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What Makes the Difference

Robert A. Michelson
Southern Illinois University Carbondale

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It has been said -- and written -- that home is where the people are, home is where the votes are. These words have not fallen upon ears of tin. In fact, in the last two decades, we have seen a dramatic rise in the number of United States (U.S.) Senators who have taken these words to heart. More and more, U.S. Senators are directing their attentions homeward in hopes of satisfying their constituents and insulating support for the coming elections.

Today's Senator is multifaceted -- an ombudsman, a politician, a statesman, a legislator, and a prophet all at once. A good Senator like a good stew, though, is more than the product of a successful mixture of ingredients. Something enhances and enlivens his character and performance. In a stew, it could be pepper, garlic, or salt; for the Senator, it is his staff, his aides. No Senator can function or perform his duties adequately without the support of a good staff. A good staff acts as a catalyst, affording a multiplying effect to the Senator's efforts: one plus one equals four.

To be fair, I have to admit my summer internship for U.S. Senator Paul Simon (Simon) has colored my perception of Senators and their dependence on staff. As this analysis of the responsibilities, attitudes, and images of the Senator, his staff, and interns progresses, the

synthesis of textual wisdom with work experience should provide added insight and reveal -- or eliminate -- the errs of hasty generalizations.

In the book Congress and Its Members, Davidson and Oleszek propose that members of Congress have dual-identities, which in turn create dual responsibilities. These duties and roles interlock, at times coinciding yet other times clashing (p.110). Before we go any further, let me define what the Senator's roles and duties entail, on and off the Hill. On the Hill, the Senator's most prevalent role is that of legislator. This job requires the Senator to acquire knowledge and expertise pertaining to his committee work. Knowledge is power. Through research by his staff and himself and from conversations with his colleagues, the Senator acquires this knowledge. As a tool of persuasion, it mercilessly slays and sways other Senators. The Senator chooses committee work in areas that interest him and best serve the needs of his constituents. A Senator from Kentucky, where tobacco crops provide large revenues for the state, should try to get on the agriculture committee if he values his elected position. This way he can be instrumental in the drafting of legislation that effects tobacco crops.

Another role of the Senator on the Hill is that of constituency servant, a role that plays hand in hand with the legislative role. A Senator's performance can be measured by election results. If the Senator does not satisfy his constituency by giving them a big enough piece of the pie, he will be defeated at the polls, assuming that his constituents are not apathetic or fooled by his re-election campaign. Because of the repercussions, legitimate accomplishments -- obtaining small business loans, funding for education and highways, or crop subsidies -- are the lifeblood of his political career. The Senator's only alternative is deception, a method favored by a few old codgers.

The third role mentor-communicator revolves around the two-way communication between Washington and the constituents. The Senator must learn the feelings of his constituency as it pertains to an issue or legislation, relay the information to his colleagues in Washington, and return his colleagues' responses to the constituents via the mail, personal appearances, press, or other media. A communication breakdown in this relationship prevents the Senator from truly "representing" his constituents. If the Senator purposely severs the link between Washington and his constituents, either he is ignoring his duties as mentor-communicator or has abandoned them

altogether. He becomes a "maverick" legislator who votes for or against legislation or drafts legislation, based on his own morals or principles.

Lynn Martin has accused Simon of neglecting his mentor-communicator responsibility during his bid for the presidency. She also claims that he is using his position as a stepping stool for the realization of higher aspirations, implying that he does not and will not adequately represent us on Capitol Hill. At the same time, she reamed him in every interview for not agreeing to debate with her more than two times even though Simon as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee had to attend confirmation hearings and review the nomination of David Souter to the U.S. Supreme Court. The job of filling the unexpected vacancy magnified his demanding schedule (Hardy, Section 2, p. 10). *He also did not want to give the relatively unknown -- and unliked -- Martin the exposure that 10 statewide debates would guarantee.*

To fully appreciate the "representative" role of the Senator, our attention must shift homeward. Since a Senator represents a larger geographic area than the Representative who only "mans" a district, his duties, although theoretically the same, differ in the amount of

time taken to complete them and by the amount of money expended in the process. Both factors are multiplied; it costs more money and takes more time. The two challenges the Senator faces back home are the maintenance of constituent relations and the complications of casework. The first task, the maintenance of constituent relations, has proven costly, financially as well as politically (if ignored). To accomplish this task takes a great deal of time, money, and effort. Trips back and forth from Washington add up; they can be taxing on the Senator's health and pocket book.

