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INTERVIEW WITH:

The Honorable Charles McIlhinney, Jr. (R)

143rd District

Bucks County

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Heidi Mays (HM): Good afternoon.

The Honorable Charles McIlhinney, Jr. (CM): Hello.

HM: Hi. Thanks for being here with me today. I'm here with Representative Chuck McIlhinney, and he represents the 143rd Legislative District from Bucks County. He has been serving the Pennsylvania House from 1998 until 2006, and he'll be soon a Senator with the Pennsylvania Senate. Thank you for being here with me today.

CM: Great to be here. Thanks for having me.

HM: I wanted to begin by asking you about your family and your early life.

CM: Well, I've been involved in politics most of my life. My mother was a big influence. She was a [*inaudible*] with the county Party, so I was out door-knocking and lit[erature] dropping at a young age. I went away to college and really gave up on politics, never thought I wanted to get involved in it at all. I ended up playing lacrosse for Bryant College, and I tore my knee up playing that in one of my last games there in the playoffs. And from that point on, I came back home and was actually on crutches laid up in bed, and I'll tell you the story; everybody else's "How'd you get involved in politics?" again. Well, what happened – with no intention whatsoever of doing it – the leaf machine in Doylestown Borough broke down, and they told us we'd rake the leaves out to the end, and they'd suck it up with this big vacuum cleaner, and they told us that

we would have to bag them in these brown bags because the Borough Council didn't want to repair the leaf machine. So on my crutches, I could get around and pick up about 200 signatures on a petition and went up to Borough Council and said that we're not going to stand – because I don't want to be, you know, stuffing these leaves. My own personal greed, I guess, or just wanted to get out of work; “We're not going to stand for,” you know, “this sort of a thing.” So, on Borough Council was a friend of mine from an earlier time, Phil Dailey, bangs the gavel, says, “All right, we're going to fix the leaf machine.” And I think, you know, that was a great victory, and we're going to get some things done. After the meeting, Phil Dailey pulls me aside and he says, “Since you got 200 signatures on a piece of paper, you can get ten more because Ollie Wilson isn't running for election. You're going to run for election and come up here and figure out how to pay to fix the leaf machine without raising taxes the whole time.” So, that was like my first entrée into this. I said, “Yeah, you can complain. You can make the changes,” and government's not trying to stick it to you. But the bottom line is, you need to come up with solutions, so if you're going to get involved, don't just complain, come up with some solutions. So, I ended up serving on Doylestown Borough Council. We managed not to raise taxes and fix the leaf machine after a tough contract with the police department that year, but the bottom line is that that lead to, I guess, a new awakening—or I don't want to say awakening, just a realization – that you need to kind-of be compromising on both sides to come to solutions. It's not as cut and dry as Borough Council just wanting me to bag leaves. So, it's little bit more to all these issues. So from there, when Senator Conti [Joe; State Representative, 1993-1996; State Senator, 1997-2006], who's leaving now, was the State House Member, when he moved over to the

Senate, I was the Councilman, and he had contacted me. I'd worked on many of his campaigns previous when he was our Township Supervisor as well, and he had told me in advance that he'd be moving on to the Senate, so I had some time to prepare to run for the State House, which I did. [I] had a tough first election. It was actually a three-way Primary and a Special [Election], basically, because the Republican Member – there were three Republicans sitting, two Supervisors and me, the Councilman. One changed to be a Democrat, one changed to be an Independent, all from within the District, you know, towns next to each other. So, it was basically a geographical battle between the three of us, which I managed to survive by 297 votes, I think it was, which led to, you know. Further elections were a much bigger margin, luckily, in the future years.

HM: Well, could you tell me; what was your career before coming to the [House]?

CM: I was a fiscal director for the Private Industry Council, so I have a finance degree, and I came out as a bean counter. But I was 29, I guess, when I first decided to run for the House, so I didn't really establish too much of a career. I was single. I got married when I was out here. I now have two lovely children. They're two and four years old now. My wife has put up with me, but the one thing I have to say, you know, Jennifer, you're going to see this, but you knew what you were getting into when you married me. But she's been a tremendous source of support in some of these races and to allow me to go out and do my job in the District takes a special kind-of person.

