

Senator John H. Glenn Oral History Project

Interview 12

Interviewed by Brien R. Williams

Washington, DC

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Abstract: Senator Glenn provides an update about the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee's investigation into campaign finance reform. He expresses frustration about the fairness of the process involved in submitting and voting on subpoenas. To date, the Republican majority on the committee submitted and approved 142 subpoenas, whereas the committee approved only 18 of the 43 submitted by the Democratic minority. Glenn notes how the committee chairman, Fred Thompson, early on agreed with Glenn about using the hearings to gather information in order to formulate legislation that would provide for substantial reforms in campaign financing. Glenn expresses the opinion that Chairman Thompson was being undermined by the leadership of the Republican Party. These leaders see no need for changes in the present system because the Republican Party, at that time, was raising twice as much campaign funding as the Democrats. He provides details about the lack of cooperation received from various Republican Party organizations subpoenaed by the committee, such as the National Policy Forum, Americans for Tax Reform, and the Triad. He notes the lack of documents turned over to the committee by these organizations and how most documents sent in were heavily redacted. He points out the pattern forming when committee staff try to interview people from Republican organizations. A scheduled time for the interview would be cancelled at the last minute. It is his opinion that the committee should issue contempt citations to these organizations if the interviews are not conducted in a timely manner. Glenn discusses how he works with the leadership of the Senate Democrats in devising the minority strategy for the hearings. Many Senate Democrats want to demonstrate their anger over the way the Republican majority is handling the investigations by boycotting the hearings, an option Glenn is against. He details how any contact with the White House regarding the hearings is done through the committee counsel. At present, his main concern is whether or not he can gather the background information needed for the hearings.

Abstracted by Frank Himes