

## Earl Blumenauer Interview on Governor Vic Atiyeh

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Interviewer: James Moore, Pacific University Professor

Note on the text: This transcript was made through AI in 2025 with some manual corrections. We recommend checking this text against the audio recording before quoting the speakers, as it may contain errors.

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James Moore 0:00

So, this is going to be recorded and go eventually into the Atiyeh archives at Pacific. So, first of all, a little bit of... we kind of walked in the same area, even though you're older than I am. No, when you first came on the scene in '69 [Blumenauer: basically] the person who was carrying the 19-year-old bill was Don Stathos. And Don Stathos is a good friend of my family. And his daughter and I grew up together. And so, my dad was elected county commissioner, Republican county commissioner, in Jackson County in '74 and that's right when the Don Stathos' bike ways were being put in. And so we'd go out with Don and my dad. My dad bicycled to work every day. And so it was just kind of, you know, reading that, it's like, oh, well, there you go. Isn't that fun?

Earl Blumenauer 1:00

Wow. Who is your father?

James Moore 1:02

Tim Moore, he was the anchorman at KOB1 and then county commissioner, and then when Jimmy Carter got rid of federal funding for abortions, he and the other two female members of this county commission voted to have the county pay that, and so he was defeated in the Republican primary. So, it's a small world in many, many ways as we get into this.

Earl Blumenauer 1:31

Well, I was just down in Southern Oregon, and did a bike ride from Ashland up at and just had those memories flooding through because Don, I worked with, with Don in '71 on the ratification of the 18-year-old vote, yeah. I mean, he was active in '69, but in '71 he played a key role in in the ratification, and then he got screwed being left out of the voters pamphlet when he ran for state treasurer just in Multnomah County, where most of the Republicans in the state live, regardless, and the ones who'd be most likely to vote for him, and I'm convinced that he was there, I think he would have won the primary against Craig Bergman, and I think he would have been very competitive in the race for state treasurer.

James Moore 2:58

Other thing is looking at your Lewis and Clark self, the media coverage of you, I am in charge of the Marshall Scholarship, big scholarships like that, not Rhodes, but the other ones, the Truman, the giant one. And we get a lot of students who want to do it, but the ones who make it are the ones who take it upon themselves to be active in the public sphere. And so when I read that you were a member of the City Club, there's a step I don't see many students taking these days. You know, taking on the statewide things. We have people who do that. They tend to be kind of more politically ambitious than good on the topics. And so just seeing that, it's like, you know, I would have written you a letter for the Marshall, no problem whatsoever. But it's a rare thing to see.

Earl Blumenauer 3:53

Is there a statute of limitations? [Both laugh.]

James Moore 3:56

We can do that. Okay, so when you were doing the 18, 19, year old voting, did you run into Vic at all, or was he just one of the members in the background? Was he opposing you?

Earl Blumenauer 4:13

I mean, well, the ratification of the 18-year-old vote was intensely partisan in the state senate, was a partisan in the house, I mean, but luckily, there was, even though it was controlled by Republicans. There are Republicans that would stand up to Bob Smith, Don Stathos, being one. And I suppose we could tell stories about the ratification of the house where Smith allowed our bill to come to the floor because he had enough written commitments that would be defeated. Except, there were some people who reneged, like Bud Byers, from who is then from Albany, and Bob and Ellie. We passed it. Bob Smith never recognized Bud Byers. For the rest of the session, he'd be bouncing up and down. "Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker." I suppose at some point he got it, but almost never, if there's any choice, he wouldn't do it. Yeah, so it passed, went to the Senate. The Senate, you'll recall, that was the year that there was a 15-15 tie.

James Moore 5:37

And the coalition, kind of its last gasp.

Earl Blumenauer 5:41

It was the very last gasp of the coalition with Debbs, Potts and John Burns. So John, after a 16-day stalemate, magnanimously agreed he'd break the tie for himself. And the Democrats wouldn't elect him, so he got 15 Republicans to go along, 14 Republicans in Debbs. That was it infuriated the Democrats, because they were 16-14, but Debbs still played the coalition stuff, and they were dead locked, and Vic was not on our side and o there's this big deadlock on this, and we had the votes, but the coalition wasn't going to allow it to be voted on, and Vic was part of this leadership. They just didn't want it to happen. And that was back when the governor had to physically be in the state to be governor, and when you left the state, the senate president became governor. Tom McCall was in New York or someplace, John Burns became governor. So one of the things Burns and Debbs Potts did is just kind of throw a bone to the Democrats, and got fried, they allowed Harry Boivin to be speaker, be president pro tem. Do you know the story?