Researchers have found that Senators tend to visit their home state at times of adverse economic conditions and as election day approaches (Davidson, p. 132). The latter would explain why my group of interns "socialized" with Simon more than the previous group of interns. I suspect that the fall interns have seen the most of him since he has been "in town" shooting commercials and giving interviews, two more methods that Simon utilizes to maintain his relationship with the constituents. Simon also uses his staff in offices across the state, newsletters, personal appearances, mailings, and radio/television/newspaper interviews and commercials to keep in touch with the Illinois voters. Notice with few exceptions, these methods cost

Simon money.

Voter estrangement would prove disastrous come election time; so, the Senator cannot afford to overlook the importance of casework. A Senator cannot ignore the problems and questions of his constituency for long without feeling the sobering effects. Casework is basically the "ombudsman" role of the Senator. Not all Senators enjoy performing this service, but they do recognize its necessity. Caseworkers clear up red tape and expedite matters for constituents lost in the "bureaucratic hogwash and rinse." They are usually assigned specific subject/agency areas and work on the cases in their particular areas until they are completed. The majority of the casework is handled by the Senator's staff or interns, but at least in Simon's case, the Senator still manages to handle a few cases. Simon handles cases of special interest to him. His "personal favorites" are those dealing with immigration and visa problems. These cases, incidentally, make wonderful human interest pieces on the five o'clock news.

As aforementioned, the two "worlds" of the Senator -- Capitol Hill and home -- can create conflicts-of-interest. When dealing with casework, the question arises of whether or not a contributor to the

Senator's campaign fund should be deprived of normal ombudsman services available to all constituents for fear that he would receive preferential treatment. The resolution for this dilemma is perplexing, for an unknowing caseworker could very well "go to bat" for a constituent without knowing that he had contributed to the Senator's previous campaign. What are they to do in this situation—apologize and discontinue the service? At Simon's Chicago office, the staff member and intern are notified if the case that they are working on belongs to a major contributor or close associate of Simon and instructed to give it special attention. Most of the time, the Director or Acting Director of the Office handle these cases and pamper the constituent. I feel this is ethically wrong, but we were assured that it was necessary for Simon's re-election and for the money flow to continue.

Conflicts-of-interest are also possible when it comes to voting on legislation. The Senator may have a financial interest or investment in oil and have to vote on the depletion allowance. His own interests may taint his perception of the constituents' wishes; more than likely, the Senator will talk himself into believing that his constituents want what "just happens" to be the same thing he wants. The

same problem arises with the Senator who is a practicing attorney with clients who have an interest in legislation. I feel the Senator should excuse himself on votes where there is a conflict-of-interest and do his best to eliminate conflicts-of-interest.

That the two worlds of the Senator produce conflicts-of-interest and different roles for the Senator does not preclude the intertwining of senatorial duties with results befitting both the constituents and the Senator. The Food and Drug Law, enacted in 1906, is a prime example. Some twenty years prior to 1906, after hearing the complaints of constituents who had become concerned that legal restrictions for adulterants, injected into food, did not exist, the efforts of the Honorable Senator A.S. Paddock of Nebraska began. Acting as both the caseworker and mentor-communicator, Paddock introduced the worries and wishes of his constituency to his colleagues in the Senate. Research revealed that some of the adulterants were harmful to the health of the public, and so the Senate responded by drafting and passing legislation that restricted the injection of the harmful adulterants into food. Because of opposition in the House of Representatives, seventeen years passed before the legislation became law. Nevertheless, this instance

illustrates the marriage of senatorial roles that benefits both the Senator and the constituents. Paddock's constituency realized that he was doing his darnedest and rewarded his efforts by re-electing him; the constituents got the Food and Drug Law of 1906 (Hartke, p. 90).