HM: Well, what made you decide to become a Republican, and what kind of Republican do you think you are?

CM: Everybody's talking about a lot of issues; "Why are you a Republican?" I was Republican in college, and I came to that solution. I registered Republican when I was 18. I don't know if I ever had a choice, really, but I was going to register that way, but why I actually became one was in college; [it] was my theory on what government should and should not do for you. It's not government's answers to solve all the questions, solve all the problems; they don't have a solution for everything. Sometimes you just need to leave it up to the people back where the problems are to make the decisions to govern themselves a bit. I get a lot of flak sometimes. I voted against the mandatory seatbelt law, voted against the mandatory helmet law, and it's not that I think that you should not wear a helmet or you shouldn't wear your seatbelts, but it should be something that you take upon yourself to do to protect yourself. Government can give you the statistics, but we can't protect you from yourself, so you need to kind of take responsibility for your own actions and suffer the consequences if those actions are, you know, not what you want to see happening. And that's part of, I think, maturing and growing up, or whatever, but you can't just turn to government for all the answers, and that's what I see the different philosophies in the Republicans and the Democrats. You know, they talk about fiscal and social issues – it's the fact that every time somebody has an accident, I see a lot of the Democrat policy leaders come up with new laws to protect them from themselves. You know, you always see at the national level, I think, like, the video

games. Like all of a sudden somebody shoots somebody, and Hillary Clinton's¹ on the Hill talking about outlawing video games. Like, you know, how about the parents just protecting and teaching right from wrong, and, you know, overlooking and seeing what the kids are actually doing every day, which I spend a lot of time seeing on my kids, you know, what they're playing, what they're watching. He watches Spongebob², and I see them punch each other. Hopefully, you won't grow up to be a psychopath, but you need to, kind-of, take part in raising your children and not just turn to government for the answers. So, that's the different philosophies I see, and I see it out here in Harrisburg an awful lot.

HM: You had a great story about why you got initially into politics. Why did you decide to run for the Pennsylvania House?

CM: Well, that happened when Joe Conti moved on, and like I said, he came to me and said, "I'm moving on. You ought to think about this." Now, one of the things I think that Joe – he always liked to, and this is a long-standing philosophy in politics, is your biggest troublemaker, you put him in the decision-making spot. So, I was complaining to Joe Conti as my State Rep[resentative] about the number of bars that were in Doylestown. It was a resort liquor license issue, and we have 28. It's a historic town and we're putting a lot of effort into it, a lot of money revitalizing it and did a Main Street Program. It's now a beautiful spot. Actually, when I was on Council, it wasn't such a nice little town. It was getting some empty store fronts, and it was kind of getting

¹ Hillary Rodham Clinton, wife of former U.S. President William Jefferson Clinton; U.S. Senator (D – New York), 2001-2010; Presidential Candidate, 2008; U.S. Secretary of the State, 2009-present.

² SpongeBob SquarePants, cartoon on Nickelodeon Channel, ca. 1999-present.

depressed, so we started the revitalization project in the town. And I was worried about the 28 liquor licenses for a quota of three, and we needed to do something about the liquor laws, and I was complaining and complaining, and Joe was kept on saying, “That’s tough to change the liquor laws, and,” you know, “it’s just a long-standing issue. Every time you bring it up, there’s a lot of things that get attached to it.” And when it opened up, I think it was an opportunity for him to get me out of his hair, say “How about you go out there, and you see if you can’t change the liquor laws?” I’m happy to say two years into my term, though, it was my bill that changed the resort liquor license law, the county-wide quota system, and gave the town some standing. So, the towns can now, you know, accept or deny or have some sort of say in whether or not the new liquor license comes into your – you kind-o State Representative, 1993-1996f can place it as part of the zoning process, which they never had standing before, so we were able to get it, but it was a full-time effort over two years, and I can see why Joe, he had other issues on his plate than to deal with little Doylestown Borough’s liquor license problem.

