And so as the nation is polarized, so is the House of Representatives.

**DOUGLASS: I think one could also say that the Republican leaders are on the conservative end of the scale, are they not?**

Sure. Absolutely. But when you're the in majority, you have to consider everybody. When you're in the minority, you don't have to consider anybody. And so, the minority is becoming more and more shrill and moving more and more to the left.

**DOUGLASS: Do you think that polarization is a good thing or a bad thing?**

**DeLAY:** I think partisanship is a good thing. Polarization leads you to believe that people are so mad at each other that they don't debate. I think what the country is going through is a debate on the direction and the future of the United States of America. Whether it be on foreign policy or economic policy or cultural policy, there's a huge debate going on in this country. That debate's been going on for [nie on] 25 years. I have lived through that debate and that transition of Democrat dominance to Republican dominance. We're just not there, as when the Republicans are not as dominant as the Democrats got to be. But that's, I think that's good. It's a healthy, as long as it stays a healthy debate about the issues and, I think I cringe at the politics of personal destruction, I think we ought to keep it above all of that and stay on the issues, and argue over principles and if we do that, then I think the polarization and the partisanship is very beneficial for the future of this country.

**DOUGLASS: I guess I just have to respond by remembering that certainly Clinton said he was a victim of the politics of personal destruction because they were dozens and dozens of hearings into everything large and small that happened within the Executive branch while he was President. And things were said about his personal behavior. Would you say that the uh, ongoing criticism to investigation to impeachment of President Clinton had any component of the politics of personal destruction?**

**DeLAY:** Yeah, I think it did to a certain extent. I don't think he was the victim. I think he was the victim of his own personal destruction as far as his personal character and his personal habits, but the system is set up so that when you have one party in the White House and the other party in the Congress, there's going to be a lot more oversight than you normally have because you don't have, like we have now, where you have the Republicans in the Executive branch and the Republicans in the Congressional branch, Legislative branch, where they work together all the time. You don't, you don't need the hearings when you can call up the President and say "why is this being done? Show me why it's being done," and you can get it done... you can get your answers." You call up the opposite party, they're not going to give you answers. So, you gotta have hearings and you gotta have subpoenas and you've got to have oversight, so it is a different process when you think about it that way.

**DOUGLASS:** Well then I want to ask you about that, but, I want to continue on for a moment on this idea about partisanship, and whether it's good or bad. You made a very fiery speech in your farewell speech on the floor of the House of Representatives in which you criticized people who might try to be statesmen, or make themselves statesmen by seeking to compromise whenever possible. Is compromise generally not a good idea?

**DeLAY:** No, compromise is a necessity, but you don't start with compromise. I like to think that for the 12 years I was in leadership, we started from the Right and worked our way to the center. And then you had, then passed a bill in the House, then you had to work with the Senate—now that's where the compromise comes in. But you started, and you stood on principle. And then did what you could to get the legislation passed. There, I don't call it being a statesman when you start from a compromising position...

**DOUGLASS:** You described it as pre-statesman, it was a very derogatory image, those who seek first a compromise. Does it make you angry when people do that?

**DeLAY:** Not angry, it just gives me more work to do to keep them from doing that. (laughs)

**DOUGLASS:** So you don't think that compromise is necessary to go through a long process of refining legislation and taking into consideration what everyone might want—

**DeLAY:** No no no, that's where compromise comes in. But my point is, and I hope my point was in the speech is that it's where you start that's important. If you start from principle, and then you start compromising to get the legislation done, then, your principle 9 times out of 10, will win out. You won't have to change it much. But if you start with compromising with yourself and start from a compromising

position, by the time you get to passage and to the President's desk, it's probably a pretty lousy piece of legislation.