James Moore 7:36

No, I don't know the story of it, and I know all the names.

Earl Blumenauer 7:39

So we're having a hearing, and Harry "The Fox" Boivin was Chair of State and Federal Affairs, where the committee was, where the bill had been referred, and there weren't enough votes to get it out. And they just, you know, they bring it up. They'd rail they had this big hearing, and we were kids, and everybody in the back of the room, and I think Harvey Akinson said, "If I were Senate president, you know, I'd fix this committee." And the words are kind of in the air, and people realized actually Harry's Senate president because John's governor, and so they yanked Betty Brown and somebody else appointed him to the committee and kicked it to the floor. All hell broke loose, not just because the voting age, which they were incensed about, but they were just thinking about what damage could the Democrats then do with a 15-14 majority in the State Senate and Harry Boivin as Senate President in terms of reconstituting committees, moving bills. And it was, it was great. Anyway, he was on the wrong side, and it disappointed me, because I thought he was... we had lots of Republican support for the concept of the voting age, but Vic was a conservative true to his principles, you know, but I actually campaigned pretty aggressively against him in '74, I was running for re-election. Keith Burns was then the state senator. Was it Keith Burns and then Phil Lang, and so we did a great big joint mailer to everybody in southwest and southeast Portland, all these Democrats and Republicans that just [eviscerated?] Vic for being on the wrong side of workers comp, of money for widows and orphans. I mean, all of the things, sometimes he was, you know, he was one of four votes against, but he was very principled. And even if it wasn't popular, he stuck to

his grounds, but we helped remind lots of voters in '74 about that. He was cranky with me for a while after that.

James Moore 10:36

Yeah, there are several stories, even from within his own family, of things can be frosty for a couple of years.

Earl Blumenauer 10:44

But it ended up... because he was somebody you could work with. He was conservative, but not, you know, out there, and he was a nice guy.

James Moore 11:00

So when you are elected, you get a great assignment on the Revenue Committee, which is pretty darn cool for a first time person. Every member of the legislature I've talked to who was able to get on the revenue committee first or second term said it was the best thing that ever happened to him. So Vic is a tax guy, et cetera. So were you working with him, or was it a committee, then having to negotiate with the Senate? How did that really work?

Earl Blumenauer 11:31

The defining revenue issue that session was school finance. And that was obviously a huge interest of mine, deeply involved. The session convened with... that last school year, there had been a number of school districts that started the school year without an operating budget for the year, they were going down. It was just extraordinarily frustrating. McCall decided that he's going to make this a signature issue on his way out the door, there was land use, but... So there's the McCall plan. Our committee, a fascinating group of people, I sat next to Sam Johnson, for instance, I mean great guy, who actually we agreed with on a lot of these things, and ended up being a big supporter of mine, and we were dear friends till he passed on. Howard Cherry chaired the committee and former Portland school board member, deeply conscientious and deadily dull, but thoroughly knowledgeable about every detail. We had Vern Cook in the Senate, chairing the revenue committee, if memory serves. Kind of a loose cannon. Behind his back, you would hear people calling him Vernon Kook, but himself pretty knowledgeable. Big tussle in terms of getting this thing put together, and Vic was on the other side. I mean, substituting property tax with income tax, making it progressive, limiting the amount of federal tax that could be deducted. I mean, it was complex, modestly controversial. Got shot down. Vic was on the other side. I remember... no, it was Stafford Hansell I debated out in Forest Grove. I think it was at Pacific on the McCall plan, but he was the voice of the loyal opposition, and he won a fair amount of money against it and just skepticism. But I didn't work with him at all, and, you know, it was part of where we just had different political objectives and why I campaigned against.

James Moore 14:57

Exactly. Other big thing in '73 is Senate Bill 100, so what did you see there to tell you that when it finally passes -- and a thing that I completely forgotten, Scoop Jackson and [Stewart] Udall are trying to put together a national land use plan looking at it, saying, "I'll be darned." So at one point, McCall, representing McCall, and Vic, representing the legislature, went back to testify before the committee. And this is the trip where Tom McCall said to Vic, "You know, I've never liked you."

Earl Blumenauer 15:44

And what did Vic testify?

James Moore 15:46

Well the thing had passed, so it was explaining how the system worked,

Earl Blumenauer 15:54

Yeah, but I'd be fascinated to see what that was.

James Moore 15:57

Yeah, I'm trying to dig up exactly when it happened, but what Vic remembers is, Tom would say stuff, and then Vic would have to correct him, because Tom didn't know diddly about the details. [Blumenauer: No.] So it was just one of those very interesting things.