HM: You talked about some of the candidates in your first race. What else do you recall about that first House race?

CM: It was a whirlwind. It was a Special Election in February – actually, it was in January – and I took office on February 17. But Joe Conti won in November. We announced in December, had the election in January, took office in February, so, you know, it was really like a four or five week campaign. And I remember the signs going

up on all three sides, and we had these three way debates, and a lot of people came out to support me and got behind me, and it was enough to win it.

HM: Do you remember who some of those people were?

CM: Oh, well, I had a large base of the Republican Party, but my campaign chairman, Tom Scarborough, obviously, my family themselves were on board. I had a whole list of – I guess at that time, the DA [District Attorney] was Allen Rubenstein, and just a lot of senior members of the Party. Harry Fox, and I guess, the Sheriff, and they were just coming out saying, “Stick with it. You’re going to do it. You know, you’re going to beat these other two guys,” and it turned out pretty well.

HM: How did it compare to other campaigns?

CM: Oh, since that time—that was the toughest campaign, and I guess the good part about it was I didn’t know it. I didn’t know what to compare it to, and so I guess I wasn’t as stressed. I was probably more stressed like the last time; I won 61 percent of the vote or something a couple years ago, and everybody knew – you’d walk around town, and – I was going to win that election, but I was more stressed about it. I guess it’s because you end up facing a fact that everybody tells you you’re going to win, so you feel like the pressure is on you to make sure you do win. When that first election, everybody was telling me I wasn’t going to win, and I ended up winning, so the roles gets reversed. I guess the more expected of you, the more pressure’s on you.

HM: Do you recall how much money you had to raise for that first election?

CM: The first election was between 20, 30,000 dollars, which was a lot, actually, for a Special Election. It was a three-way race, and they've subsequently gone up in cost through the years. I do believe that we just spent over one million dollars for getting elected to the State Senate and combined with my fundraising and the State Republican Campaign Committee's fundraising. I think it did top one million. If not, it'll be close to it.

HM: Do you like to campaign?

CM: Campaigning is just about going out and talking to people, asking them their opinions, and listening. And it's a lot easier than legislating, that's for sure, because at least you have some open minds out there. Sometimes you come out with the legislators, and they got a one track mind, and it's hard to get anybody to kind-of compromise on that, but again, that's your job is to come out here and try to get something that accomplishes the best for the most people.

HM: Did your family get involved?

CM: In this race? Sure, sure. They've been very good. My aunt Debbie Harrison, and my aunt, Marybeth, and my grandmother was even rooting for me. She was the funniest.

She would see an article in the newspaper and she would call up and she would really be mad about it, and [say], “They can’t say that about you.” I’m like, “You know, this is what they do in politics. They kind-of twist some stuff sometimes.” But, it was a lot of fun seeing my mom and my dad and everybody supporting me.

HM: What techniques do you think work the best?

CM: Contacts, flat out. If you’re going to try and run a campaign from behind a desk in an office, you’re not going to win. You need people to see you and, you know, shaking their hand is the best way; look them in the eye, and that’s the best way to get your message across.

HM: How was running for the Senate different from running for your House seat?

CM: It’s bigger. It’s four times the size. You’re running in areas that – I was down in Falls Township, which is two and a half to one, 70 percent Democrat. I’m a Republican, and I’m trying to, you know, shake hands and, you know, say, “Can you think about voting for me on the other side?” Because, you can’t just run in the Republican areas and say, “Oh, I’m just going to get the Republican votes.” You’ve got to represent everybody. I was pretty pleased to get 40 percent of the vote down in, in Falls Township. That was quite a large number. It was like double the Republican registration, so.

HM: Can you describe the 143rd Legislative District?