Once a student works for a Senator as an intern, he learns that the Senator fosters and juggles three images: one on the hill, one at home, and yet another in the privacy of friends, family, and employees. Each of these images tries to cater to the positive metaphors, promulgated by the people, press, and politicians; again, whether his efforts are successful depends largely on the efforts and achievements of his staff. The Senator tries to hang with an air of intellectualism and professionalism on Capitol Hill. He rarely will be seen in other than a starched suit and tie (unless someone hides cameras in the hotel room he frequents with his "nieces"). This is not to say that all Senators are humorless with a personality rating of one point three on a scale of one to ten. This assumption would be erroneous since the presentation of the package -- the Senator -- often sells it to the public; so, it would be safer to assume that the Senator has a great personality and a thimble for a brain.

Anyways, a peculiar transformation occurs when a Senator from

a state such as Kentucky or Iowa returns home. It can best be described as "retromorphosis." The Senator reverts to his "old habits" and puts on his "old clothes" in order to appear to be just like the common folk. In some instances, I believe this is a sincere act. I imagine that the Senator is not thrilled to be formally dressed for all occasions and just wants to relax. For others, I suspect it is a ploy to lure the voters into a false sense of security, reminiscent of the actions the pod-people in The Invasion of the Body Snatchers. Regardless of the whether the intentions are sincere or not, the public can see the difference in dress and gestures in commercials, in the newspapers, and in person. Paul Simon's new campaign commercials show him dressed in a flannel shirt and casual slacks. This is quite a difference from the blue suit and bow tie that the public is accustomed to seeing him wear. This garb though is what Simon wears when he is at home in Makanda or when he is relaxing.

The public perception of the Senator rarely skates passed the propaganda, pushed by Simon and the other Senators. A side of Simon seldom seen by Illinoisans is the one I got to see at the office parties. The Honorable Paul Simon told funny jokes and even laughed at the marginally perverted jokes. I was just about floored. He is human.

Although the interns and new staff were apprehensive, those aged staff members Bill Clair, Anne Roosevelt, and David Siegel were notably comfortable with the whole situation. After chatting with Simon, I was pleasantly surprised and relieved to find that the man I work for was the same man talking to me. Simon does not project a false image of himself for public consumption. I was impressed.

To say that staff merely help the Senator would be an understatement. A good staff ensures the Senator's survival on the Hill and at home. Before we proceed, it is necessary to point out that the Senator employs two separate staffs -- committee staff and personal staff -- that perform distinct functions for the Senator. The size of personal staff tends to reflect the population of the state the Senator represents, the larger the population the more money he is allocated for staff. Unlike the Representative though, the Senator can hire as many staff as he can afford.

The main goal of the personal staff is the re-election of the Senator. They perform a variety of duties, essential for his reelection. Even though, this summer, I learned that sometimes the sole motivation for the staff is the retention of their jobs, the important thing for the Senator is that they get their jobs done. The Senator

hires and assigns staff, according to expertise or interest. Each Senator dictates the specific functions of the staff and his relationship with the staff; so, each office is unique. Some work alongside their staff, and others give their staff substantial leeway and discretion.

In Simon's Chicago office, the functions are duly distributed among the personal staff. No one person, aside from Lucinda who is always complaining about answering the phones, is overly burdened by the responsibilities of his job. Being a journalist himself, Simon understands the power of the press and writes a weekly column P.S./Washington expressing his views on issues of the moment. The job of the press secretary Ellen Golin is to make sure Simon "makes the news." She is responsible for the preparation and timely issuance of press releases. This includes knowing which statements are newsworthy, writing them up in such a way that is "likely to make the news," and getting them to the press before the deadlines. The press secretary must decide if the release should be an exclusive and what paragraph and line to extract from the text of the release to spark the interest of the press. Golin also has to make sure that erroneous or adverse stories are "killed" if possible. If it is an adverse story, all

she can do is offer Simon's point of view. Not every case, column, or speech deserve press coverage. Golin chooses those she feels will benefit Simon or rebut allegations against Simon. Again, the functions of the press secretary vary according to the individual Senator, but for the most part, the press secretary provides a major link between the Senator with his constituents.