Earl Blumenauer 16:12

Well, and that was part of Vic's strength. And I think part of what irritated him about Tom McCall is that Vic knew the material. I mean, you may not agree with where his knowledge led him, but he knew his stuff, and I can see him correcting McCall, on Senate Bill 100. McCall would have been the last person I would have sent back there for the state. But by the same token, McCall didn't know anything about the McCall tax plan, and Dick [or Vic?] knew his stuff. So that's interesting. Oh, that's a great little factoid.

James Moore 16:56

Yeah, just fascinating.

Earl Blumenauer 16:59

Well, the Jackson foundation went on. The Jackson foundation that was established by his wife gave grants to land use advocates, primarily in the Northwest. They did some stuff here and there. It's quite progress. Scoop was quite progressive at that, on so many things, if he just could stay away from the war in Vietnam.

James Moore 17:33

So were you in the middle of that fight over land use, or were you just second term...?

Earl Blumenauer 17:41

Well, I was vice chair of the State and Federal Affairs Committee in the House. We had some modest role, theoretically, but this is one thing that Les AuCoin, who was the House Majority Leader and Pacific persona, chaired the state and federal Affairs Committee, and we had interest in this stuff, but it was quite clear that Ted Halleck would kill anybody who changed one comma. That makes perfect sense. And so there was a lot of talk, but the House of Representatives really didn't do a deep dive. Now, in retrospect, I'm not certain that that was the best strategy, because there wasn't broader buy-in and ground proofing. And so we were fighting land use in the '75 session, in the '77 session, and I was gone by '75. We had three ballot measures, and leading, not inconsequentially, to one of the untold stories about the Oregon Land Use system, where Vic Atiyeh rode to the rescue. And I'm looking forward to reading your book to find out about stuff that I'm sure I hinted I had suspicions but didn't know, but I just profoundly respected Vic as governor, stepping up for something that wasn't his baby and that he had some skepticism, but he made it possible for it to survive.

James Moore 20:01

Well, the skepticism is interesting, because he was skeptical, and that's part of his principles. But he was in favor of land use planning in a big way. It's just how you get there was the key thing.

Earl Blumenauer 20:16

He was involved with Measure 10 in '69, which was moving it in that direction.

James Moore 20:25

And the reason he was in favor of it is because the Atiyeh family had a farm basically, where the Fred Meyer is on TV Highway coming up to that weird, funky intersection that's got like, five roads coming together, Scholls Ferry comes down, and things like that. And then they sold the farm, and all the brothers moved up the hill. They looked right in the neighborhood, right up the hill. And he had watched that little two lane country road turn into a four lane highway with strip malls for miles and he thought that was the worst thing in the world.

Earl Blumenauer 20:26

And why do you think he was not more positive and engaged in Senate Bill 100?

James Moore 21:15

You know, at the time, because later it becomes it has to work, because it's part of making it so that we can get investment in this state. That's why he rides to the rescue, cleans up the implementation at the local levels, you know, all that kind of stuff. He sees it as part of an arc that includes that, getting rid of the unitary tax and visiting all the countries of the world to try to get investment here, it's same thing, but at the time, he looks out there, and as far as I can tell, he wasn't asked about this specifically, and I didn't find out about it until after he died, really, as far as I can tell, his conservatism said, you know, if we do something, it's going to be more or less permanent, and is that what we want to do? So you see the same thing on should we have wilderness? When he comes in, there's a proposal for 700,000 acres of wilderness from the feds, he comes back with 60,000 acres. It ends up being over a million, but it's because, it's not that he didn't think wilderness was a good thing, but he really was nervous about walking something up forever. And so land use changing, you know, decades of practice interesting forever, it's a big thing for him to buy into. By the end of his term, his two terms as governor, he's pushing a sales tax, same kind of thing. There are no other alternatives. We have to go do this.

Earl Blumenauer 22:55

Yes, we were on that. It's interesting, the arc.

James Moore 23:02

Yeah, something that I wouldn't have picked out, but for him, it was very, very clear. I'm writing right now about the unitary tax, and it's just fascinating the context and things with it, the main context, which is totally missing from the coverage here and Vic's remembrance and other people's: there was a huge national conversation about it going on at the same time. The Reagan administration had a blue ribbon panel, the EEC had come out and said, "You got to get rid of the damn unitary tax." For us, it was all about Japan. But there was a very large national conversation. All the court cases ended up being focused on California, because that's where all the money is. But we were our parochial little conversation about, oh, should we have it or not? You know, do that kind of thing, just fun stuff. So, '73, '75 we're in the era where we have a very interesting mayor of Portland. We're beginning to look at Portland, and that's part of the land use negotiation where Roger Martin has very interesting things to say about, you know, how should the Portland area fit in with the statewide land use? All those kinds of things, but it really kind of comes out as talks about moving towards Mount Hood Freeway, moving towards better public transit, which eventually becomes the light rail discussion. Were you watching any of that? Paying attention? You know, were you a transportation guy at that point, watching all that come together?

