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## Moakley, Clay, Mitchell Interview Transcript (MS100/09.01#19)

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**Program Titles:** "Representative Moakley with Representatives Bill Clay and Parren Mitchell"

**Program Participants:** Congressman John Joseph Moakley, Congressman Bill Clay, and  
Congressman Parren Mitchell

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**Recording Overview:** This recording includes five interviews with members of Congress that were broadcast on WILD as episodes of a radio show featuring Congressman Moakley. In the first segment Representative Joe Moakley discusses the Anti-Poverty Agency and the Office of Economic Opportunity. The second interview he focuses on Summer Neighborhood Youth Corp. The third segment is with Representative Parren Mitchell. He and Congressman Moakley discuss housing legislation. In the fourth interview Congressman Moakley speaks about the Older American's Act and the Elderly Program. The last segment is with Representative Bill Clay. He and Congressman Moakley focus on the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and Public TV.

### **Part I: Moakley Transcript Begins**

**ANNOUNCER:** From the Nation's Capitol, here is our Congressman Joe Moakley, discussing the Anti-Poverty Agency, the Office of Economic Opportunity<sup>1</sup>. Joe is the Congressman from the 9<sup>th</sup> District, which includes Roxbury and other sections of the Boston community.

Joe, the main target of the President's proposed dismantlement of the OEO program appeared to be the community action agencies. And many people say that without that facet of the program,

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<sup>1</sup> The **Office of Economic Opportunity** was the agency responsible for administering most of the [War on Poverty](#) programs created as part of [United States President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society](#) legislative agenda.



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there really would be no one around to do the job in many communities like Roxbury. What do you think about that?

**REPRESENTATIVE MOAKLEY:** I think that's probably the most correct statement on the whole OEO Bill. The President tried to dismantle the OEO programs and tried to put them into other departments without having community action groups. I think that unless there's community participation, the OEO programs would fall flat on their face. We all know that the President vetoed this bill twice. He impounded the funds. But Congress feels that these programs should be maintained and they should be expanded. And I think that more than anything, other than the funds that we need to keep these action agencies in tact, because the life blood of the whole OEO program. Right here in the Roxbury area we've received a \$700,000 dollar grant to Circle Inc, which is a community project that is headed up by Chuck Turner, who is a very community minded individual. And I think that we need people in the communities administering these grants, or else they just wouldn't work.

**ANNOUNCER:** Joe, what do you think are the chances for passage of the OEO Bill in the Senate? And based on past history, what do you think the President will do with it?

**MOAKLEY:** I'm very happy to report that the Senate has always voted for this type of legislation. It's the House that we've always had trouble with in the past. But now that the House has pulled together and really been reminded, this is the first time that the federal government has established a program that aids the poor and reminds comfortable America that there are poor people in this country. And this agency has been the dreams and the hopes of those who just aren't as lucky as some of us. And I think that Congress has realized this, and they'll pull together and pass this OEO Bill.

And I just hope that the President will not veto the bill because I think that this very well could be the battle ground where the Congress reasserts its power and says to the President, we are



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separate but equal. And if this has to be the battlefield over which we will determine the President's powers and the Congress powers, so be it. But I'm very happy that not only does the Congress feel this way, but Judge Jones in Washington D.C., when the President went about dismantling the OEO program, put the brakes on and said, no, you can't dismantle this program because the Congress has mandated it. And you can't just voluntarily decide that it should go out of business.

**ANNOUNCER:** Joe, now that the Congress, at least the House, has spoken, how much do you plan on giving the OEO program? And what's the money going to be used for?

**MOAKLEY:** Well, there's \$334 million that the OEO will receive. The Legal Services Corporation, which is a very important part of the OEO, will receive \$71 million. And this matter has just been approved by the Congress. And the very important Head Start Program<sup>2</sup> and other programs such as Head Start will receive some \$419 million. And this represents a little bit of an increase over last year's budget.

**ANNOUNCER:** Joe, in consideration of that, what do you think is the future of OEO, based on the President's past actions and past court decisions and what Congress had done in the past?

