

This is an interview with Claude Pepper, U.S. Congressman from Florida. The interview was conducted in Washington, D.C. by Jack Bass and Walter De Vries on February 1, 1974 and was transcribed by Joe Jaros.

Claude Pepper: . . . my term began on November 4, 1936 and I was in until '51. Then I was out of Congress for twelve years and I came back in '63.

J.B.: Well, during this period since 1948, what has been the major changes that you have seen in southern politics and in Florida politics?

Pepper: Well, along about that time, perhaps a bit before, the South was beginning to revert to the attitude of conservatism which had so long characterized the dominant attitude in the South. While we did have a populist movement back in the early part of the century, it never did take the whole South. It was a sporadic movement which died out pretty soon. But I recall that in '44, in my Senate race, I was a staunch supporter of Roosevelt and the New Deal, and my majority, although I won in the first primary, was considerably reduced over what it had previously been. I attributed that to the growing strength of the combination against labor, the growing conservative attitude, the growing departure from the principles and policies of Roosevelt, especially since Truman, whatever good qualities he had, he had many, as an executive, he wasn't the kind of a political leader who could bring a large volumn of people along with him as Roosevelt could. So, with no dynamic, magnetic personality like Roosevelt to lead in the liberal cause, I noticed even as early as '44 that the trend was developing strongly toward conservatism. And by 1950, there were six . . . I'm speaking of the whole

country now, there were six senior Senators defeated. I was one of them. And the basic issue was National Health Insurance, civil rights, liberal attitudes favoring labor, minimum wage and all that sort of thing. Adequate hospital and medical care for the people, those were things were basically the issues. And of course, the McCarthy stuff was simply the coloration of it. It was an excuse, it was simply a manifestation of that extreme right-wing conservative attitude that was beginning to grow stronger and stronger. And since that time, we have seen more Republicans elected. We have had a Republican governor who turned out to be a failure, but we had a Republican governor, we've got a Republican United States Senator now from Florida. Of course, as early as '28, Florida went for Hoover and Florida has been for the Republican ticket in most of the presidential elections since that time. Not all, I mean that it went for Roosevelt all through his time and I think maybe one time for Truman. But we've seen that growing sentiment of conservatism in the South while some other parts of the country that had been previously Republican, like some of the New England states, have been getting more Democratic. Looks like a lot of the South has been getting more and more Republican.

J.B.: To what do you attribute that Republican development?

Pepper: Well, I don't know. It's kind of hard to figure out. It may be that there is a legacy of a sort of conservatism. Usually, in the past, the conservative cause has been aided by the prejudice of those who opposed any kind of civil rights activity. Any liberal who honestly was a liberal and thereby indicated some appreciation of humanitarianism and exhibited concern for the people, would find himself sooner or later taking a forward looking, I think an American, position on civil rights. As soon as he did that, no matter

what other virtues he had, he aroused an enormous amount of sometimes emotional opposition. For example, I supported civil rights in Florida. I was one of the few, if not the only, southern Senator who did. Men like Hill and Sparkman from Alabama who were here a long time together, they never did anything that favored civil rights. They always participated in filibusters, they always voted against every civil rights bill that came up. They survived as relatively liberal men because they took the locally approved position on civil rights. I didn't do that. So, I had the anti-civil rights people on my neck as well as the anti-labor people and the pro-doctor people and all those other people. And so, that's one of the things. And then I guess that another thing was that due to Roosevelt's leadership, and emphasis on the problems of the South, a lot of our problems have ameliorated. Not solved, ameliorated. The South wasn't in as bad shape as it was when Roosevelt came in, even for awhile there after. So, maybe they didn't appreciate so much the need for a government that tried to provide for the welfare of all the people. I don't know how you account for the conservative attitude or philosophy. What is it that gives men a philosophy? I have never understood why the South, which needs help so much and has profited and prospered so much by the help that it got from the Roosevelt administrations and some subsequent administrations, how the South on anything other than civil rights, even assuming that they might be justified in some respects for taking a very conservative attitude on civil rights, how they could on purely economic issues, take a conservative attitude. And yet right over here on the floor of the House or the Senate, you'll find that a great many, sometimes a very large number, of the southern representatives who will vote no on a purely economic issue. And yet, the South, while it is growing, the level of income is rising, the industries are being added to and all that, I just can't understand why southern representatives so often align themselves against

progress and improvement on purely economic lines.