Earl Blumenauer 24:55

Yeah, my first major piece of legislation was in 1973, which created the State Transportation Commission and mandated a multimodal, comprehensive statewide transportation plan, abolished the Highway Commission and created a transportation commission, and named Glenn Jackson the chair.

James Moore 25:24

Very politic.

Earl Blumenauer 25:25

Well, I had a chance to where, I mean, this was actually before I was elected. I'd known Glenn because he'd been helpful on the voting age and he had been a supporter of mine and a number of the people at the Pacific or Don Frisbee close friend. So I was talking to Glenn about that before I was even elected, and I can remember... who was it? Somebody said, "God, this is a fabulous idea. You just keep working at it long enough. And when you've been here as long as I have, you'll get it inactive." It happened as a freshman, House Bill 3166 the Mount Hood Freeway. One of the reasons I ran was the Mount Hood Freeway was going to knife through the heart of not only the legislative districts that I was seeking to represent, but I grew up there. I had both my grandfather and great grandfather built homes down on Franklin Street, just off of Powell, just deep roots in the southeast, deep reservations about slicing it up. Yeah, and my district was 50-50, I mean, half the people thought it was a great idea, and half the people were appalled. So this was something that I was involved with before I first ran for the legislature, and continued throughout my time in the legislature, and then was involved from the outset with light rail, the planning and advocacy on both the county and the city. So it's, yeah, it's pretty fundamental.

James Moore 27:26

Did you run into Vic at all on that? He's, far as I can tell, he's more on the sidelines, but...

Earl Blumenauer 27:32

He was a supporter of the Mount Hood Freeway, and in favor of, you know, a good construction project and something that would help his constituents get to Mount Hood faster. My impression is that he was supportive of efforts when people were trying to Jimmy around with it. Legislatively, not supportive. Lots of firepower trained on Bob Straub when he collaborated with Don Clark, and I'm blanking on the name of the other county commissioner... that's terrible... Mel Gordon. Former Republican, and then became a Democrat and then became a Clark County Commissioner, you may recall. And who left the county, because he was going to be Executive Director of the Columbia River Basin Commission, which used to be a really fat patronage, cushy, well paid, almost no work, and he resigned and left and Jimmy Carter abolished it. [Moore: There you go] Which had cascading effects, but Mel actually was more involved than Don Clark on the redesign of the 205 freeway. And they were both opposed to the Mount Hood [Freeway]. Goldschmidt and some help on the city. But he was the driving force. Straub Jackson, by that point, is convinced it's a no go. Although, Straub appointed somebody to be the head of the Department of Transportation named Bob Burco, from California. And was against the Mount Hood Freeway, and he was somebody that Straub, you know, and he claims credit to this day for all that, but furious backlash from some of the old guard. And he really got undercut. It was all delivered by Jackson, Goldschmidt, Straub, with strong support from Multnomah County. Vic was reliably opposed in their efforts that people would try and embarrass or try and Frank Ivancie worked with, is kind of interesting, because five years later, Vic's governor, Goldschmidt's gone, Reagan is president, and [Frank] Ivancie's mayor. Kind of a perfect storm, but Vic, he extracted a price for his support. We had to give up more of our money and kind of spread it around so forth, but, but he, he might have been in a position to overturn it, but he didn't. Not as spectacular as, you know, the land use rescue, right? But it was interesting, because Governor Atiyeh was different than Minority Leader Atiyeh.

James Moore 31:51

You know, I never got a chance to ask Vic this, but there are members of Vic's staff, most openly Denny Miles, who talk about that, you know, extracting a price kind of thing. It's basically a way to stick it to Neil [Goldschmidt].

Earl Blumenauer 32:09

Absolutely. I mean, Neil was very close to Straub. I think he was a driver for him when he was in college in the '66 campaign, is my recollection. He was very prominent in helping Bob in '74. Neil had some terrific staff, notably Doug Wright. The late Doug Wright just passed away earlier this year, and there's no love lost. Yeah at all. Yeah. And Neil

was sort of the antithesis of Straub's approach, because Neil was every bit as democratic in a different way. I mean, I don't think he was a pigeon holed Democrat, you know, Bob Duncan Democrat. He was a pro business Democrat in ways that people didn't appreciate. But Vic just was not going to get out over his skis. He was reflexively against Portland liberals. I mean, he was metropolitan, but not Portland. He very much represented Washington County, saw that as some direct competition. And I think in those early days, most people perceived it that way, and I think there were some trade offs, and I have no direct knowledge, but that is entirely consistent with my understanding of the dynamic of what I observed and what I would expect.