**MOAKLEY:** Well, I think that the OEO performs a very vital function. Many people who come from affluent areas probably don't realize it, but I do. Coming from the Boston area, I know what OEO has done, and I know what the Model City Programs have done, and what the community action groups have done, and how people pulling together with some federal funds can make a difference in the lifestyle of the community and give them that hope that they just didn't have in the past. And I just hope that Congress would continue the OEO or some similar type agency, and keep the community participation, because this is a very vital function of the

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<sup>2</sup> The **Head Start Program** is a program of the [United States Department of Health and Human Services](http://www.hhs.gov) that provides comprehensive education, health, [nutrition](#), and parent involvement services to low-income children and their families.



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OEO is the community participation. You're dealing with people you know, people who know the community. You're not dealing with people who have been just flown in from New York, or Chicago, or San Francisco. But you're dealing in the Roxbury area. You're dealing with the Roxbury people. And I think it's very important that this go back and forth, and so people who really do need the help get the help.

**ANNOUNCER:** Thank you very much Joe Moakley. Tune in next week at this time to WILD radio, as our Congressman Joe Moakley discusses matters of interest to our community.

END OF INTERVIEW

### **Part II: Moakley Transcript Begins**

**Q:** From the Nation's Capitol, here is our Congressman Joe Moakley discussing the Summer Neighborhood Youth Corp. Joe is the Congressman from the 9<sup>th</sup> District, which includes Roxbury and other sections of the Boston community. Joe, what's the status of the Boston Neighborhood Youth Corp. Program this summer?

**REPRESENTATIVE MOAKLEY:** Well, I'm very happy to say that the program has finally started. It started last Wednesday with federal funds. And more than \$2 million will go for the program under the control of the ABCD<sup>3</sup>. And there's over 5,000 positions for youngsters this summer. And many of the youngsters will work 40 hours a week instead of the usual 20-30 hours a week that they worked last summer. And I'm very happy to report that it finally did get started after all of the obstructions and all of the roadblocks that the Nixon Administration had put in the

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<sup>3</sup> **Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD)** is an [anti-poverty](#) and [community development](#) organization based in [Boston, Massachusetts](#). It is the largest non-profit human services agency in New England, serving serving more than 100,000 low-income Greater Boston residents through its city-wide network of neighborhood-based organizations.



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way of the Congress. And I'm very unhappy to say that the Congressional Delegation for Massachusetts really had to show its muscle to change some of the thinking of the Labor Department in this instance.

**Q:** Joe, you mentioned obstruction. What do you mean by obstruction? That seems to indicate that perhaps the Administration was standing in the way of the program's being implemented. I wonder if there was any doubt that ABCD would actually be getting federal money for the Youth Corp. Program. Was there ever any doubt about that?

**MOAKLEY:** There was a lot of doubt that the money would ever finally get to ABCD. And when I say obstructions, I mean the impounding of the funds that would go to probably one of the most worthwhile endeavors here in the Boston area, employing 5,000 youth that come from very low income areas. And I feel that the President on his own should have allowed this money to come flowing freely into the Boston area instead of impounding the funds and having court cases. And we finally won a recent court decision, which the court in that instance said that the funds cannot be impounded and they have to be spent. So, this last Wednesday the funds were made available to the ABCD, and to put this Youth Corp. Program forward. And after the judge's decision came down, I'm sorry to say that the Labor Department started playing some funny games.

**Q:** Well, Joe, what do you mean by funny games?

**MOAKLEY:** Well, the Labor Department got in touch with the ABCD and they said that you would have to sign a pledge that they would be responsible for all fiscal obligations if the decision was later overturned by another court. But after other Congressmen, as well as myself, contacted the Labor Department and told them that they were violating the law by putting all these obstacles, unfair obstacles by the way, on the ABCD before they could receive the money, they did back down.



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**Q:** I'm curious, does ABCD or any other anti-poverty agency like that have money that they can pledge in a situation?