W.D.V.: Is that attitude changing with the newer freshmen members that are Democrats from the South?

Pepper: I don't know . . . maybe . . . well, I don't know. I haven't seen much change in the new members. Some of the new members . . . we have a new man from Florida, Gunter from Orlando, who is fairly liberal. He's a new first-timer. There should be an improvement in it on the part of the younger people, but I don't know. Maybe they think they can't survive if they take a liberal attitude. And I was the only conspicuous liberal among the southerners, the most, I think. And of course, they finally defeated me and tried to destroy me. One of the campaign finance people of Smathers, who defeated me in '50, told me that he personally received \$700,000 from the Republicans in the North, that they sent down to Florida to use against me, because I was a friend of labor. He spent at least two million dollars altogether. So, maybe a lot of the younger men are fearful of coming out too strongly for the liberal point of view. Because today, it's generally assumed that you can't be too liberal to get elected in the South. It's generally accepted. But I don't know what the reason for it is, I wish that I knew, and I wish that there was something that I could do about it. Because my people have lived in the South every since the early days of the country and I love the South. It's my home. I was born and reared in Alabama. It's been a source of painful regret to me to see the conservative sentiment that there is in the South in the last two years, we had a man, Leroy Collins, who was a liberal governor of Florida, and yet, this man Gurney, whose record has been so tainted by associations of corruption, defeated him by 250,000 votes. In Florida, in the Senate race. It is generally considered that a man who is what they call an "extreme liberal" or really just a good Democrat, would



have difficulty winning a statewide race for the Senate, although Gunter is probably going to have a fair chance in the Senate race that is going on down there now. He is rather liberal in his attitude.

J.B.: How do you analyze the effect of the 1970 elections in Florida, the Chiles victory and Governor Askew's victory?

Pepper: Well, they were both good. Askew made a good impression against a man who took a negative position. He used to be a partner of mine. He took too much of a pussy-footing position and Askew hit upon, he was an honorable man and they wanted integrity, and he hit upon the idea of a corporate income tax, which he courageously presented and that and his own evident sincerity and integrity simply made it appear that he was a better man than the opposition. So, he finally won out, and then in the general election he was opposed by a Republican and there is still a great majority registered Democratic in Florida, and the Republicans are still not going to win the governorship soon, I think. I don't think that Thomas who is running against Askew can possibly win. To beat Askew. Chiles . . . Chiles did defeat Cramer, who is a very right-wing Republican. Because he was a conservative in legislation and while he started off here liberally, he swung back right away to a more conservative position, because he began to get repercussions from Florida, they tell me. But he attracted by the gimmick of walking a thousand miles, as he is supposed to have done, that gimmick sort of attracted attention and he hit upon that gimmick. And then, he's got a pleasant way about him, he's been in the state senate. He beat Farris Bryant, which was a good thing. He was a very conservative Democrat. He had been governor, but when he ran for the Senate, Chiles beat him badly. But that was a case where it looked like . . . obviously they two better men, I thought, and it happened they were the more liberal men. While

Askew is no flaming liberal in the sense of the word, he would be the first one to assert it, he did take a liberal position on school busing and on the corporate tax, which is something that somebody should have done long ago. But on a lot of other things, he's not too liberal. So, he's been able to give an image to the people of integrity and responsibility and honor and reasonably liberal, but not too liberal to excite too much bitter opposition. And his personal image has aided his political situation a great deal.

J.B.: Did you grow up in north Alabama?

Pepper: No, I grew up in east-central Alabama, I was born in Chambers County on the eastern border of Alabama, not far down below West Point, Georgia. Up above Opelika, Alabama about twenty-five or thirty miles. And then I grew up from ten years old on up until college age, in fact, later than that, at Camp Hill, a little town of 1800 population on the Central Pacific Georgia Railroad a hundred and seven miles below Birmingham and twenty-five above Opelika, about twenty miles north of Auburn College. That's where I grew up. My father was born in east Alabama, my mother in south Georgia. Her family moved to east Alabama a good many years before the Civil War.