James Moore 34:21

Playing off what you just said, what people talk about Vic and the legislature as while he was the tax guy and, you know, playing these roles. But you know, by the time he gets into his last several terms, he's the Minority Leader of six people, and then the Minority Leader of seven. In fact, there are gold Roman numeral sevens that all seven of them have. [Blumenauer: Really?] Yes, and the six of them have their picture taken in the phone booth on the second floor. The picture exists. Wally Carson gleefully got out the poster size version.

Earl Blumenauer 35:03

I hope that's in the book.

James Moore 35:06

I hope so too. It's fun, because whatever Vic gave us in the archive, we own the rights totally, so any pictures that we have there, we don't have to do anything with. They're ours.

Earl Blumenauer 35:21

The Magnificent Seven. That's a fascinating group of people who were there, Tony, [unintelligible], and Wally and...

James Moore 35:31

Tony becomes treasurer, Wally becomes Supreme Court, Vic is Governor, Bob Smith goes to Congress. I mean, if you're going to have few playmates, those are pretty powerful playmates to have, but fascinating talking to them. "So how are you effective with that many?" And when there were six, Jason Bo gave them all so many assignments that Wally Carson said he only had one free hour a week. But the committees were the only place they could have influence, and because they were respected, they were actually able to have influence.

Earl Blumenauer 36:10

And as you know, and this worked for Vic, the combination of maybe modest partisan numbers, but the geographic and philosophical interests were very strong, right? And so you'd have, you know, he served with Mike Thorne. He had a great relationship with Mike Thorne, and Mike Thorne cut his teeth in democratic politics on the Bobby Kennedy campaign in '68 but even by the '70s, he was pretty much indistinguishable from Republicans. I mean, he was a younger, [Ruff?] Raymond, that he supplanted, as I recall. And you had, you know, people downstate, Fred Heard, Lenn Hannon down in your old stomping grounds. These are people who were... they ignored conservative and agricultural and small town interests at their peril, and they harbored sort of... they were Portland adverse. Some of them with higher aspirations, would listen to the siren song of big city politicians and money, 90% of the business elite were in Portland, [Moore: Yeah, absolutely] and they tended to be moderate to even progressive on many of these issues, but you didn't have to work very hard, and there was a price to pay, even when there was a Portlander elected for leadership.

James Moore 38:26

There are so many... you bring up things, [Blumenauer interjects: Oh, I'm sorry.] We can talk about that. That's fine! That's perfect. You are elected into the house when something major has happened. Two things: first of all, there's a

bunch of new voters. I went through and looked at the 1960 to 2014 voter registration and the two... that's the biggest jump percentage wise. The second biggest jump is four years later, for reasons I'm not quite clear. It's like a 25% jump when 18 year olds come in, and then there's a 24 point percent jump. And I don't know if it's a post-Watergate in voter registration.

Earl Blumenauer 39:19  
But in what year?

James Moore 39:22  
I don't have it loaded on here. It's maybe '74 to '76? So it's sometime in there. So there's a jump of 18 year olds, and then there's this other...

Earl Blumenauer 39:39  
As we bring these young voters in, we're still winding down the war in Vietnam, we've had the first Earth Day. There was this burst of environmental, anti-war, civil rights action, and the kids can finally vote. Then we have this '74, '75, Watergate debacle.

James Moore 40:04  
So from your observation, it's the reaction to the Watergate...

Earl Blumenauer 40:08  
And to Nixon, yeah, and to appointing a guy who pardons Nixon. I mean the '74 plan, I think there were like 293 Democrats elected to the House of Representatives. I mean, there were people swept in who... stunning people, and swept out pretty quickly. But all of this stuff was coming to a head, and it was still playing out in '75 and '76. And people were hungry for something different. And what they were getting from the Republicans was not different. And, I mean, that's how, you know, Jimmy Carter. I mean, where'd this peanut farmer come from? Kind of backing in, but there was all this energy and but for the war in Vietnam, I think Scoop would have been president or vice president. I even met with him at one point. He wanted me to run his Oregon operation, thinking about that, and I just couldn't get past the war. But he was, you know, Udall. I mean, they were amazing people who are out there stirring stuff up so that doesn't surprise me in the least.

James Moore 41:39  
That's good, but there's another major thing that happens. In '67, I believe, the Supreme Court rules that you have to have one person, one vote. And so '70 was the census...