CM: It is the prettiest district in the state, flat out. It is the district from the Delaware, on the Delaware River from Doylestown up to Riegelsville, and it encompasses a big chunk geographically of Bucks County's river front. And when I first ran, it also included New Hope. It included New Hope, Solebury, and Buckingham—all of Buckingham – it was split in the redistricting a few years ago, but it was basically the upper half of Bucks County along the river. And I've brought people down there and it's very wealthy and it's very affluent and very educated. I always kid people; I knock on doors and, you know, a soccer mom comes to the door, and she's got two kids there and you say, "Anything I can do for you?" You're thinking, "Eh, what questions could she ask me?" It turns out, well, she's a stay at home mom with an M.B.A., and she's got a few questions she wants to ask me, so I get into these philosophical debates with my soccer moms. But the district, in itself, is just a really pretty, natural, scenic area, and a lot of the quality of life issues that you got to bring up and you got to fight for are probably unique to that area. It's hard to come out to Harrisburg and actually convince somebody from Central PA to spend their tax dollars on buying open space and preserving open ground. They just look around at, you know, Dauphin County or whatever, and they go, "You've got to be kidding me. We're going to spend tax dollars to a wealthy district to buy farmland so that we don't build on it?" But, it was a very important issue in the district and I fought, you know, years in getting that first Growing Greener package together and subsequently, and the second one was much easier to get done because of the success of the first one. I like the way Governor Rendell didn't even bother to

rename it. He just called it Growing Greener II. It was too successful to change the name.

HM: Well, what are some of the constituent requests that you typically receive?

CM: It could range from, you know, getting a driver's license to passing a new law, but most of my constituents are pretty reasonable about it. They watch. They see what you're doing. It's a silent majority that you see happen out there, and they let you know if they're dissatisfied with you pretty easily.

HM: What kinds of projects have you been a part of and brought back to your district?

CM: There's been a ton of grant money that I've been able to get a hold of, and I love the way that people keep saying, you know, the pork barrel spending. And, you know, my opponents have run against me on it, and they said, "Ah, this pork spending. We got to stop pork spending," and I've not been, you know, shy about it at all. I said, "You know what?" I'm at the YMCA in Doylestown, and I say to them, "You know what pork spending is?" I said, "It's when Montgomery County YMCA gets a project, [it's] grant money. When Bucks County gets it, it's economic development money." It's much needed funds. I mean, a lot of those community-based organizations rely on those sort-of government grants to sustain them. They cannot raise it themselves all the time. Sometimes there's an economic cycle. They go up and down, and they just can't afford it. And when things go bad at the women's place – I remember the one was the boiler

blew at a woman's place in the winter. So, you know, they weren't able to pay for it, so you had to go, and I was able to get the rest of my colleagues from Bucks County. We supported the grant, and, you know, there was heat, at least for the winter, so it's an important part of being the State Representative to get that sort of grant money back into your district. And to say you shouldn't do it is just, you know, political rhetoric, and that's campaign politics.

HM: Can you tell me what your first impressions were whenever you came to the House?

CM: First impressions: big room. You know, I got here in the majority, and I've always stayed in the majority, so I was kind of spoiled that way. It was a lot of commotion, a lot of argument. It looked like a kind of organized chaos, but you ended up seeing that there was some organization to it, and there was some sort of rhythm. It's amazing: on a normal day, you go into the House Chamber and you say, "Look, how can anybody be listening to each other?" There's all this talking back and forth, but when the important, big issues come up you can hear a pin drop in that Hall and everybody's paying attention and, you know, a lot of this stuff. What happens is, it gets gone over in Committee and it's, you know, this bill's been around for six years. I worked on one bill. It was the Open Records Law. I picked it up. It was 45 years in the making and I finally got it passed, but, you know, John Maher [State Representative, Allegheny County, 1997-present] and I got together and we said, "We need to –" I made the promise to the Newspaper Association and they, you know, hounded me on it and fought for it and we