J.B.: Well, did your own liberal instincts come out of populist tradition in that area?

Pepper: Well, I just don't know why my philosophy developed. I think that it . . . I didn't have any near relatives in politics, except that my father ran for deputy sheriff one time, and chief of police, a farmer and a merchant, all of that, but he never did succeed very much in politics. I didn't have any other near relatives, except an uncle who was superintendent of public instruction in a south Alabama county. But I, from early days, had an aptitude toward politics. When I was in grammar school, I was president of the Heflin Literary

Society and then later on, I was editor-in-chief of the Camp Hill Radiator, the little magazine that we put out. Then, I went to Dothan, Alabama and taught school for a year when I was seventeen years old, that would have been in the early days of the war. And then I took an interest in BYPU and was president the following year and my first year in college, I was president of the Alabama BYPU. Then at college, the University of Alabama, I was a member of the executive committee from the freshman class, my first year. Later on, I represented the University on the debating team and at the Southern Oratorical Contest at Chapel Hill, North Carolina. I ran for president of the student body in my last year. My third year, I took the course in three years and one summer. And fortunately lost. And then I went to Harvard Law School and I was president of the Beal Law Club, one of the law clubs at the law school. Then, I went to the University of Arkansas and taught law for a year and then moved to Florida, to Perry, Florida, down below Tallahassee. And I hadn't been there quite three years when I was elected to the Florida legislature, the house of representatives. And then I was named to the state Democratic executive committee. Then I was defeated for re-election there in 1930 and moved to Tallahassee and in '34, I ran for the U.S. Senate against an incumbent Senator, lost by 4,050 votes. They stole it from me, but I didn't complain about it. Two years later, both Senators died, in '36. I first announced against the one that I had previously opposed and when the other one died, I switched over, I made an effort for his seat, and no one ran against me in the primary or general election. So, I was nominated and elected when I had just become 36 years old, to the United States Senate. So, when I came here, I had taken a liberal position in my first campaign for the Senate in '34. My first plank in my platform was for federal aid to education. And my people were relatively poor people and I had a deep

sympathy for the problems of the South, I knew something about those problems. I worked in a steel mill one summer at Ensley, Alabama and I did some summer work on the farm and all that. But I still, in '38, participated in a filibuster here against an anti-lynching bill in the Senate. Because I thought that a Senator from the South had to do that. But instead of talking about pot-likker and reading the Bible and so-and-so as a filibuster, I talked about the economic conditions of the South. And I said, "If you people from the North would help us to improve our economic position in the South, we wouldn't have so much of this problem that you are trying to deal with in this way now." But from then on, that was in '38, from then on, I never again participated in a filibuster. I voted for every resolution of cloture. I voted everytime to include the rules to prevent a filibuster. I voted for every civil rights bill that came up. So, I guess that I came probably under the spell of Roosevelt more than anything else. I was groping for . . . well, my first speech in the Senate, June 17, 1937, they had up an appropriation bill for the relief administration. And I got up late one afternoon and made my speech and it was a liberal speech. One of the things that I pointed out was that in every period of the past, whenever there were problems to be met, there was somebody raising the red flag of danger and saying, "you can't afford to do that." Or, "we musn't do that." And I said, "But the progress of humanity has been achieved by those who have said, 'let's go ahead.'" And so on. And so, Bob Wagner came to me the next day, Senator Wagner from New York, and said, "Pepper, I was down to see President Roosevelt this morning and he said, 'What sort of fellow is young Pepper who made that speech yesterday afternoon in the Senate?'" And he said, "Well . . . (inaudible) and he said, "Well, I knew that he was here, but . . . tell him to come down and see me, I would like to talk to him." And that had caught his eye, the idea that a new Senator from the South would get up and make that kind of a speech.

