

## Welfare Reform

January 5, 2011

Interview #5

*[This interview was conducted via Skype. Both the narrator and interviewer used webcams for video and audio delivery. Scott used a digital voice recorder to record audio from the computer speakers. Letchworth was in her home office in Florida and Scott was in her office in 201 Hart Senate Office Building.]*

**Scott:** Welcome back.

**Letchworth:** Well thank you. Happy New Year to you and your family.

**Scott:** Happy New Year to you and yours.

Last time we ended with a question. I asked you about one of your best memories of your time in the Senate. You were talking about the final passage of welfare reform, and what a long process, but rewarding process that had been. I wonder if you would like to say a little bit more about that.

**Letchworth:** Sure. I think really, if I think about the best memories, that's clearly one. Another one was the passage, and this was with Senator Paula Hawkins [R-FL] that didn't get a lot of fanfare but I think it's a big deal now, and that was the, I'm trying to remember the actual real name of it, the child abduction law, basically setting up that whole hotline and setting up that whole nationwide group system. In different states they call it different things, like Amber's Law. Or the Missing and Exploited Children, basically that act, so that now all the states—well, you know, now all the states all over the country, they talk to each other when a little boy or little girl is missing. It goes on this national database. They have recovered so many kids. That was super, super rewarding too.

And really both, for [audio break] Congress in general working, in my view, the way it's supposed to. There were committee meetings and also private meetings with industry leaders and private meetings with law enforcement. I'm thinking about the missing and exploited children for example, in that case. How does it work? How would it work better? If you could make it work better, what would you, you know, if you had your dream, what would you have at your disposal? Really, the same thing was done in a much larger scale when Senator Dole was creating the welfare reform bill. We talked about how he would have governors come in.

It was funny, I got involved several different times, just sort of by accident, being at the right place, or you might say, wrong place at the wrong time, having to go down and see him because of a floor issue and he would be in with one governor and I would play secretary and move one governor from one room to the other and don't let this governor see this governor because they are not supposed to know they are together, they're not supposed to know they are there. Basically, Senator Dole wanted everybody to think that they had their own—and they did—their own private meeting with him and he had their undivided attention. And they did. He just didn't prefer them to know that five minutes later he was going to do the same thing with another governor and the same thing with another governor. So we played musical chairs and doors, shuffling one governor in and one out. But [that's] the way you are supposed to legislate, the way that Congress is supposed to work. You're supposed to hear from the industries and hear from the people that know or don't know [and] people that have good ideas. Air them and discuss them, have debate on them, all of those. Both of those bills did that. To me they are sort of the "A+" of a way that legislation should pass. A litmus test on how things should be run. I just really enjoyed both of those processes very much. Of course the end result of the bills [was] good too, and that's always helpful.

**Scott:** It seems too, in that process that you just described in terms of hammering out the compromises, it has to be a long process, doesn't it? Just to speak with all those people and to take into account all those opinions, it requires a lot of work.

**Letchworth:** It does. In both of those cases, welfare reform, it was brand new. In other words most of the programs there had never been tried, not on the federal level. Obviously a lot of them [had been] on the state level, that's why Senator Dole picked a lot of them because they worked in various states. But they were new programs. Writing new programs, that's difficult. I notice, and I notice this more and more, I don't know if it's the level of the legislators, I don't know if it's a time issue, I think it's a little bit of both, but the bills they pass now are so vague. They leave them up to the agencies to write the details. You know the old adage, the devil's in the details. That's dangerous.

I remember Nancy Pelosi, and I'm not saying this in a critical way because she was being completely honest, everybody took it as a bizarre statement: "We have to pass the bill to find out what's in it." Do you remember that statement? That was the health care issue. People thought, a lot of people turned that around to mean it's all about not reading the bill. Remember that campaign. Really, she meant it has to be passed and it has to go to the agencies and the agency heads have to write the programs before we know what it's about. That's really what she was saying. And I'm not sure that's what legislators should be doing. Obviously, that's my little opinion.