finally got it passed. But realize that people have been around working on these issues for years and years and years, so some of these Legislators have been around for 20 years. You're not telling them anything new, so they're not exactly hanging on every word you're saying in the House. I do have a funny story about that: I went to the newspapers after they didn't endorse me for the House seat and I said, "Well, listen. I'm there. What can I do?" And they said, "Well, you're not going to get anything done," and I said, "Well, I'm going to go out there and going to fight for that resort liquor license law." Two years later, I came back. I got it passed, got a law changed. I said, "See, I finally got something done," and he goes, "Well, you want to do something really, you know, worthwhile, you tackle the Open Records Law," and I said, "Open Records Law? What's that?" And, you know, he got into it. "All right, let me see what I can try and see what I can do." I come back; I'm working on the Open Records Law and didn't quite get it done by the next election. They endorsed my opponent, that next time, saying that I didn't have enough experience, that, you know, the other lady that was running had enough experience. The following year, between the cycle, I passed the Open Records Law. I get an award from the Newspaper Association, Legislator of the Year Award, the Open Records Legislator of the Year Award, plaque hanging in my office. I come back to the newspaper the next time with a new opponent, and I said, "All right, got it done for you." You know, "I'd like to have that endorsement." You know, we're trying to work forward. I was able to accomplish it. They endorsed my opponent again, saying I've been there too long; it's time for a change. So, it's sort-of like that middle year was perfect, you know, but so I've had such a relationship with the newspapers. You can't pay attention. You can't waste time worrying about what they're going to say, what

they're going to do. You just have to go out and do your job and, you know, hopefully you write history, if you win, I guess, right? So, I'm here doing the history on what I've done and what I've accomplished and ignore the newspapers.

HM: Well, can you, can you tell me how you felt on your first Swearing-In?

CM: I was very proud. It was a close race, but I was very pleased in a five-week span to have a whirlwind of activity and be able to get out and meet a lot of people and get enough votes to win. I was very pleased with it.

HM: Because Special Elections are a little bit different than the regular – the Swearing-In Ceremony for a Special Election is a little bit different than the grand ceremonies, so it was a little bit more intimate.

CM: I had about 60, 70 people in the House Chamber come out.

HM: Just for you, so that's nice.

CM: Yeah, yeah, it was nice. I was with Ted Harhai [R. Ted; State Representative, Westmoreland County, 1997-present]. It was two Special Elections on the same day and the same Swearing-In, so it was nice when I saw what happened the next time when you only get two seats, two tickets to get your family in. It was nice to see how much I was able to share that with so many people on that first time.

HM: Were there any Members that mentored you whenever you first started?

CM: Yeah, there were a few. Roy Reinard, [State Representative, Bucks and Philadelphia Counties, 1983-2002], who was in the 178th before Scott Petri [State Representative, Bucks County, 2003-present], who was from Bucks County; he was a great help to me when I first got out here. There were some other ones. Ron Marsico [State Representative, Dauphin County, 1991-present] and Denny Leh [Dennis; State Representative, Berks County, 1987-2006], even Sam Smith [Samuel H.; State Representative, Armstrong, Indiana and Jefferson Counties, 1987-present] and Dave Argall [David G.; State Representative, Berks and Schuylkill Counties, 1985-2009; State Senator, 2009-present], and since this isn't going out to the press, I'll tell you a story about that; I get out here, and I'm looking around, kind of confused, and I'm thinking, "Well, you know, I got all these issues, all these votes coming up," and I didn't have orientation because of the Special Election, so they kind of just threw me into this active voting schedule, and I'm trying to catch up to everything. And John Perzel [State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1979-present; Speaker, 2003-2006] pulls me aside. He says, "Listen, stick close to Dave Argall. He's kind of in the same ballpark as you. He's got the same opinions. You kind-of got the same philosophies, you know? You know, try to stick close to him." I go, "Okay," and I get a call a couple weeks later. Dave Argall calls, "Hey, listen, I'm standing up with a new environmental initiative with the Democrats with Bill DeWeese [H. William; State Representative, Fayette, Greene and Washington Counties, 1979-present; Speaker 1993-1994] and Mike Veon [Michael; State