And I got into a colloquy with Bailey from North Carolina. And I got the laugh on him a time or two, for which he never forgave me. But anyway, I have grown generally, I grew more liberal as I grew older. Whereas, it is just the opposite here in most instances. Men like Pat Harrison came here as a great liberal and wound up as a great conservative. A noble man and my dear friend, but that's what happens. And that's what generally happens here. But I happen to have gone in the other direction, I don't know just why, except that I just saw what the colossal problems and needs of the people were in so many areas, education, health and job training and housing and all the things that have to do with the amenities of life. And I didn't know any area where was this potential aid equivalent to the federal government. This was a great country and if we could get the federal government behind it . . . you see that statue right on my desk, that's a Samothrace, the Winged Victory, given me by the Lasky Foundation with a ten thousand dollar honorarium for being the author of five bills for setting up institutes in the national institute of health, like heart and different ones, heart and a whole lot of others. So, I saw all those needs and here was a great government that had a power to help and it seemed to me that there was a place to turn if you wanted to do anything. As I often said, I didn't have any money, I couldn't be a Rockefeller or a Ford, but if I could get the United States Government behind it, I could do things even more than they could do. And so my ideas, the best thing that I could do to explain it is that just by having a conscience that was concerned, about the problems, turned to what seemed to me to be a ready source of aid. Now, if you want to call that liberalism, that's what it was.

J.B.: Were you defeated the same year as Frank Graham?

Pepper: Yes, that same year.

J.B.: Who else? Were there any other southern liberals?

Pepper: Well, first, there was Scott Lucas, the majority leader of the

Senate, the Democratic leader was defeated. Next, the Democratic whip, Francis Myers of Pennsylvania. Next, Miller Tidings of Maryland, who was chairman of the armed services committee and a World War I hero. Next was Elmer Thomas of Utah, the chairman of the education and labor committee. That was Elbert Thomas. Next was Elmer Thomas of Oklahoma, who was chairman of the agricultural sub-committee of the senate appropriations committee. And then I was the sixth. I had fourteen years seniority and all the rest hadn't much more than I. And that was in addition to Frank Graham and Helen *Cahoyan* Douglas. Frank Graham told me, you know, he came within 5,000 votes of winning the nomination within the first primary over Smith. Smith was undecided as to whether he was going to call for a second primary or not. Then my election occurred in Florida where all the power of money and reaction and McCarthyism were embodied in a tall, handsome, clotheshorse kind of a fellow, Smathers. As unscrupulous as Nixon. And with the McCarthy coloration and all, and a whole pile of people, they had a New York public relations firm, the best that money could buy and like I said, he had almost unlimited money to spend. They created an animosity against me. Frank said that within a week after my election, or ten days at the outside, ten days after my election, a lot of that same crowd moved right up into North Carolina, that had been working against me. He said, in ten days, they had made him out such a monster that his friends would hardly speak to him. A man that had been a strong supporter ten days before would shy away from him ten days later. Civil rights, all those things, they turned them up into communism, you see. So, that was one of the great tragedies of that year. Nixon, of course, made that same kind of an old campaign that he has always made, a prejudicial, viscious campaign, relating Helen *Cahoyan* Douglas to . . . what was her name, the communist in New York . . . Marcantonio. Everytime that Helen would vote for housing or



health care, and if Marcantonio voted that way, he'd say, "See, he's a known communist and she voted right with him." There was that guilt by association thing, you see. So, there were eight, including Helen and Dr. Graham, there were eight defeated that year. Six of us were senior Senators.

J.B.: In your case, you felt that it was your pro-labor attitude that really generated the money that was behind it.

Pepper: Pro-labor, pro-civil rights, and pro-medical care, pro-national health insurance. That was one of the most formidable oppositions that I had. Because I had every seat but one, and I spoke out for national health insurance, that's it. And the doctors just formed an army against me. They had plenty of money. The American Medical Association levied an assessment of \$25 on every doctor who was a member of the American Medical Association to use against me and Jim Murray in that campaign. And in Florida, it was reported to me by several associates, that the doctors agreed that they would devote the first three minutes of every patient call to talking against socialized medicine and Claude Pepper. And I know that a few doctor friends who did support me dared not let it be known among the profession that they did. They just hid the literature and didn't distribute it as they were expected to do. But they didn't dare refuse to receive it, so those were the main influences, and money . . . .