**DOUGLASS: One of the changes Republicans have made in the process of writing legislation is uh to take a lot of the power out of the hands, the lawmaking power, of the committee chair and to concentrate it more in the hands of the leaders, the party leaders. Why is that a good change?**

**DeLAY:** It's a good change because then you don't have these little fiefdoms and kingdoms that were built when, as they were built when the Democrats were in control. We served in the minority and we noticed uh that the majority, the Democrat majority really didn't have it, by the time they lost the majority, they had no leadership. They had a bunch of committees with 30 strong chairmen that had been there for ages and those chairmen did exactly what they wanted regardless of what their caucus wanted or what their leadership wanted. That is very dangerous and it leads you into the minority. You have to have a strong leadership so that you can develop the agenda that needs to be done, considering everybody, not just a chairman of a committee, and, so that you can move that agenda and accomplish it. And that takes a strong leadership.

**DOUGLASS: Now you know the Democrats will—**

**DeLAY:** It's also one of the reasons we've implemented term limits on chairmen.

**DOUGLASS: Which you think is a good idea?**

**DeLAY:** Absolutely, a great idea! Even though I'm against term limits for the people, because they, their term limit comes when they vote you in or out of office, but to stop these fiefdoms and these kingdoms created by a chairman that serves as chairman for 10, 20, 30 years, you have to have term limits on a chairman.

**DOUGLASS: You know the Democrats complained that they're not allowed to offer amendments, that they're not invited to participate in negotiations over legislation, that sometimes they're not allowed to come to House and Senate conference committees. Is that a good change, they say that is undemocratic, small "D."**

**DeLAY:** They've taken themselves out of those meetings by not being willing to work on the legislation and get it done. Why would you bring somebody to a meeting that wants to kill the legislation? Doesn't make sense. All you'd have is a meeting of posturing and pompous speeches and no work would get done. If the Democrats showed any propensity for wanting to be part of the process and help with the legislation, of course they would be included. And they are included on a lot of legislation that they want to be a part of. But they chose, the minute they

became the minority, to be the “No” party, to be against everything that we were doing, and twist the arms and break the legs of their members to keep them in line to vote against everything that we were doing. So, why invite them to the table if they wanna put a, take a saw and cut the table in half?

**DOUGLASS: I guess their argument back would be that they represent a significant portion of the population.**

**DeLAY:** Well then represent ‘em. Be a part of the process, don’t be a part of the process that they just say no. We would love for them, I mean, I’ll give you an example: when we created the Homeland Security Administration, the new, a brand new, big, huge agency, all the leadership, the Democrats were brought in, we worked together to fashion that legislation, got to the day of marking up the bill, to actually getting the bill written and out of committee, the Democrat leadership decided to walk away. And vote against the bill, after we had spent untold amount of hours working with them, giving them concessions, making concessions with them, getting a piece of—the day that we were marking up the bill to get it out of committee, they walked away. Now, and then they complain that they weren’t invited to the conference committee between the House and the Senate. I’m sorry. It’s, you know, there are consequences for your actions. And if you don’t want to be part of the process, don’t cry that you’re not part of the process.

**DOUGLASS: You famously participated with the other leaders in holding open the vote on the entitlement for prescription drugs under Medicare for some 3 hours, when it’s normally supposed to be a 15 minute process. Does, clearly you were trying to get the votes to pass this major piece of legislation, but does that undermine order in the House when something like that happens?**

**DeLAY:** It creates some hard personal feelings and we understand that. That’s why it’s very rare that you hold a vote open, but a 15 minute vote isn’t a time limit. There never has been intended a time limit. The Democrats, when they controlled the majority, there wasn’t a time limit, it is basically informing the members that you have 15 minutes to get on the floor to vote. And if you don’t get over there in 15 minutes you may miss the vote, but if the majority needs more time, the majority can stretch the time it needs to get its work done. The Democrats make it sound like “at the end of 15 minutes, you’re supposed to shut it down.” No. When everybody has voted, the way they want to be recorded in the end, that’s when you shut the vote down.

**DOUGLASS: What happened that day? What happened on the floor there?**

**DeLAY:** Well we went to the floor knowing that we were short of votes we went to the floor knowing the enormity of the issue. The importance of the issue could very well get us to where we needed to be, and as we worked those votes it was obvious

to us that we actually had an opportunity to get enough votes to actually pass the bill. So we took as much time as it took to pass the bill. That's what a majority does.