But going back to those two bills, they didn't just give it to an agency and say "You figure it out." Legislators figured it out. You figured it out from hearing from all sorts of experts and the ones who are in the field and the ones that have been in the field and the ones that have seen things work and not work. It was, and it is, a long process. But you know Kate, isn't that the way Congress really is supposed to operate? They are not supposed to stick their finger in the air and see which way the wind is blowing and react, especially the Senate. Of course the House has a tendency by its design to do that a little more. But then it's supposed to come to the Senate and the Senate is supposed to debate and listen and do all of that. I think that's why both of those come to mind. And they really do bring a smile to my face.

**Scott:** Well we have covered a lot of material over the course of our interview. I want to thank you so much for giving us your time and taking the time out to put this in the record. I have learned a lot. You have added a lot to our collection in terms of filling a big gap that we have in our historical record of the history of the Senate. I wonder if there is anything else you would like to add to our record here? If there is anything else you would like to mention that we haven't had the chance to discuss?

**Letchworth:** I agree that it seems like we have discussed a lot. And it has been a ball for me, Kate. It really has been a blast. To be honest, I'm going to look over the whole thing, but I think you did a great job in posing the questions and I think the combination of the questions and the answers and our back and forth a little bit, I think it did cover an awful lot and I hope it has been, will be, educational for a lot of people. So I'm going to leave it at that. I'm going to leave it at that. And say that it has been a blast and I look forward to reading it and hopefully others will too.

**Scott:** I think they will. Thank you so, so much. You've made the process so easy for me. This is only my second interview and I've learned a lot from you and I feel like we've had a really great back and forth which has been a lot of fun for me too. So thanks again.

**Letchworth:** You are welcome.

## Senate Page Program

March 21, 2012

Interview #6

**Scott:** Welcome back. Thank you for being here.

**Letchworth:** Thank you, it's good to be here.

**Scott:** I wanted to end our interviews by going back a bit to ask you to describe your role in establishing a separate school for the Senate page program.

**Letchworth:** Okay.

**Scott:** How did you get involved in that project and why?

**Letchworth:** The Senate page board used to consist of the secretary for the majority, the secretary for the minority, the sergeant at arms, the secretary of the Senate, police chief, maybe?

**Scott:** Doorkeeper, maybe?

**Letchworth:** I'm talking about the Senate side. The House had [its] own page board. Almost immediately, we're talking about early January of '95, we convened one of these page boards. The first thing I asked was how can we get them separate from the District of Columbia? It was just that we were the redheaded stepchild of the District of Columbia. Not that they didn't want us, but we were this unknown entity that they had to give teachers to. We did our own thing, obviously meeting from 6:30 to 9. We met in the Library of Congress. They didn't have anything to do with us other than they did have to supply us teachers, homework assignments, and whatnot. The curriculum, so to speak, went through them. There was always, I don't want to say a tug of war, because I wasn't a teacher. But it seemed an awkward fit. We had some really smart kids. Believe me, I wasn't one of them, but I can remember being a page and being around some kids that I thought were really "wow" in the wow factor as far as smart. They were running circles around that school. It was a joke as far as—especially when you would talk to them and they would almost chuckle and say, "Boy this is kind of nothing compared to my high school." Then I would hear all the stories of the kids that went back and struggled to catch up. I remember thinking over and over, that's unfair to them. They got an unbelievable experience, as you can imagine, being the page but then to make the catch-up of schooling so hard on them. It seemed unfair. One of the first things that we talked about was how do we get this separated from the D.C. school system formally. They had,

the page school had been accredited by the Mid-Atlantic School District [Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools].

**Scott:** It's an accreditation program?

**Letchworth:** Right. But we never pulled the rip-cord on it. We had continued our accreditation but we hadn't gone solo with them. It was time to do that. We took immediate steps to do that and I want to say by July the dorm was finished. It was revamped completely. Of course, that was the, what was the old funeral home called?