J.B.: Was civil rights the biggest issue insofar as being used against you as an issue with the voters?

Pepper: Well, I had voted the year liberally on . . . I had introduced the first poll tax bill and then there was an error that I should have caught in the Congressional Record. These reports are not nearly perfect. Where it said that I introduced the first SEPT bill, that's what it said in the record and I

just checked it and didn't change it. I had introduced the first civil rights bill, which was the anti-poll tax, that I introduced and fought for in the Senate. But I did not introduce the SEPT bill, however, I did vote for whatever liberal bills that came along. And then one of the things that was just ready made for them , in 1946, at Madison Square Garden, when Henry Wallace and I were speaking before the Committee for the Independent Arts, Sciences and Professions headed by Joe Dickinson, the sculpture . . . they held a meeting, and I was requested to go there by the Democratic Committee. Well, nevertheless, Wallace spoke, he was at that time still Secretary of Commerce under Truman. But he and I were sitting outside the hall talking and the photographer came up and said that he would like to take a picture. There was the wife of one of the actors that was one of the supporters of that meeting, anyway, several of us who were on the program were asked to stand together to have a photograph. Well, Paul Robeson was on the program, too. It was really, to say . . . he might have said something, because, you know, he was a pronounced liberal. In those days, and later on he came to be definitely associated with communism. So, they called Paul Robeson and told him to come over and join in the picture. Well, as luck would have it, they put him right by me. Well, I could have kept out of the picture, I knew right away that that would be used against me very heavily in my campaign. But I just didn't quite have the stomach to walk out of a picture just because a black man was in the picture, so I didn't do it. They took the picture. Later on, Paul Robeson became much better known as an associate of communism, he had been to Russia and so on. By the time that my '50 campaign came along, here was a ready made picture with, not only a "nigger," which would have been bad enough in North Florida, but with a "nigger communist." At a time when Smathers was using the McCarthy type of smear campaign against me,

with being a communist anyhow. And they put this whole entire picture of me standing beside . . . they cut all the rest of the people out, they just had me standing right there beside Paul Robeson. And then, in the campaign, they had it arranged . . . I didn't have but two daily papers in the state supporting me, the St. Petersburg Times and the Daytona Beach News-Journal, all the papers, like the Orlando Sentinel, which was one of the most vicious against me . . . when I would speak, they would try to get a Negro to come up and shake hands with me. Or when I would go through the line of people, I'd get down off the platform and shake hands with them, as soon as I shook the hand of a Negro, why (claps hands) there would be a flashlight bulb burst. The picture in the paper the next day would be of me shaking hands with a Negro. One night at Leesburg, Florida, I spoke, they built a platform out in the public park for me, and that night the National Guard happened to be drilling, but they finished the drill and were standing around with a lot of other people hearing me speak. Well, as soon as the speaking was over, shortly after the speaking was over, why some of my friends told me that a black man walked up just while I was still speaking and took the position right near the bottom of the steps leading up to the platform. Well, there was gracious space there and every body wondered why was this black man walking up there next to the steps leading up to the platform? While I was still speaking. So, it turned out that what had happened was, that a man in a sports red car with the top down, as he described it, had come to this man who was a janitor in a theater right down the street and told him, "I'll give you \$25 if you will go up there to where Pepper speaks tonight, get up near the steps leading to the platform before he finishes and just as soon as he finishes, you rush right up on the platform and shake hands with him. And you hold his hands until the flash bulb burst and then you turn around and come on back down here and we'll be watching, we'll give you \$25." Well, he never got to carry it

out because some of my friends suspected something and they walked up to him and said, "What are you doing here?" Well, pretty soon, he caved in and told us exactly what had been proposed. I had an affidavit made by a local circuit judge before whom they brought this black man and he made a statement under oath that that was what they had attempted to do. That was the typical kind of thing that they used against me in the campaign. And my voting record, generally favorable to civil rights, of course, and my picture with Robeson and all these other black people's pictures, it was just said that "he's a friend of the niggers," that's it.

J.B.: How do you feel about it now, looking back on your voting record and what it cost you compared with other southern liberals who compromised on civil rights and compromised on other liberal positions, liberals who later ended up being conservatives? Would you rather have gone that route, looking back on it, or . . . .