**MOAKLEY:** No. Actually, this was just a shotgun to the head and they said, all right, the court said we have to release the money. But we want you to sign these forms saying that after we release the money, if after there is some court of higher appeals says that the money shouldn't have been released, then you'll have to pay back the money that you've spent, which is the most ridiculous situation that any poverty agency could ever find themselves in, because of course they have no money that's been hanging around that they could use for these purposes.

**Q:** It just seems like another example of what you said earlier, some of the administrative policies that we've been faced with this year.

**MOAKLEY:** I'm telling you, some of the administrative policies that the Congress has had to face either collectively or individually, it's been very frustrating. And everyday it's another obstacle, another roadblock. And we spend half of our time getting over the roadblocks before we can really get down to the work we're supposed to do around here.

**Q:** Joe, what about the entire fight, if we might call it that, between Congress and the President? The President has waged battle in many cases by impounding funds in two or three different instances. Do you think the courts will continue to overturn the President? Or what has been the history of these impoundment cases?

**MOAKLEY:** Well, of course, you know, the impoundment is relatively a new word in the halls of Congress. Every President, by the way, has impounded a certain degree of money, or many Presidents have. But no President has ever impounded the entire funding of a program, which would render it useless and not being able to operate. But this President has done it. But I'm



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happy to say that on every one of the impoundment cases that have been brought to court, that the judge ruled against impoundment.

So, I just hope that the President and the Administration would get the message, and really after their legislative battles are fought, whether they've won or loss, I wish they leave them either with the veto, and if the veto was overruled, then so be it, and not take this additional step that has become a part of the Nixon Administration, the impoundment rule. Because it has only served to disturb the Congress, disturb the people, disturb the programs, and none of them have stood up in court so far.

**Q:** Thank you very much Joe Moakley. Tune in next week at this time to WILD radio, as our Congressman Joe Moakley discusses matters of interest to our community.

END OF INTERVIEW

### **Part III: Mitchell Transcript Begins**

**ANNOUNCER:** From the Nation's capitol, here is our Congressman Joe Moakley, who represents Roxbury and other segments of the Boston community. Today, Joe will be discussing housing legislation now before the Committee, with a guest.

**REPRESENTATIVE MOAKLEY:** Thank you very much. I am very pleased today to have as my guest a very distinguished colleague from the 7<sup>th</sup> District of Maryland, Congressman Parren Mitchell<sup>4</sup>. Rep. Mitchell, who is one of 16 members of the Congressional Black Caucus, heads the Housing and Minority Enterprise Committee for the Caucus. Now in his second term in the

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<sup>4</sup> **Parren James Mitchell** (April 29, 1922 – May 28, 2007), a [Democrat](#), was a [U.S. Congressman](#) who represented the [7th congressional district](#) of [Maryland](#) from January 3, 1971 to January 3, 1987. He was the first African-American elected to Congress from Maryland.



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House, Congressman Mitchell has already distinguished himself as an advocate of the Nation's needy, the poor and the disadvantaged.

Parren, you know that on August 2 or 3, the House Banking and Currency Committee<sup>5</sup>, of which we're both members, will be considering the Miscellaneous Housing Bill. And I know you've got some serious reservations about Section 504 of the bill, and I was wondering if you could discuss this.

**REPRESENTATIVE MITCHELL:** Sure, Joe. I would be delighted to do this. First of all, let me indicate that I'm delighted to be on this show with a good guy like you, because as you know, I think very highly of your contributions both to the Committee and to the House of Representatives.

Now, looking at the Housing Bill, particularly Section 504, its total effect will be that of a repressive punitive kind of thing against the people who are at the bottom of the barrel anyway, and that's the poor of our country. In effect, this bill, as you well know, will negate and nullify the Book Amendment, which has really saved so many persons who are living in public housing. I think that what has happened in Section 504 is that we have resurrected all of the old bad features that we tried to put in the Housing and Urban Development Act<sup>6</sup> of last year.