The Director of the Chicago office, Anne Roosevelt, makes sure that everything runs smoothly in the office and "catches hell" if her staff blunders. This summer she was coordinating Simon's campaign in an office up the block. In fact, the staff in the Chicago office was split- some in the regular office, some in the campaign office. This riff created temporary positions, filled by chipper graduates from an array of universities.

Since Anne Roosevelt has been busy in the campaign office, Nancy Chen was appointed Acting Director. Chen's normal title is Deputy Director/Intern Coordinator. Aside from assuming Roosevelt's responsibilities, Chen still handles all Asian immigration casework since she can speak Chinese fluently and knows a handful of other Asian languages. Believe me, she is an asset. Her ability to speak the native tongue breaks the communication barrier with Asian-American

constituents. One day, while the interns were goofing around in Dixon's office, threatening to smear his staff in softball, an Asian-American walked in. No one in Dixon's office could understand him. We escorted him to our office, and Chen helped him. This situation made me realize the need for multilingual staff.

As the Intern Coordinator, Chen chooses the interns for the Chicago office. The process involves an "oral confrontation" with the staff and herself and includes a writing sample. The prospective intern knows before he leaves whether or not he has been chosen. My interview surprised me because we talked about our ideologies and compared notes as to what our positions were on capital punishment, abortion, and military spending. I expected a routine "Why do you want to work for Senator Simon" interview. *Thank God*. The importance of her responsibility tends to be overlooked by the interns but certainly not by the staff who have to work with the students she chooses.

The next in the chain-of-command is Glenece Banks, Office Manager. Banks' responsibilities include talking on the phone with family and friends (just kidding), ordering supplies, training the interns on the computers, writing letters of congratulations, and

handling various office crises. With Roosevelt's absence, Banks assumed the role of "the punisher." Still, she seems to garner more respect from the staff than Chen possibly because she acts like one of the staff. Even though Glenece scolded us, Chen came off as being the heavy. I think the distance between Chen and the staff magnifies her weaknesses as a leader.

Besides answering phones and recording constituents' opinions, Debbie Gadiel, the part-time secretary, boosts office moral *except after long nights of lapping drinks*. Gadiel always has a joke, a comment, or jovial look that lightens up tense situations and livens up the office atmosphere. She trains the interns on the phones, teaching them how to answer the phone, transfer calls, take messages, and record requests or opinions.

The rest of the staff in the Chicago office are assigned to one or more issues such as immigration, unemployment, military, education, or labor. Casework is most vital; it highlights the link between the Senator and the constituents. In Simon's offices, the caseworker must have a written request from a constituent before he can begin investigation. If a constituent calls requesting assistance or information, the caseworker asks him to send a letter, explaining the re-

quest in detail. A walk-in simply fills out a request form.

Once the caseworker receives the written request, he starts work on the case. The first thing he does is determine whether or not the case falls within Simon's jurisdiction. If not, he contacts the constituent by phone or by mail, explains why it is not within Simon's jurisdiction, and offers advice as to what organization could be of service. If so, he fills out a bucksheet, a form calling for the name of the constituent(s), for the codes of the agencies involved, and for the styles of the letters to be mailed to the constituent(s) and agencies. After completing the information on the bucksheet, he enters its contents into the Correspondence Management System (CMS) -- a computer system that enables the office to retain the casework information, including names, the constituent's problems, interim communications, and final disposition data. The case is given a number, and the file is opened. CMS allows easy access to form letters, facilitating frank mailings, and in the event that a constituent continuously writes, the form letter responses can be changed by using the CMS's ad hoc function. ~~(See Appendix I for samples of ad hoc and form letters.)~~

After the data is inputted into CMS, the caseworker "bucks"

the case by mailing the letter, casting light upon the situation, to the agency or agencies. He also encloses a copy of the constituent's letter. As soon as a case is "bucked" to the agency or agencies, the constituent receives a letter summarizing the actions of the caseworker. A copy of the letter, sent to the agency or agencies, is also enclosed.