Pepper: Well, as I look back on it, I don't know . . . the question mark always arises in one's mind if he has had an unhappy experience as to whether he could have avoided it or not. I could not have avoided what I did and been the man I was and the man I hope I am. A man having some regard for principle and for the black polity. Now, it has many tragical personal aspects. I would have become chairman of the foreign relations committee in the Senate within about two years of the time I was defeated, if I had been returned to the Senate. And would have served longer in that position than any man in the history of the country. Fulbright now has, but I would still have been chairman if I had remained in the Senate. And if I had trimmed my sails, way back there, I don't know how far back I would have had trimmed them, nor how much. At least Hill and Sparkman survived, as I said, because they never voted for civil rights, they always participated in the filibuster. They never came out for national

health insurance. I did. They never came out for minimum wage, I did. I've got a cartoon out there on my wall showing the sprinkling of Pepper over the transom door of the rules committee in 1938 and the minimum wage bill coming out of the door below. Because I made an issue and I've got a picture here, they have it framed, my picture is on the front of Time Magazine with my little red *vest* and underneath the picture it says, "A Florida fighting cock will be a White House weathervane." And that meant here was a southerner making an issue of minimum wage, fighting for it and winning. And they said that immediately after my primary victory, which was nationally acclaimed, why they filed a petition to discharge the rules committee that was blocking the consideration of the minimum wage bill, and they flocked up to sign it, which was attributed to the fact that a southern Senator could win on that issue. Although I had a bitter campaign, a former governor ran against me, Mark Wilcox, who was an able Representative, left the House to run against me, and I had two or three other nondescript fellows. Incidentally, Joe Kennedy, who while he was Ambassador to the Court of St. James, at whose embassy we were having dinner one evening, my wife and I in '38, said to me down the table, "Claude, if I had known that your winning your election down there this last spring was going to make that man in the White House go crazy so nobody could tell him anything, I never would have supported you." He had given me a \$2500 contribution. So, it apparently heartened President Roosevelt to believe that he could go ahead with his program. Now, I could have been somebody else, I wouldn't have been Claude Pepper as I am now, as I have generally been known. Everyday, I see somebody from all around over the country that says, "My father remembers you. I remember you . . . I was always a booster of Claude Pepper." Well, it was because people thought that I fought for things that I thought were right

[NEXT PAGE IS 17]

for the country. So, you always have the problem as to whether you ever fight for anything. You know, if you are ever going to have a battle, you've got to have somebody that's got to be up in front. Now, they may not last through the battle, but somebody has to be a part of the advance. And, I reckon that I just had to pay the price of losing what could have been a long Senate career, because I did have some convictions and principles. Maybe I was foolish enough to try and stand by them, I don't know. But taking it all in all, I will let the record stand as it is. And I suspect that if I had it all to do over again, I would do exactly what I did before. I would hope that the vicious forces that defeated me and many others of liberal disposition might succeed again as they did then. And I can see now that I could have run a better campaign, but the trouble was that I didn't have much money. I had \$200,000 and Smathers had two million. That actually put me at a great disadvantage. And then I waited too late. Frankly, they caught me by surprise with the blitzkrieg that they put on. It was like the German blitzkrieg in World War II. It was a massive effort where they coordinated the Republicans, the reactionaries, the anti-labor people, the doctors. Then, they stirred up a lot of emotionalism about the communist issue, all that and then resorted to every devious trick tactic. This Dick Banner that has been involved in giving \$100,000 to Bebe Rebozo was Smathers campaign manager against me. A former FBI man and they had two FBI men shadowing me from the first part of the year, right on up through the campaign. It just happened that I found out one day that they had tapped my telephone. All the time. Everytime that I went to a hotel, they would bribe the telephone operator to tell them all about my telephone . . . to let them in on all my telephone conversations, and if I lay down for a nap or something, to tell them that, "He's napping right now, but he left word to call him in twenty minutes or something like that."



That sort of thing went on throughout the whole campaign.

J.B.: You say FBI men, do you mean former FBI . . . .

Pepper: I mean former FBI men, yeah.