**MOAKLEY:** Well, I know, Parren, that in my District, the Roxbury, South Boston and Dorchester District, that this provision will have some startling effects. As an example, the Boston Housing Authority surveyed a number of housing developments in the city and found

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<sup>5</sup> The **United States Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs** (formerly the Committee on Banking and Currency) has jurisdiction over matters related to: [banks](#) and banking, [price controls](#), [deposit insurance](#), [export](#) promotion and controls, federal [monetary policy](#), financial aid to commerce and industry, issuance of redemption of notes, [currency](#) and coinage, public and private housing, [urban development](#) and [mass transit](#), and government contracts.

<sup>6</sup> The **Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965** is a major revision to federal housing policy in the [United States](#) which created the [United States Department of Housing and Urban Development](#) and instituted several major expansion in federal housing programs.





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that under this section of the bill, a person who has an income of \$235 per month, who is not on welfare, will have to pay \$65 in rent, as compared to the \$59 a month he is paying now. And a family of four on welfare will have to pay \$96 a month, compared to only the \$59 a month that they are paying now. Now, that's a very astonishing increase, and I think that that just typifies the effect it will have here in Boston. I'm sure that the net result will be many, many evictions. Now, I know that in Baltimore, I'm sure you have a similar situation.

**MITCHELL:** You're quite right. I received correspondence from our Housing Commissioner in Baltimore City, and he's absolutely in bitter opposition to Section 504. Above and beyond that, I think we have to look at a particular category of people in public housing, that's the black elderly, many of whom worked as domestics, many of whom were not covered under OASI<sup>7</sup> benefits for a long period of time. And when they got covered, their monthly OASI benefit is so small that they are really living almost at starvation level. And it would be just cruel and vicious to ask them to pay more in rent than they can possibly afford.

We've done our job in the Congress. We appropriated and authorized the money. And then the President, acting out of his wisdom I suppose, impounds the funds. And certainly people are hurting. That seems to me to be the better approach.

**MOAKLEY:** Well, I would agree. Of course, you and I, together with Gus Hawkins<sup>8</sup>, who worked very hard on that OEO situation, and it wasn't but for the help of the judge in Philadelphia that finally freed the funds in order that the Neighborhood Youth Corp. could be funded adequately. In the city of Boston it means putting 5,100 children to work from poor and disadvantaged areas. And if it weren't for the Congress, together with the Judiciary, Richard

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<sup>7</sup> Old-Age, Survivors Insurance

<sup>8</sup> **Augustus Freeman "Gus" Hawkins** (August 31, 1907 – November 10, 2007) was a prominent [African American Democratic Party](#) politician and a figure in the history of [Civil Rights](#) and organized labor. He served as the first African American from [California](#) in the [United States Congress](#), where he sponsored the [Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Act](#).



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Milhaus Nixon would still have those funds tucked away somewhere so that we couldn't have them.

Parren, doesn't a problem arise when you don't make allowances for varying costs of housing? For an example, the heating cost in Boston and Baltimore would have to be considerably higher than the heating cost in Miami. So, shouldn't the contributions that HUD make vary accordingly?

**MITCHELL:** I would agree. That was one of the reservations I had about this approach. On the other hand, I think we have to be honest and say that we are dealing with Congress and parts of a committee, the Banking and Currency Committee that really don't have a deep-seated commitment to provide housing for people. And we are dealing with a kind of climate in this nation now that seems to suggest that we have done enough for those people, the poor, the black, and other minorities. And I would much prefer to see that kind of a variation taken care of. But frankly, Joe, let's go for what we can get.

**MOAKLEY:** When I was in the state legislature, take a lead in public housing, and the reason was, as a child, I lived in public housing, and I know what it was first hand. And I think we are dealing in Congress with many people from rural areas and affluent urban areas that just don't realize what public housing is all about. And you feel that because you put a building up, and you make adequate provisions for rent, that they have done their job. And they just wash their hands and they walk away from it. And I'm glad that I'm serving on the Committee on Banking with gentlemen like you that know what housing is all about and know the things that have to be done to make it not only livable physically, but mentally and other ways.

So Parren, I'm very happy to have you on the program today, and I'm sure that I look forward to doing other shows with you.



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**MITCHELL:** Joe, thanks for letting me be on. I think you're a great guy. And please invite me back.