Earl Blumenauer 41:50  
And '62, Baker v. Carr.

James Moore 41:52  
Okay, but so the '70 census first, and then the '72 election is the first coming in. And so you go from the multiple member districts in Oregon to single member districts.

Earl Blumenauer 42:05  
Well, that was a different phenomenon, though. We could have had multi member districts, yeah, but under state law, yeah, but the decision was to go to single member districts, which profoundly reshaped...

James Moore 42:19

So what was, I mean, you're coming in with that, right? It's been described to me as the shift from rural to urban in terms of power in the state, or the beginning of that shift, which we're still arguing about. It's also been described as, I mean, the way Vic saw it is before that happened. He loved representing the dairy farmers as well as the West slope. And after that, he got meaner letters from his constituents because they felt that he was their guy. And so he saw a real difference in the way that his constituents related to him. But it's also, when you look at, it swings more power into Portland immediately. So you come in, Vera comes in same time. I mean, there's kind of a whole club of people who come in and are able to be pretty powerful in the legislature as we go along there. Were you conscious of that at the time of that kind of a change happening? Or were you just however old you were, 22 or whatever, 23, saying, "Woohoo!"

Earl Blumenauer 43:30

To what are people attributing the shift?

James Moore 43:38

Are you hearing? Well, for instance, Ted Kolongoski, who is a staffer as this is happening, watching it.

Ted Kolongoski attributes it to,

In effect, the breakdown of rural coalitions. And, for instance, what you were just talking about with the Mike Thorns of the world and things like that, there's a breakdown of that, because you only have this smaller constituency when you're in the legislature. So it begins to change that pattern. Barbara Roberts, she's, you know, doing school boards and stuff like that. But she comes in, she talks to Frank, who's there, as it has happened, she said, Frank said about the same thing. There was, in effect, as people had to represent just a smaller chunk. It encouraged more partisanship. It encouraged less centrism, as they were seeing that. So that's what people are observing. I have a feeling if I go back and look at, you know, pick a sampling, and look at some key races, that's going to be hard to prove, just because so many people, even then, didn't have really that many contested primaries and that kind of stuff.

Earl Blumenauer 45:07

Well, you got some contested primaries. And the contested primaries are what flipped it. What happened, I think, when you moved away from the multi-member districts, you were isolating people one on one. And that, I mean that as a 23-year-old kid, I won every precinct in Southeast Portland against the Democratic leader for the district. And I mean, there were people who had significant names, James Hagerty, which was the Eisenhower press secretary, big famous name at the time, was on the ballot against me, and I won every precinct. But I could do that by mobilizing people and knocking on every single door. The shift, I think, is not so much that you don't represent as many people, because I think people underestimate how sensitive they are to the surrounding community context. Vic never stopped representing the dairy farmers.

James Moore 46:32

Yeah, no, exactly when you look at his policies and [the way he talked?], yeah.

Earl Blumenauer 46:36

He was a Washington County guy, but what's different is you get in, and you can work your way in. And we had an energy of young people that was remarkable. I mean, there were a number of us in our mid 20s and 30s, Al Densmore, Jackson, we called him "Little Lee Johnson," who represented Ashland was, you know, early 30s, Bob Marx... I mean, so you had a lot of that energy where people could earn a seat, and you broke the back of the conservative coalition, that

It was a slightly smaller and more focused constituency, and you'd go out there if Glenn Houston in Albany is going to be a jerk. Okay, he doesn't vote with the Democrats. He gets comfortably re-elected every general election, but they go after him in the primary, and took him out. The guy [Robert L. ] Elfstrom in Marion County that Keith Burbage took out, it put the fear of God in some of those folks, and it's and it gave you a more diverse and energetic and largely younger base, yeah, and our and our politics were more independent and progressive because there were, I mean, Vic was sort of an outlier in some respects, with mainstream in the '70s. So because you had George Wingard, you had the aforementioned Don Stathos, Tom Hartung in Washington County. I mean, you had people in the House and Senate who are Republicans that you could talk to, and it was a profoundly different dynamic.

Vic was somebody you could deal with, but he was not somebody who was lurking to make deals right with progressives in either party. Yeah, that wasn't, I don't think that's what he felt his role was.

James Moore 49:43

He wasn't big on deals in any case.

Earl Blumenauer 49:43

He wasn't big on legislative... I mean, he didn't have major legislative accomplishments. He was true to his principles, and I'm sure played an important role giving voice to it.

James Moore 49:57

So why did you campaign so hard against him in '74?

Earl Blumenauer 50:04

I thought he was completely out of step. I mean, the things that we were doing...