**Scott:** I've forgotten.

**Letchworth:** Of course the page dorm and school is Webster Hall, but the old funeral home on the corner is where they are now. I remember the sergeant at arms really needed funding to really revamp it and really make it into nice dorms and a nice school area. We had the cabinet shop, which was ready, willing, and able to make the beds and the desks and all of that. The funding was a little bit of a problem. He met with Senator Stevens and said, "What do you think of this idea?" Asked me if I wanted to go and [I] said, "Well, if you get stuck with him and you need some backup, I'm happy to go." They went over there and looked at it. I think they made a lunch out of it, went to 116 and the next thing you know, in the legislative appropriations bill was enough money to finish it. I want to say the dedication and everything was the summer of '95, so that the fall of that year was the first year. Ever since then they have had, what you call a headmaster or headmistress, and dorm people that are there all the time—

**Scott:** And security.

**Letchworth:** And security. And it is a curriculum that almost any school could be proud of. They go the extra mile, as you know, to work with the other schools from all over the country, whatever their curriculum is. That's what was always hard, being in the D.C. school system, because the teachers from the D.C. school system are great, but you can't expect them to understand what Idaho needs from you. Or what Utah might need from you, on and on it would go. It was hard for them to meet all of those curricula. This school is designed exactly to do that. I do know it's a lot of communication between the two schools constantly to make sure that the page doesn't fall behind and it's not a problem [for] them when they go back. That was one of the things I was very proud of doing. I was the only former page on the page board. When I said it was necessary, everybody believed it was necessary because it was coming from experience. I don't remember it being that big of a deal. It was the final push and my election as secretary of the majority that ended up helping make that the final push. I do remember a couple of

meetings, one especially in June or July making the last—whatever it took to get it done. As I said, the first year I believe was the fall of '95. The rest, as they say, is history.

**Scott:** It's a wildly successful program.

**Letchworth:** It is. If you think about it, it was almost like the charter school before charter schools were cool. Before they were the thing to do, before the District, for example, glommed on to the idea. Of course we had a little different purpose than just a regular old charter school. I think it's worked out great. From what I understand, the students get a lot out of it. It keeps them on track and their page experience is worth its weight in gold. It turned out to be a good thing all around.

**Scott:** They have such a unique schedule. They really do need a program that is tailored to fit the very few hours that they have to devote to school every day and to keep them up with their own programs back home at the same time.

**Letchworth:** Exactly.

For example, back in the day before it was its own school, for example, I think we talked about in a previous interview where if the Senate was in past 9:30 was the homework rule. If it was in past 10, no school. You had to ask the teacher to give them the extra work, or help them make up the work. Otherwise the work was blown off. Think about it, a D.C. school's teacher wasn't required to come in on Saturday. That's over above and beyond. That was hard to ask and I don't even know if we had the right to ask to be perfectly honest. Just being part of the D.C. school system, why did we have the right to ask a teacher to come in on Saturday and teach 15 or 30 Senate pages, a class that they were ready to teach them in the middle of the week. When it's your own school, so to speak, you can ask the teachers, "They missed three days this week because of crazy Senate sessions. They need a Saturday work day." It's much easier to do it when they are "your teachers," so to speak. So that was another reason that it was clear. The cloakroom staff to some extent would try to do study halls with them when they missed the work, and all of that. But we weren't teachers. The cloakroom staff aren't teachers per se. Study hall is study hall. I don't know if they are studying or not. They could fall behind pretty easily and the teacher not even really know it until they went back home. It solved a lot of problems that the old system inadvertently created and it just seemed to work the best for the kids. So far, it's chugging along and doing well.

**Scott:** As the party secretary were you closely involved in managing the pages? Or does that go to the cloakroom staff?

**Letchworth:** It goes to the cloakroom staff. If it was a disciplinary issue, some of the final disciplinary issues fall to the party secretary. That would mean sending somebody home.

**Scott:** From the program?

**Letchworth:** From the program. A lot of times that was bad grades. A lot of times it was absenteeism that you can't really explain. Why didn't you get out of bed? Why didn't you come to work? How many times could you have a cold? Just typical kid, the dog ate my homework. If someone was doing that over and over again. You know, you talk to the page and you tell them, "You are getting close to being in the bad territory as far as being sent home. You need to shape up. You need to do this." The party secretary is the last straw before they get sent home. In the meantime the cloakroom is the one that monitors it on a daily basis, as far as getting on them. Why didn't you show up for math? You get on them. If you need a higher level, it's sort of like, "When your father gets home he's going to give it to you." That was maybe what the party secretary was supposed to—

**Scott:** It's like the principal treatment. You've talked to everybody else. Did that happen often that you'd have to get to that point with somebody?