Weeks sometimes months pass before the caseworker finally receives a response from the agency or agencies. The disenchanting reality of casework is that the responses do not always offer any solutions, and even when the responses do answer the question or request, the responses are not always positive. If the caseworker is writing to the constituent with good news though, he signs Simon's name with the signature machine; otherwise, the caseworker signs his own name. This way the Simon's name is only associated with good news. The closed cases are kept on file for future reference. With the constituents' permission, the successful cases are sometimes mentioned in newsletters.

Simon houses his legislative assistants in the D.C. office. These individuals not only help keep Simon briefed on current legislation but also help him resolve his schedule conflicts. If Simon has to choose

between which committee hearing or meeting to attend, he turns to legislative assistants who closely monitor committee sessions. The legislative assistants give him the "lowdown" on each of the committee meetings he should attend. Simon attends the committee meeting promising the discussion of the most pressing or volatile issues and dispatches his legislative assistants to the other meetings.

If constituents call the Chicago office with questions or comments about legislation, they are referred to the legislative assistant in D.C. who has analyzed the bill or law in questions. The legislative assistant will even mail a copy of the bill or law to the constituent upon request. Other duties of the legislative assistants include preparing position papers and working with -- at times working over -- committee members to muster cosponsors for the Simon's bills.

Up until this point, discussion has centered upon the duties of the personal staff. This was done by no means as an indication of the worth or workload of committee staff. Whereas the personal staff's goal is the Senators re-election, the committee staff's mission pertains primarily to policy research and oversight. Mounting demands, placed upon the Senators, have increased the influence the committee

staff has over the legislative process; most Senators do not have time to investigate claims, define issues, draft bills, or conduct extensive research. U.S. News and World Report describes the committee staff as the "shadow government" on the Hill (p. 63).

Even though Senate committees temporarily borrow staff from other federal agencies or hire consultants and interns, two types of non-temporary committee staff -- permanent and investigative-- exist. The authorization and funding for the two differ. The permanent staffs, funded by the annual legislative branch appropriations bill, are established by congressional rule or public law while the investigative staffs are hired by committees to supplement the permanent staffs. Authorization and funding for the investigative staff used to be achieved by the Senate Rules and Administration Committee's approval of the committees' resolutions, containing draft budgets; nowadays, funding for the investigative staffs must be included in one budget request (Davidson, p. 250).

What the functions of the committee staff are depends on the committee because the functions change from one committee to another. According to Davidson and Oleszek, committee staffs usually perform "administrative (chief clerk), substantive (profes-

sional aides), political (staff director and chief counsel), and public relations (press officer) duties" (p. 251). For instance, since they are policy specialist, the professional aides help committees develop and refine policies. The administrative duties of the committee staff encompass clerical responsibilities such as organizing, filing, keeping track of records and reports, and answering constituent mail, directed to the committee or subcommittee chairman.

Between Simon's personal staff and committee staff, a symbiotic relationship persists. Information flows back and forth, benefiting both staffs. The committee staff tells the personal staff about the status of various pieces of legislation, and the personal staff relays their opinions and the constituents' ideas and opinions about pieces of legislation to the committee staff. The committee staff brings the constituents' ideas and opinions to the attention of the committees, who draw from them as they draft legislation.