**MOAKLEY:** We will.

**ANNOUNCER:** Thank you very much. Congressman Joe Moakley and Parren Mitchell. Tune in next week to WILD radio as Joe Moakley discusses matters of interest to our community.

END OF INTERVIEW

### **Part IV: Moakley Transcript Begins**

**ANNOUNCER:** From the Nation's Capitol, here is our Congressman Joe Moakley discussing the Older American's Act and the Elderly Program. Joe is a Congressman from the 9<sup>th</sup> District, which includes most of the Boston community, plus the towns of Canton, Dedham, Dover, Needham, Norwood, Westwood, and Walpole.

Joe, I know many people, particularly older Americans have often felt that they perhaps are the forgotten Americans. And I just wondered what you think about that.

**REPRESENTATIVE MOAKLEY:** Well, I think that many of them who feel this can rightfully feel this way. I think that the senior citizens are probably the most exploited group that we have in our country. That many times candidates for office makes all kinds of promise to them, looking for their votes, and once they have their votes they forget about them until the next election, and they go back with the same song and dance. But I'm very happy to say that there is such a thing as senior power today, with many groups. Frank Manning, who happens to be President of the Legislative Council of Older Americans, happens to be a mentor of mine. And Frank and I go back to the State House days when I served on the State Senate, when Frank was



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up there pushing the Rent Control Bill, pushing the 25% limit on rents that people who lived in public housing should pay, pushing the Hot Meals programs. Frank has really done a great job in helping lead the fight for the senior citizens here in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and here in Washington.

**ANNOUNCER:** Joe, have you seen any progress in the record of the Congress this year as regards to older Americans?

**MOAKLEY:** Well, Congress has just approved the funding for Nutrition Program for the Elderly. And the President, after a year-long fight, has finally signed the measure which provides for \$100 million for the National Hot Meals Program for older Americans. And this will carry over through December 31 this year.

**ANNOUNCER:** Joe, what about Social Security increases which the Congress has just recently enacted? When do they go into effect and what do they provide for?

**MOAKLEY:** Well, this is one of the sorry stages that I have to report that Congress went through. It's true that we did increase the Social Security Program some 5.6%, but the kick in the bill is that it doesn't become effective until 1974. Now, this is a pure injustice to the senior citizens because the cost of living has gone up. They can use the money right now. I voted to have it go in effect in June of '73, but majority of Congress felt otherwise.

**ANNOUNCER:** Joe, formally, the amount of money that a retired worker would make amounted to only some \$166. How much of an increase would retired workers and other older Americans receive under this increase?

**MOAKLEY:** Well, under the increase, the average retired worker would go from \$166 to \$176. The couples would go from \$277 to \$293 a month. Elderly widows would go from \$158 a



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month to \$167 a month. And some benefits are expected to be increased from \$266 to \$290 a month for retired workers, and from \$399 to \$435 for other aged couples.

**ANNOUNCER:** Joe, are there many people in the Boston community that will be affected by the delay in the increase? And how will the increase affect them individually?

**MOAKLEY:** Oh, yes. The senior citizen is a unique group. Most of them are on fixed income. Most of them live by themselves or with their spouse. Some of them live in high crime areas and they are afraid to walk out into the streets, and therefore, they have to hire a boy to go and get their supplies, their groceries or what have you. And every time the cost of something goes up, they are more affected than the average person, because the cost of living increase in Social Security just doesn't keep up with the actual cost of living increase. And that's why I say it was a miscarriage of justice that the raise that won't become effective until June of 1974 didn't become effective earlier.

We find that some 25% of the senior citizens are still living below the poverty level. And I think that's a sad commentary on this country which prides itself on being one of the most forward countries in the world. How we find that about 50 to 60% of the senior citizens are paying well over 40% and 50% of their income for rents, and this should be adjusted somehow. And I feel since it was them that made it possible for us to go on, that a country should take care of its senior citizens as its number one priority, and that's what I intend to do as a Congressman here in Washington.

**ANNOUNCER:** Thank you very much Joe Moakley. Tune in next week at this time to our Congressman Joe Moakley, as he discusses matters of interest to all of us.