**Letchworth:** I'd say a handful of times. You are talking about 15 to 20 kids, four or five times a year, so several hundred. No, in the big scheme of things, no it didn't. But enough to, I clearly remember it. At the end of each quarter the party secretaries got the grades. You could see everybody's grades. If you had the opportunity and somebody's grades were really slipping, you might, when you sent them on an errand, say, "How's the math going?" Just to let them know that you cared and you knew, not to rub it in their face or anything like that.

As you know, these kids are here on their own.

**Scott:** At 16.

**Letchworth:** Right. You also want, in my view, I wanted them to know a lot of people were watching them. Not that they wanted to get away with anything, or get over on anybody, but the more times you let them know that you knew their grades and you knew if they missed school. Plus, you are their boss. You don't want to mess up with your boss, either. You got involved as far as that was concerned. The actual grades and all of that, the teachers took care of that. You got the overall report from them. Sometimes the principal would call and say, "I'm having problems with a certain student.

How is he or she doing at work?" A great worker, or not so good? What's your issue? You might compare notes and find out that there is an issue, there is an underlying problem there. Maybe try to figure it out. But if one is falling down and the other one is doing well. Their work is doing well but their school work is—or vice versa, you try to work it out with the school to try to figure out, how do we improve them both. Because you don't want something really bad to happen to the student as a result of being here. The experience is supposed to be a great experience but they also need to keep up with their school.

**Scott:** Do you know how the lead page is selected every year, or every semester?

**Letchworth:** It used to be selected by the cloakroom as far as his or her work. If she was the most responsible one, had shown the most interest, had shown the most leadership. You also have to take into consideration the way they fit in with the other pages. Do they seem to be the leader of the group? You can tell that. You can tell that, you know, if they are in a recess and they are all sitting in front of you in the cloakroom, who is being the leader and saying "Okay, it's quarter of four. Let's clean up the cloakroom, we need to leave." Who jumps up and does that just out of a leadership role? Or are they all going, "I'm not going to do it, you do it." You can figure it out. That's how it's done.

**Scott:** They are here a few weeks before they are selected?

**Letchworth:** Usually. This happens sometimes, more often than not, they all come together and then you just have to figure out who looks like they can be the leader. Sometimes you don't pick anybody right away until a leader emerges. In my experience, a leader does emerge. Someone feels more comfortable than someone else in the role because they are more comfortable where they are in their point of life.

**Scott:** The House has recently decided to end its page program and we've been hearing a lot about that over here. We've had some questions about whether, as an institution, we could ever [imagine] a time when the Senate may not have a page program. I wonder if you have thought about that. What is the Senate page program to this institution?

**Letchworth:** It's huge. It really is. Even to the senators that are one time removed. They see the history, in my view, they see the history. I think I talked earlier about how it used to be that the senators took more of a personal role. I remember I told you Senator Thurmond would take them in the Senate dining room for ice cream. Senator Helms would always tell us about what it was like being at home. There is still some of



that, even as busy as senators are. The senators get to see them in a pretty personal role, up close and personal because so many of them are on the floor all the time. They see the benefit of the program and how it really is an unbelievable mentoring program. Having been a former page, I'm part of the alumni association and all of that. When the action last August happened, it was catastrophic, as you can imagine. The e-mails flew. We formed a little committee/coalition to try to save the House pages. How can we raise money? Then we saw how firm the writing was on the wall. It was a Speaker [John Boehner] and a [Nancy] Pelosi move. It was in concrete they were going to get rid of it. In my view, yes the House pages, a lot of them were working the cloakroom but because there are 435 of them there isn't this personal of a daily get to know them kind of thing. See them on a daily basis. See them in the lobby, all of that. It was a little easier for them to sever the program than I think the Senate would.

**Scott:** With fewer members it's easier to establish relationships.

**Letchworth:** Sure. To say never say never, I can't imagine. Right now there is still a lot of money invested. A lot of money, that's a relative term. It's very relative. The Senate page dorm is a lot to be proud of. The school is a lot to be proud of. They have got a lot of gold stars going for them. I would hope not, let's just put it that way. I would hope not. And I'll be the first to lobby against that. Are there any sitting senators that are still pages? I think Chris Dodd [D-CT] was one of the last.

**Scott:** I think so, we've had this question recently and I think that's right.

There are still a number of folks around on staff that were pages.