This type of symbiotic relationship also exists among the staffs of Senators with shared interests. During the 1969 "battle" over the military budget, in an effort to compensate for "the sheer lack of time the Senators [had] to communicate with one another," the liberal Senators and their supporters organized opposition by utilizing

their committee and personal staffs. The offices of Philip Hart and John Cooper, for example, became the nerve center for the movement against the deployment of the antiballistic missile program. Their committee and personal staffs solicited the opinions of Senators, mobilized support, and engaged in bargaining. After sending the "dear colleague" letters, the legislative assistants contacted all the relevant staff assistants to ask for the reactions of the other Senators. The opinions were recorded, and the liberal Senators were informed of the unsure colleagues that they needed to buttonhole (Foley, p. 190-1).

By and large due to the Senator's increasing responsibilities and limited budgetary resources, interns are hired to work in the home and Hill offices. Interns supplement the staff by performing functions that the staff are unable -- or unwilling -- to do because of time constraints and by assisting them with the completion of the workload. In turn, the interns develop or improve skills on the computers, over the phones, and through direct contact with constituents.

In Simon's office, the internship begins with the assignment of the intern to a staff member. The staff member informs the intern of the particular areas that their casework covers, and they chat at

length about each other's background and beliefs. After getting acquainted with his "boss," Chen parades the intern around the office and introduces him to the other staff members and interns who offer him helpful advice concerning dress, dates, humor, and constituents.

Next, the intern is taught how to fill out buck sheets, how to use the computers, and how to answer the phones, respectively. The intern's boss explains that the casework comes from constituent mail or phone calls and then proceeds to demonstrate how to fill out a buck sheet. The process of filling out buck sheets confuses many interns at first, but once they do a couple dozen, it becomes second nature.

Upon the completion of ten or so buck sheets, the intern sets up an appointment with Glenece Banks to learn how to open, close, reopen, and record interim actions on a case. Banks usually tries to train more than one intern at a time since the process is time consuming. To begin, she types the number assigned to the intern's boss into the computer, allowing access to CMS. A series of data requests appear on the screen; she takes one of the completed buck sheets and answers the questions according to the data on the buck sheet. If the case is new, the data input opens the case, assigning a case number.

If the case is already open, the intern, she explains, only needs to enter the case number to record interim actions or to close the case. Banks ends the lesson with instructions on how to print the letters and envelopes and hands out a CMS manual for the intern to study.

About a week passes before the secretary Debbie Gadiel trains the intern how to answer the phones. Answering the phones involves much more than saying "Hello, Paul Simon's office" and connecting the caller with the desired staff member. The phones are used to record constituents' opinions and requests, to take messages for Simon and the staff, to transfer calls to the staff in the Chicago, St. Louis, and D.C. offices, and to complete or to follow-up casework. When a constituent calls wishing to express his opinion on an issue or requesting information on a piece of legislation, the intern must fill out a form which will be sent to the D.C. office if the caller chooses to leave his name and address. The letters are directed to the proper person in D.C. who sends a response to the constituent. The response strengthens constituent relations with Simon.

Taking messages and transferring calls are seemingly simple tasks, but errors in either can hinder, even harm the staff's performance and constituent relations. Failure to take neat and thorough

messages leads to time lost by the staff who have to look up scribbled phone numbers and decipher the caller's name. If the intern forgets to take a message, the staff member fails to return the call; the constituent thinks Simon and his staff do not care about his problem.

By pushing the conference key, dialing the D.C. or St. Louis office's phone number, and putting the line on hold, the intern transfers the call. When a constituent calls Simon's Chicago office with a question pertaining to legislation or with a request for tickets for the White House tour, the intern transfers the call to Washington. Sometimes, the office will transfer calls if the constituent cannot afford a phone call to D.C. or St. Louis. The purpose of transferring phone calls is to facilitate the constituent's quest, to make his experience with Simon and his staff as trouble-free as possible.

The final use for the phones is to complete or to follow-up casework. The intern should phone an agency that does not respond, even after being sent numerous letters asking for knowledge of the progress on the case, to make sure the agency has started to work on the case. To buck a case to a federal agency without a computer code, the intern has to call the federal agency to get its address.

Also, there are cases when bucking by mail is not appropriate. If a person writes complaining about his omission from admission to a university, the intern usually has to call the admission's head before the admission's deadline in order to solve the constituent's problem.