**DOUGLASS: I want to ask you about a few things that your former Speaker Newt Gingrich has said recently about the state of Congress today. First of all, in terms of polarization, he said that he thinks the country is 20% hardcore Democrat, 20% hardcore Republican and 60% disgusted. Do you agree with that?**

**DeLAY:** Not at all. No. that's a populist approach I would assume. People are disgusted that don't believe in what's going on, yes. People that don't see their world as I see the world are probably disgusted and upset, are disgusted and upset about the enormity of things that we've been able to accomplish over the last 12 years. I believe that. But no, I think that's a pretty sad view of America.

**DOUGLASS: And he said that you mentioned Congressional oversight, he suggested very strongly that there's not enough being done of the Executive branch, that the legislative branch shouldn't waive for Presidential leadership. And that all goes to this argument that some have made that Congress has allowed itself to become weaker as a branch and the Executive to become stronger during the Bush administration. Do you agree with that?**

**DeLAY:** Not at all. In no way. That is not the case that's going on. Take last year for instance. Last year, the House of Representatives, as it has for 12 years, has taken, it took the lead on many issues, that the president didn't even care about, or he was supportive, but it wasn't on his agenda, whether it be going after judicial activism, where we limited the jurisdiction of the courts, we told the courts what cases they could and could not hear, we even broke up the 9<sup>th</sup> circuit in the House, passed a bill to break up the 9<sup>th</sup> circuit, tort reform, the House was, passed 5 or 6 bills that address our litigious society in this in this country. We in the House led the way the President didn't ask for this, to start the effort of budget constraint through looking at all entitlement programs every year and reforming those entitlement programs so that we could get more bang for the buck, in entitlements. We did a lot of things; we did immigration reform against what the President wanted. The House, I'm very proud of what the House did, but at the same time, if the President is from your party and from your philosophy, of course you're going to work him. And you're going to work out problems probably behind the scenes, because you don't need to get and have a hearing or a splash in the press to get the work done. I think it's... to claim otherwise is a skewed view of what's going on here, or lack of knowledge of what's going on here.

**DOUGLASS: And finally, he said that um, the system is profoundly broken, which we've heard him say before, and that Congress needs to look more closely, very closely at how it functions and how it is organized, that it is time for Congress to take a look at how it functions and how it's organized. Do you agree with that?**

**DeLAY:** I, to a certain extent. I don't agree with that Congress is dysfunctional. You couldn't accomplish all the things that we've been able to accomplish over the 12 years, particularly over the last 8 years with a dysfunctional House of Representatives. I just gave you a long list of just one year; I could give you a book on the last 12 years of the things we've been able to accomplish. One of the things that I regret, that I was able to, but we had started it last year, was to redesign the House. And a way that it was structured. We completely redid the Appropriations Committee. Went from 13 subcommittees down to 11, reshuffled the responsibilities of those subcommittees, and that has had a good effect on holding down spending. I would like to do more. I would have liked to do more in redesigning the structure of the House. I would like to have done more to redesigning our government, to more reflect a constitutional government, rather than a government that reflects Democrat philosophy when all these agencies were created. So, yeah, we may have fallen down a little bit on that, but we had really started gearing up for that, and I think, I'm very proud of the record of this House over the last 12 years and very proud and adamantly disagree that it was dysfunctional.

**DOUGLASS:** You have been at the center of some of the most volatile and emotional issues that have come before the Congress. Issues often involving religious matters, cultural issues and so forth. One of the most well known was the matter of Terry Schiavo, where Congress intervened and you led the charge to try to prevent the hospital from removing her life support system. That was a very controversial step that was taken by you and the rest of Congress or the others who voted for that. If you had it to do over again, would you do it exactly the same way?