**Letchworth:** And you have House members still, but the House members there would not allow that to happen. But they didn't or couldn't fight the leadership to save their program. I'm not sure there is a sitting senator that was a page.

**Scott:** I don't think so, not anymore.

**Letchworth:** That doesn't mean that the former senators wouldn't come back and fight for the program.

**Scott:** Or even that the current senators wouldn't appreciate the value.

**Letchworth:** That's right. I feel like they do. I know when I was the party secretary, having a page patronage was still a pretty big deal. I know now, talking to Dave Schiappa, that having a page is still a pretty big deal. There are a number of

senators that like that page patronage, that covet the fact that they have that patronage. I think we talked about every senator has some patronage of some sort. They trade it from time to time, when they have need. If they have a need for something else, they'll trade it. It's hard to get them to trade pages a lot of the time. They like the program, they like to establish the program in their office and keep it going year after year, maybe move it around from big high school to big high school in their states. Once they get it firmly established, they like it.

**Scott:** How do they get a page patronage position? Is it seniority, typically?

**Letchworth:** It's seniority. Under Senator Lott in the late '90s he made sure that every Republican senator had some sort of patronage. It used to be that only the more senior ones had patronage. We ended up taking all of those possible jobs and chopping them into enough slots so that every senator had patronage of some sort.

**Scott:** What other types of positions might fall in that category?

**Letchworth:** Doorkeeper, for example, is one. Do they still have elevator operators?

**Scott:** Yes.

**Letchworth:** Elevator operator is one. Those are the key ones. There used to be some post office positions. Not sure they have those now that the post office is not as functional as it used to be. But that, for example, was one. So there were three or four slots where you could put college age, usually college age [people] and the pages are, of course, high school age. As I said, the page slot was a more plum patronage slot. Once senators got it, they tend to keep it. It's also a good way to pay tribute to your constituents too.

**Scott:** It's a great constituent outreach program.

One of the criticisms, or some of the perhaps unfair criticism that was leveled at the page program, is that the folks who serve here tend to be from a privileged group of people, that they have some kind of connection. That hasn't been our experience when we meet the pages. The pages are generally from little town wherever and—

**Letchworth:** And they are the top kid in that town. That could be because they won the Girl Scout prize or the Boy Scout prize. I don't remember it being kids of privilege either. I remember it being kids that excel just because they are good kids. They

are smart kids. They worked hard kids. They were the top Girl Scout or the top Boy Scout, or the 4-H club person. Generally speaking it would be the one that excelled because they tried the hardest. It had nothing to do with their privileged status, generally.

**Scott:** They are stand-outs.

**Letchworth:** They are stand-outs, exactly. I remember one page friend in particular did not stand out at all in his high school. He didn't do anything that was of rock-star status at his age. He knew that Senator Percy's mother lived around the corner and played bridge with his mother. That's the only connection. He wrote her a letter and got in that way. There are all sorts of stories like that. Typically, they are not from pure privileged status. They are not the governor's daughter, or some state senator's daughter. Rarely do I remember them being politically connected at all. Usually it's because they are top of their class in their high school or top of something in their high school, maybe it's for sports, maybe it's for volunteerism.

**Scott:** Did Senator Lott have a page?

**Letchworth:** He gave his page slot to his chief of staff at one point. His chief of staff had a couple of people from their local towns and cities as pages. That wasn't necessarily one from privilege either.

**Scott:** Senator Baker and Senator Dole, did they also?

**Letchworth:** Senator Baker had some pages. I don't remember Senator Dole having pages.

**Scott:** I wondered if that was a tradition for the leader.

**Letchworth:** I don't remember a Kansas page. I hope I'm not forgetting someone really special.

**Scott:** [Laughs] Who is going to be broken-hearted when they read this!

**Letchworth:** I just don't though. He was always very interested in the page program, don't get me wrong, but I don't remember him having a Kansas page, per se. Some of the leadership really wanted their mark on all of those spots and roles. I don't remember Senator Dole thinking that was necessarily a place where he needed to make his mark. However the page program ran, he let it run. However the cloakroom ran, he'd let it run. Some leaders, as I said, would want to make sure a cloakroom assistant was

from their state. Senator Dole, that didn't matter to him. It wasn't as important to him. But for other leaders it was. That's neither a good thing nor a bad thing. That's how they viewed that part of the leadership offices. Technically the floor staff is, in a stepchild kind of way, it is part of their office. I can remember Senator Lott wanted to make sure there was a Mississippian in the cloakroom, which was fine because we had a slot and there were a couple of good people that I had met in his office. It was easy to put a Mississippian in there. As time went on, we had several Mississippians. And then there are some leaders where it doesn't matter to them.