James Moore 50:09

So, his campaign button that said "Oregon's Next Great Governor," you didn't buy. Both Straub and Vic were trying to be Tom McCall's heir.

Earl Blumenauer 50:25

No, I mean, I just... Bob Straub never got the credit he deserved as being an important architect of the Tom McCall legacy.

James Moore 50:39

Oh yeah, the implementation was stunning and more difficult than you would think. But they were his ideas that he was implementing. The Willamette River Greenway, I mean Bob saving our beaches. I mean, Bob was there beating the tar out of Tom until Tom stole them and was a better salesperson, although that was, I will say, that was a unique moment in time, because all of those forces we talked about with young people, with progressive interests that had been bottled up, that broke loose, starting in '71 with the Bottle Bill and the Bike Bill, and '73 and then it was Bob Straub who implemented it. I truly think that was a unique period in our time, I mean we haven't seen anything like it before or since, and there were a number of people who were playing in that space. There were more progressive business aspects. The media could change its mind, witness the Oregonian on the Mount Hood freeway.

Gotta tell you, reading the Willamette Week editorials on the unitary tax is fascinating, very nuanced. You know, boy, this is a bad tax. It's getting in the way. But we shouldn't get rid of it. We should tinker, do this and the other, but it's

like, I would swear that they would be saying, "Keep the unitary tax. We need the money." But it's just amazing. Fun stuff.

Earl Blumenauer 52:35

The editor at that time was a former Wall Street Journal reporter.

James Moore 52:38

Who was it?

Earl Blumenauer 52:39

Ron Buel. Ron Buel helped found it, and you had Allan Weber there...

James Moore 52:46

Writing the editorials?

Earl Blumenauer 52:46

I don't know who wrote it, but I mean, there were people who all went on to do something in the business space. I don't mean to go too far afield.

James Moore 53:04

No, we're great. The '74 election, in Vic's mind, and Vic supporters, he did really well. You know, he introduced himself to the state. He only lost by 10 percentage points. It's like, no, you didn't lose by -- just pretend it's 10 percentage points -- you lost by the biggest amount anybody had lost since 1950. He got shellacked, but that's not how they viewed it, and so he was always late to declare and decide. It frustrated his staff to no end about if he'd run for re-election, but he was feeling positive about the campaign as soon as it was over. Just fascinating.

Earl Blumenauer 53:49

Well, part of that is he was kind of a... he was, in his own way, an optimistic and goal driven person, but he also was given a gift. Neither Bob nor Vic could assume the mantle of Tom McCall, but having at least the hat, if not the crown, was easier for Bob, because he was author and supporter of so much of what McCall was given credit for having done, and Vic was against it all. So, it was kind of a natural... for Bob. He was, as you know, not the natural choice of the Democrats. I mean, this was very spirited, you know, campaign, hotly contested, and he got the nomination in a, you know, three way, kind of on the Duncan effect. He'd been around so long, he'd run five times statewide. Yeah, but as soon as he took office, he had to contend with not being able to measure up to Tom McCall's image, and Vic didn't have to worry about that, because Bob Straub was then running against Tom McCall. And it's interesting to me that this, and I remember feeling it so profoundly at the time, and I feel it to this day, that it had become so other worldly, so mythologized, that in 1978 the real Tom McCall couldn't measure up to the ...

James Moore 56:19

[imagined?] Tom McCall, yeah, exactly.

Earl Blumenauer 56:23

And lost. Bob got shellacked because he was defeated by the ghost of Tom McCall, and it was Vic Atiyeh who was there. And I don't mean to denigrate, I mean because he had to be focused, he had to campaign hard, he had to exude optimism. It was not a good year for Democrats. I mean, if it had been in a presidential year, I don't think Vic would

have been elected, even under those uncertain... but when you're talking '78 you're talking about in the middle of Jimmy Carter's really rocky presidency.

James Moore 57:22

At that point, we're all getting the hint of malaise in the air.

Earl Blumenauer 57:29

So he kind of benefited from a national political climate. He benefited from the specter of the real Tom McCall, and he was somebody who came out earlier, convinced that, well, he wasn't really shellac, this was just the warm up. He'd never run statewide before, and that combination is... you gotta give him credit.

Unknown 57:59

I'm going to go check on something, but I think you have about 10 more minutes. They're setting up downstairs.

Earl Blumenauer 58:11

Well, Jim, I'm happy to continue the conversation. I like reminiscing. You know, I'll buy the first beer bottle. It's fun for me. These are things that I thought about at the time because I was experiencing them, and just felt then, and continue to feel extraordinarily fortunate to be a kid in the middle of this stuff, and be able to, actually, because of circumstances, be able to have my hand in. I mean, I'm chairing the revenue committee for two sessions, and the interim committee, and I did the ethics legislation, and, I mean, there's just stuff because of the times.