As soon as the intern learns these rudimentary skills, he is expected to accomplish the tasks set before him by his boss -- case-work -- and by Banks -- answering phones -- with or without supervision. Simon's Chicago office trusts the intern to act professionally while performing his duties. This trust motivates the intern to do his best, but knowing that what he does helps not only Simon but also the constituents and Simon makes the difference.

CLOSING REMARKS AND OBSERVATIONS

When I stepped onto the commuter train on May 21, 1990, I did not know what to expect of my job at Simon's office nor did I know what was expected of me except that I show up by 9 a.m. every weekday. My first days were not odd. After meeting Beidre Christenson, my boss, I was trained for tasks that lay ahead of me. *I taught some of the older staff how to use the CMS and Word Perfect programs on the*

computer. All the functions required of me seemed clerical; so, I wondered how important the interns' functions were to the office.

By mid-June all the other summer interns had arrived, and I was adept in my casework for prisons, education, handicapped, mental illness, and environment. Already, I had written oodles of ad hoc letters requesting this or that, and the computer work had become almost assembly-line. Around this time, I noticed how relaxed the office was compared to my preconceived notion of a senator's office. The dress code was loose -- shirt, tie, and slacks. No socks were required unless Simon or "bigwig" visitors were coming in! The other interns and staff, with a few exceptions, were a blast, most of them pranksters like myself. I was enjoying working in the Chicago office.

The casework started to really interest me, especially the prison and the environment cases. With the prison cases, one man who shall remain nameless wrote us every week with a new problem. He addressed the letters to the honorable Paul Simon which tickled me until Deidre explained that that is formally how you are supposed to address him. She also explained that this man and other constituents write often once they learn that their letters will get answered. He was writing just to get a response, not for us to solve his "problems."

I decided to write him ad hoc letters with Deidre's signature all summer. She ended up getting cards thanking her for her help and wishing her well.

The environment cases interested me for a different reason. This summer in many counties, there were heated debates over the locations of landfills and incinerators. By far, most of Deidre's mail on environment was from constituents concerned about the location of landfills or incinerators "in their backyards." My response to these constituents was sent to D.C. and an altered version became the form letter for those writing about landfills.

Perhaps the most satisfying case for me personally, dealt with a girl who was denied admittance to four prestigious graduate schools because two of her four letters of recommendation had been mistakenly omitted from the applications sent to the universities. Her father wrote to us literally begging Simon for assistance. Deidre had gone on vacation, and so I handled the case by myself. After the father sent me copies of the other two letters of recommendations, I contacted the four universities finding out who I needed to attention my letters to at each university. I sent copies of the recommendations along with a letter explaining the situation to each of the

universities.

Within a week, I received responses from the universities. All four had decided to admit her. I cannot tell you how happy I was to call her father and inform him. I remember quite clearly the conversation with her father, his praise for Simon, and his gratitude to me for my assistance. This case made me realize the importance of casework. It is not just helping Simon answer the mail; it is helping people, people who vote.

I cannot lie. By the end of the summer, answering phones, writing form letters, and taking that train had taken its toll. Having a second job to pay for my train fare did not help, but I was growing tired of the internship. Even though I made valuable friends and acquired skills to help me in just about any job, I was ready for school. *Sound sick?*

And although it sounds cliched, this experience changed my life. Before going to work for Simon, I wanted to be a prosecuting attorney and eventually a politician. After working for Simon, I learned that I could not handle either of these ways of life. Simon constantly has to be careful about what he says and does in public, which are not rough tasks for him since he is genuinely a nice fellow. I, on the other

hand, could not accommodate these requirements. Wearing suits, cutting my hair, and "kissing butt" are not what I consider the "funner" things in life. I can appreciate his efforts though and that is what I plan on doing *from afar*. I admire Simon for his tenacity and his mirth. Congratulations, Paul, and thank you for the opportunity. It is something I will never forget. Funny, until I wrote this paper, I did not realize how much I miss the people I worked with this summer.

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