**Scott:** Of the leaders with whom you worked, how many of them took an active role in the page program in terms of mentoring or setting time aside to talk with them? Did they have a chance to do that?

**Letchworth:** They did, and do. I would say all of them in their own way. I think you and I talked about [the fact that] Senator Scott had, because I met him later in his career and because I was page age, although I was a staffer of his, I was page age. He a lot of times in the evening would sit with me and talk to me about what he did as a senator. He liked to talk about China because he was one of the first that started doing those visits. It wouldn't be at all unusual if another page was with me and he'd sit down with both of us.

I can remember Baker talking a lot to the pages. His hobby, as you know, is photography. Senator Baker would come in on weekends and take pictures of the Capitol. If there was a page in the picture he would tell them what he was doing and all of that. Senator Dole, the same thing, talk about farming in Kansas and all of that. Senator Lott too. So they all do because they are around them a lot too. They are one of the senators that are on the floor an awful lot, or in the cloakroom an awful lot. The pages are brushing up against them all day long. They do get to know them, almost a little better than most other senators who aren't on the floor all the time. I would say all of them take an interest. It never took any kind of pushing or prodding to tell any leader that I worked for, "This is the last day of this page group." "Oh, get me their names. And get me a funny anecdotal story." And they'd read it in the *Record*.

**Scott:** Right, you always find at the end of the session a tribute to the pages.

**Letchworth:** And it never took any—it took more prodding to try to get a senator to sit in the chair sometimes than it would to praise the pages and wish them luck and give them the "atta boys." I would have to say without exception that they all took an interest in making sure they had a good time, making sure the program ran well, but also acknowledging them. A lot of times we, meaning the two party secretaries, would carve

out a little period of leader time to make sure that they did do that. Never got a groan. Always ready, willing and wanting to do it.

**Scott:** Did you typically do a farewell celebration or party at the end of the session?

**Letchworth:** Sometimes the cloakroom would do something. It depended on our schedule. If the last day was going to be midnight, crazy hours, no. But if we limped out of session, sure, you would do a little something. We would do cake, cookies, ice cream, in the cloakroom. If it was really late they didn't even want to be in the cloakroom anymore! We'd all seen enough of each other. It just depended. That would be something that you would do. I can remember doing it up in the office sometimes. Try to do it at the end of a summer session sometimes. It depended on the Senate schedule. As the staff you tried to do that at the end of big chunks of time: before the Easter recess, back in the day when they did budgets right before the Easter recess and those last weeks were brutal and vote-o-ramas. You tried to do a little bit of a celebration after that. Maybe before the August recess when you went out, you tried to do something like that. As a matter of fact, the two cloakrooms would sometimes do something together.

**Scott:** Oh, really?

**Letchworth:** Not any big long drawn out thing, but just "Phew. We made it and aren't we glad? What are you going to do for August?" Or, "What are you doing for Easter?" Just compare notes, a way to decompress a little bit. They still try to do that, depending on schedules and how tired people are and sick of being with each other.

**Scott:** Where was your office located when you were party secretary?

**Letchworth:** It's always been in the same room, 337, of the Capitol, which used to be part of the Supreme Court at one point. It's always been that room, literally since the party secretary was created. Once it was separated from the sergeant at arms office, from everything I remember, it's always been in that room. There is a second room, it still has the room number of S-337, but technically it was a second room at one point. It is now the administrative assistant, or the secretary's secretary. That's technically a second room but now it's all one big suite. That got added and I don't know when.

**Scott:** While you were there?

**Letchworth:** No, that had been there since the '70s. Sometime before the mid-'70s that was added in and I can only presume it was a private office and it was too small. Maybe it was a hall closet. It's a pretty small little part of that office.