**DeLAY:** Absolutely. I have to give you a little personal note: I was the last man standing in town when we realized that Terry Schiavo tube would be pulled over the weekend. Rest of the leadership, both in the House and the Senate had left town. I had been following the case, I had been trying to follow the Shivo family to keep Terry from being killed through court order. And so, I went right, I stayed in town, I was supposed to go home, I stayed in town, and I worked on that issue. I'm a pro-life member, I believe that government other than the death penalty, government has no right to allow anybody else, or the government itself to take your life period. And once again, I was proven right, we have a judiciary that's unaccountable, all we did in the in the Congress was to give the federal judiciary to take a hard look about what was going on in Florida, and they chose not to. And they chose to thumb their nose at the Congress and the United States and the President of the United States. And I think it was outrageous.

**DOUGLASS:** You don't care necessarily if the majority, according to polls, support what you're doing?

**DeLAY:** No, I don't. No I try to stand on principle. I try to stand, I try to do what I believe is right. I believe in Edmund Burke, whose, I forget the quote, but paraphrasing basically is that I run for office and tell you what I would do if you voted for me. If you voted for me, you put me in office, so I'm going to do what I said what I was going to do. Because I believe in it.

**DOUGLASS: Whether the country wants it at that moment or not?**

**DeLAY:** Then the country needs to get them new representatives. And that's what elections are all about.

**DOUGLASS: Just a few personal things, just about observations about people, it's been said that your relationship with President Bush was not really close, is that correct? How would you describe that relationship?**

**DeLAY:** Oh, I think I think... close, what do you mean? You know? He hugs me, kisses me (laughs) no I think I think we... I have an incredible respect for him. The moral leadership that he exhibited after 9/11 will forever earn my respect. He... we are a lot alike, we're the same age, we believe basically in the same things, we both became, came back to Christ about the same time for the same reasons, it's just a lot of similarity. He married a girl from back home; I married my high school sweetheart. We've had a very strong respect for each other in our abilities to do our job, and we have never said a cross word to each other, we've been very straight with each other, he's a very giving man, a very thoughtful man, and I appreciate that.

**DOUGLASS: Why did you decide to resign?**

**DeLAY:** I decided to resign for many different reasons. I'd been in this business for 22 years in the House of Representatives. It was obvious to me that that even though I've been nuclear for a long time, I was getting too nuclear. My family had been through a lot, the Democrats had been attacking me for 10 years, I had my first frivolous ethics charges filed against me 10 years ago, 1995, I've had a reco suit, racketeering, frivolous reco suit filed against me. I've had ethics charges filed every election cycle. They've all been dismissed by the way.

**DOUGLASS: But you've had your hand slapped a couple of times?**

**DeLAY:** No. I was warned, frankly the Rules Committee violated their own rules, those admonishments, were their opinion about some things going on that are not sanctions, and they're supposed to be kept private. But they broke their own rules.

**DOUGLASS:** But are you saying that you finally decided that you were causing trouble for the party? That's why you left?

**DeLAY:** I had become a liability, yeah, but that's one reason I left. The 2<sup>nd</sup> reason was, I realized that I can be more effective outside the House, in helping maintain the majority and move legislation than being locked down in a reelection campaign in Texas. And this coming election is incredibly important for the future of the country. And then there were personal reasons—my wife and my family has been through enough, and there's no reason to put 'em through it anymore.

**DOUGLASS:** And are you going to miss it?

**DeLAY:** No, 'cause I'm very very involved in other things, things that help drive the conservative cause, help elect Republicans, and I'm sorta enjoying that.

**DOUGLASS:** Are you going to start a movement or an organization?

**DeLAY:** Well, it's too early to tell, I've only been out of, about a month or so, yeah I hope I can build—we, the conservative movement needs more grassroots oriented organizations and I hope I can build a political coalition that can be effective in driving the conservative agenda.

**DOUGLASS:** But you might be the leader of some kind of an organization?

**DeLAY:** Who knows, I've been working with several different organizations, been consulting with a few, working on a book, speaking out and there'll be more of that. And helping Republicans get elected.