END OF INTERVIEW



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### Part V: Clay Transcript Begins

**ANNOUNCER:** From the Nation's Capitol, here is our Congressman Joe Moakley, who represents Roxbury and other sections of the Boston community. Today, Joe will be discussing the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and Public TV with a guest.

**REPRESENTATIVE MOAKLEY:** I'm very pleased to have as my guest today, a very distinguished colleague from the 1<sup>st</sup> District of Missouri, Congressman Bill Clay<sup>9</sup>.

Representative Clay, who is a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, and now serves as the organization's Chief Fundraiser. Now, in his third term in the House of Representatives, Congressman Clay is a member of the influential Committee on Education and Labor. And he has already distinguished himself as a fighter for the disadvantaged and poor, as evidenced by his continuing fight against discrimination in public TV.

Bill, the House recently approved \$130 million in federal funds for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to operate for the next two years. Before the vote, you complained very bitterly that most public television stations are run by all white boards of directors, and discriminate in employment against minorities and women. Would you go into detail for the listening audience some of the points that you brought out in debate?

**REPRESENTATIVE CLAY:** Well, first of all, I think I ought to preface my statement by saying that Public Broadcasting Corporation is a unique type of animal created by this Congress and subsidized heavily by the U.S. Congress to perform specific purposes, and primarily to perform services of broadcast that are not available on commercial television. I think I also ought

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<sup>9</sup> William Lacy "Bill" Clay, Sr. (born April 30, 1931) is a [politician](#) from the [state](#) of [Missouri](#). As Congressman from Missouri's First District, he represented portions of [St. Louis](#) in the U.S. House of Representatives for 32 years.



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to say that I am a big supporter of public broadcast and by no means would like to see it destroyed, because I think it plays a very intricate part of our mass media in this country.

My complaint primarily was that with us giving more and more control to local stations, that we ought to be sure and make sure that the people at the local level that are going to be making the decisions about employment and about programming truly reflect the composition of all elements of that community. And this has not been true. Traditionally, the local boards of directors come from primarily the educational field, the universities and big business. And in a recent survey that was conducted, we found that in ten of the major cities of the country, there were not any blacks or other minorities on any of the ten boards of directors. And this I resent very greatly.

**MOAKLEY:** In the law I understand that the public broadcasting is supposed to live up to the civil rights aspect under Title VI and VII, but you say they are not living up to it?

**CLAY:** Yes. Those provisions of law are not being enforced at this point by HEW, by the Broadcasting Corporation, or by the FCC. I think that what happened on the floor of Congress the other day was, in itself, a victory. I think that we made it expressly clear what the intent of Congress is in this area, and I think that we are going to get much more cooperation from these federal agencies.

**MOAKLEY:** I know that it was a very nip and tuck fight right down to the wire. And your amendment lost by one vote, which was one of the tightest votes that we've had on the floor of Congress. But you feel that it was still a victory even though you lost the amendment?

**CLAY:** Oh, yes. I think it was a victory because Congressman Staggers and Congressman McDonald made it perfectly clear what the intent of Congress was when the bill was passed in



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1967. And we got all of the legislative history into the record. And there is no question now that they must comply with the provisions of Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act.

**MOAKLEY:** Congressman Clay, what role do you believe public television must take in providing some leadership in ascertaining the needs of the community and following the community's needs?

**CLAY:** Well, I think if public television is to live up to its mandate, the mandate that was imposed on it by Congress, that it cannot adequately do this without determining what the needs of the communities they are supposed to be serving are. And without ascertainment, without going out into the community and asking the people what it is that they think the greatest problems are, what types of programs they want to see, I don't see how realistically and legally they can perform the mandate of Congress.

**MOAKLEY:** Thank you very much Congressman Clay for your very wonderful presentation to the audience here. And I thank you also very much, for assenting to be back here next week so that we can finish the discussion we started today.

**ANNOUNCER:** Thank you very much Congressman Joe Moakley and William Clay for your views on public TV. Be sure and tune in next week to WILD radio as our Congressman Joe Moakley discusses matters of interest to our community.

END OF INTERVIEW