**Scott:** With the same entrance?

**Letchworth:** Yeah, you go in the same entrance, but there are actually now two entrances. You typically lock the one that goes into the party secretary's office so they have to go through. It in effect now serves as the reception room for the party secretary and that was at one point a separate room. But basically, the Republican party secretary has always had that room.

There were times, especially when Senator Lott first became majority leader, he wanted to do a major room renovation of the Capitol. He had plans on moving a lot of the Capitol space. There were a lot of senators that came in the office and walked off the office space and made recommendations, whether the whip's office should be up there. Or maybe the secretary of the Senate should be up there. There was a lot of jockeying. But when it was all said and done, basically everybody stayed where they were. A few offices changed but basically everybody stayed where they were. I think you probably know they made a pretty nice suite for the chaplain. During that time is when I'm talking about. People eyed the party secretary's suite, but as you know, nothing ever really happened. It was during that time.

**Scott:** Was there pushback and that's why it didn't move forward?

**Letchworth:** I certainly didn't push back. I didn't feel like I had the standing to push back. I did a lot of praying that it wouldn't happen. I would lobby against it, "This is a horrible spot. It takes forever to get up here. It's a really lonely corridor." I can remember sort of tongue in cheek making some remarks about it not being the greatest place to be. But I didn't have any standing to push back. Basically the room maneuvering was going on whether I was able to do anything about it or not. With some luck it didn't happen.

**Scott:** One last question for you. Are there things about the Senate that you miss? You've been out for more than 10 years. It's been almost 11 years now.

**Letchworth:** The camaraderie, but I'm not sure it really exists like it used to. I hear—of course I keep in touch with a lot of old friends—that doesn't exist like it used to. Can you put the genie back in the bottle? I hope so. We have the greatest deliberative body there is. Our form of government is wonderful. It is almost on a self-destructive

mode at times. When you watch it and you think that's not the way it was created. Part of the reason why it self-destructs or doesn't function as well, in my view, is because you don't have that camaraderie. How do you get that back? I know we talked about this. Senator Frist tried it when he was leader and before he was leader, having social dinners. Several senators have tried it over the last decade or two to try to recreate that. Has time taken that away? Have our schedules made that impossible? I don't think anything is impossible. I'd like to see that come back. I miss that, but if I were to come back it wouldn't be there anyway. You really did make some real, true friends. A lot of them are still very good true friends. Not that you can't make true friends now. But the schedule is so hectic, it's so partisan, that you are almost demonized if you do become a friend of the other side of the aisle. Even if it's a function of your children play together. Or your spouses are buddies. You don't want to tell a lot of people. That's a shame. That really is a shame. I would have to say the friendships, the friendships and the camaraderie and the feeling that you are really doing good, for the good of the country. Now I feel like there are a lot of zingers that fly around and there is a lot of "they did good for the party, for the message." But is it good for the whole? I don't know. I think that's what I would like to see if I came back. Or that is what I miss the most but I don't know that that exists anymore anyway.

**Scott:** It's a different institution.

**Letchworth:** It's a different institution and I know the House side is different as a result. Again, how do you put the genie back in the bottle? Cable TV, the 24-hour [news] cycle, all of that, I don't know that you can. These different forms of gangs of six, the bipartisan group of "fill in the blank," they try. It seems like they are able to meet on their own, they are able to do all of that without any criticism but once they go public, they get demonized. So their work product gets demonized before anybody even opens the page on the work product.

**Scott:** It's like the product isn't even the story.

**Letchworth:** The fact that the Gang of Six have been meeting for three weeks behind closed doors. The Democrats have been talking to the Republicans and the Republicans to the Democrats. That must be awful. The product must be awful because they are talking. You're right, the work product barely gets a look. The whole story becomes that they have talked. That's a shame. Do you have something like that [and] then you punt the work product to another group? Maybe that's how you have to try to put the genie back in the bottle. That would be an interesting think tank thing to puzzle through. Surely there are ways to do it. But in the way that the institution is viewed right now, I'm not sure there is.

**Scott:** I want to thank you so much for taking all the time that you have to spend with us to put this in the record. This is a great addition to our collection and you've been such a treat to interview. Thank you.

**Letchworth:** You are quite welcome. It has been wonderful.