J.B.: How do you view the state of politics in Florida at this time?  
And what direction do you see it heading?

Pepper: Well, Miami is . . . Dade County is the most liberal county in the state, I guess. While I always say that my hometown of Leon, where I lived up until '52 and then I moved to Miami, the liberal . . . some reasonably liberal candidates like Askew have been elected to state office, the cabinet . . . but right now in the Senate race, it's generally believed and regretted by a good many of his friends, that Pettigrew, the former speaker, is going to be regarded as too liberal by the people in central Florida, which is very conservative. And by north Florida, which is basically Democratic, but they vote Republican in general elections and presidential campaigns and is pretty conservative in its voting pattern. Generally speaking, you see, you've got a large Republican vote in Florida now. All the way up the east coast, after you pass Miami, it's basically conservative. Palm Beach is largely Republican, although Paul Rogers has to vote very conservatively to remain a representative from that area. In the Florida delegation here, we've got eleven Democrats and four Republicans. Among the Republicans, of course, none of them is a liberal, Bill Young from St. Petersburg and Burke from Ft. Lauderdale and Bafalis from Palm Beach and there's another one somewhere, there are four of them . . . none of them, of course, is a liberal. Among the Democrats, about the only liberals are Gibbons of Tampa, Fascell of Florida, he's just south of me, Pepper and Lehman. There are four of us who generally vote pretty liberally, usually vote together most of the time. The rest of them all vote . . . like Sikes and Fuqua and Chappell and Rogers and all of them generally vote very conservatively. Because Haley, his county . . . the southwest coast of Florida, Bradenton, Sarasota and Ft.

Myers, I used to carry all that in the early days as a Senator. It was a good liberal Democratic area, now it's Republican. If Haley gets out, it is generally assumed that no other Democrat can win, because he has voted very conservatively. And he was married to a Ringling, so he can stay in, I guess, as long as he wishes. But basically, I would say that Florida is conservative today, with liberal spots like Dade County. But it is very difficult for Dade County people to get elected statewide to a governor's office. We haven't heard of anybody getting elected statewide to a governorship from there. We do have two men in the cabinet, two Jewish fellows, Shevin and Stone. Stone is secretary of state and Shevin is attorney general. And Stone is now running for the United States Senate, for the Democratic nomination. I guess therefore, you would describe Florida as a relatively conservative state now.

J.B.: You said that Chiles has gotten more conservative since he has gotten up here?

Pepper: Yes. Chiles . . . you see, he won his race largely on his walking and that was the great projection. And he pussyfooted . . . I don't mean that he pussyfooted, but he didn't take any extreme position in anyway on anything. So, he sort of took a middle of the road position and he beat Cramer and he beat Bryant. But as I said, he started off here a little bit liberal and he got a repercussion apparently, or thought he did, from home, and he switched back, as a lot of the columnists pointed out. Switched back to a very much middle of the road position in his voting record. So, I don't know. I would suppose that a man with money who takes more or less the middle of the road position will have more or less the best chance of winning the Senate nomination.

J.B.: Could I ask you just one more quick question?

Pepper: Yes, go ahead.

J.B.: That's this, and I think that you . . .

Pepper: I'm afraid that I haven't helped you very much . . . .

J.B.: There's a theory that a lot of Republicans in the South are people who were native southerners who benefited economically from basically New Deal programs, improved their economic status and then switched to the Republican party. Do you . . . .

Pepper: That's right.

J.B.: You agree with that?

Pepper: That's right. There's a man who is president of the state senate now, who is now a Democratic candidate for Congress. He supported Nixon in '68. And probably in '72. Now he is a candidate for the Democratic nomination. I don't believe that he ever switched over and registered as a Republican, but you are right . . . .

(End of side A of Tape)

Pepper: . . . .everytime that we delay doing it, we are just condemning that many more people, many of them to death or ill health or no happiness in their life.

(tape speeded up)

Pepper: . . . there's a full page ad in the Miami Herald that helped it. The caption was, "Early in his administration, President Kennedy urged Claude Pepper to get back into public life." Matter of fact, it was written with that intent, we sort of fixed it up a little bit . . . .

(End of Interview)