James Moore 59:02

Ted Kulongoski describes that time as the time when the legislature was truly a co-equal branch. The last gasp of that is really John Kitzhaber's Oregon Health Plan, generating policy, and we haven't seen that in over 20 years. You know, you look at the budgets, the budgets of the governors and legislature now just react. But it's a golden age, not just from your personal point of view, but looking at it, it's kind of a golden age for the legislature.

Earl Blumenauer 59:38

Well, but the people in the legislature, and Vic is emblematic of that. I didn't agree with Vic on most of the major policy issues of the day. I respected him. He was a smart guy. He had other things he could have done with his life. He cared about his community, and he carried his arguments with dignity and was part of a process that helped make the legislature work. We had Stafford Hansell, who...

James Moore 1:00:10

The type of farmer who would clean your clock, apparently.

Earl Blumenauer 1:00:12

Stafford was one of the most amazing people I have ever met. And when I was first elected, this is the first time legislators had individual offices, and my office was just across a partition from where Stafford and Mary Elizabeth, his wife were, and Howard Cherry was in there and Phil Lang. I mean, it was in an all star gathering. All three of those people were established professionals, doctor, insurance executive, a very innovative farmer, but three people deeply knowledgeable, I mean, really deeply knowledgeable. And they were there for the right reasons. We drifted, I think, to where it was harder to recruit people. I don't want to sound elitist, people of stature, because a number of the people there were kind of ordinary. Lloyd Kinsey was just a well intended teacher, modestly progressive, representing Northeast Portland. Mary [unintelligible], oh, my Lord, just a blessing to serve with her, and Mary Burrows. I mean, the revenue committee I chaired had Norma Paulus, Paul Walden, Tony Van Vliet. So it's, in many respects, it's a magic

time, because of, I think, the characteristics, the temperament, the experience, the quality of the people who were there. It got to the point where getting in the legislature became a full time job. As the techniques of polling, voter targeting direct mail and frankly, negative campaigning were refined, you could get in the legislature by just devoting a year and a half of your life to doing it. So you got people like Drew Davis, huh? Not much there, but re-elected, I think, five times, and one of those young [unintelligible] who was in his 20s. You started making it harder for people who didn't have a portable profession, that worked for some lawyers or teachers that had to get time off, professors, retired people, a few independently wealthy. But it really narrowed the base pretty substantially, and so it narrowed those experiences. So it was very different.

James Moore 1:03:46

Ted also sees this as... I mean, the environmental movement is just beginning to really take off. And so between then, and say, like about the time Vic leaves office, '86, '87, there's this shifting that takes place, where for statewide office, before that, everybody competed for the same money. They went and knocked on the same corporate doors, same logging, you know, executive same, whatever. By the end of that, the public employees were coming on. That was the Democrats' purse. Business was the Republicans' purse. So there's a shift that's [unintelligible].

Earl Blumenauer 1:04:21

The business at that point was much more open. I mean, when I ran for the legislature, I had support from most of the leading business people in the metropolitan area.

James Moore 1:04:34

Ted talks about he was knocking on exactly the same business doors as Vic, for a lot of times, and Vic knew that he couldn't go to the Schnitzers, and, you know, that kind of stuff. Just amazing.

Earl Blumenauer 1:04:46

At some point, we might just chat a little about the '82 camp. I did spend a fair amount of time trying to help Ted. [Moore interjects: Good, yeah.] I was part of a little group at one point where it looked like he was very much in the hunt, if not the favorite. We put together a transition group. It was interesting trying to think about how to do this stuff, and Ted was spending time in September and October, until the onslaught hit. That was interesting, watching Vic just hammer him to a pulp.

James Moore 1:05:33

And looking at Oregon, I think it's kind of the first modern campaign. You know, just stick to your message, hit it. Ted remembers, Vic was doing like a Joe McCarthy thing. "Say, I have a list of plant closures right here in my pocket." There's no list.

Earl Blumenauer 1:05:53

They hit it. Well, part of it. And again, we're getting into rocky economic times. People are really upset. Interest rates are sky high. People double digit mortgage 12, 14% and this is, and we went into a period of...what was it? 33 out of 36 counties lost population. So it was... anyway, I'm happy to continue the conversation, if it's helpful at all. And actually, I like hearing what you're saying. This brings back lots of memories, and it's fun to speculate about.

James Moore 1:06:42

Yeah, exactly. Reverse history. Fantastic.