Representative, Beaver County, 1985-2006], so will you come down to me?" So, I'm like, "Okay, I'll come down," and, you know, I have kind-of a strong environmental stance, so I'm walking out the back of the House. Sam Smith gets a wind of it – neither one of these were in Leadership at the time – Sam Smith gets a wind of it and pulls me aside and says, "What are you doing?" And he goes, "You can't be doing that." I said, "Well, John Perzel said to stick close to Dave Argall." And he goes, "I don't know if I'd go out there." I said, "You really don't think I –?" He goes, "It's on statewide TV. You don't want to go out there right now. Dave's a little bit off the Reservation." So I go, "Okay, I won't go out there," because I've only been there, you know, for a month or a month and a half or so. So, John Perzel gets done banging the gavel, walks out to the back of the room and says, "Hey." Sam Smith pulls me over and says, "Hey." John Perzel pulls me over and says, "I need to talk to you." I go, "What's going on?" He goes, "You were going to go out there with Dave Argall," and I go, "Yeah." And he goes, "Why would you do that?" I go, "You told me to stay close to Dave Argall in these first few months that I'm here." And he goes, "Well, I didn't want you to do it when he does something stupid." And I'm looking at him, "How am I supposed to know that's stupid?" I'm getting yelled at by the Speaker and the future Majority Leader, and it just kind of goes to show, you can't come with all the answers. You know, you can't have a position on all the issues, and you got to rely on some people when you're out there, and you can make mistakes. I don't think it would have been a huge mistake to be out there advocating for the environment on that position, although it was opposing Governor Ridge's [Thomas J.; Governor, 1995-2001] plan at the time, but it just kind of goes to show it's all personalities in the end.

HM: Would you say there's camaraderie in the House?

CM: Yeah, there definitely is. There's been some stressful times, lately. I have to say that that pay raise issue fractured the Caucus; it really did. It was the wrong thing at the wrong time, and it caused a lot of people; a) to lose their jobs, but; b) just to kind-of lose faith in what we're here to do to begin with. It took the front seat to all the other issues that we've been working on, and it was sad to see that happen that way.

HM: What kinds of activities do you think promote camaraderie?

CM: Well, the fact that you got 203 people in a big room, and you're locked in there until four AM making votes and arguing about things. That's the bottom line; you're in a room and you need 102 votes to pass it. If you don't walk across the aisle and start talking to some of the folks on the other side, then they have no reason to support any of your issues or, you know, positions, or your bills. So, you have to deal with it. It's a matter of necessity for survival if you want to get anything passed. You can say, "We're in the majority. We're going to run it," but you're really not. You need to have support from both sides on the basic philosophy of where you're moving, or you're going to see roadblocks being thrown up in front of you at every turn.

HM: Have you, or will you ever, serve as a mentor to others?

CM: I've tried to. As a matter of fact, I tried to help out with Scott Petri who followed in Roy Reinard's spot, and we've become very close. And same thing with Kathy Watson [Katharine; State Representative, Bucks County, 2001-present] and Bernie O'Neill, [Bernard; State Representative, Bucks County, 2003-present] and we have a close relationship with the guys from Bucks County to make sure that they stay out of trouble. You know, you're sitting on the House Floor, and you don't want to tell a Member how to vote, but when you see Bernie sitting next to me, and you see him making this vote, and you're looking up at that, I go, "I don't think you want to do that because you got some information from one group, but the other group back home's going to be really upset with you. At least, before you make that vote, I want you to know who's going to be mad at you for that." And like I said, it's a learning experience, especially that first year you're here. You just don't know all the issues, so you have to rely on some advice from your colleagues.

HM: How long does it take for you to—?

CM: I think it's a full cycle. I think it's a full two years. When you get reelected, you come back with a little bit better understanding of what it takes to work the district back home and pass legislation out here.

HM: Have you always had a district office?

CM: Yes.

HM: And where's that at?

CM: Well, it's right in Doylestown, just had the one – great office staff. Heather was with me from the beginning, and Tammy came on shortly after that. And that's the key, I think, to being a successful legislator is to make sure you got good staff helping you out in your district, making sure that the services are delivered back to them, because they want to know when they got a problem – at least, they should feel real comfortable when they have a problem with the State – that they call their State Rep[resentative] first. It's the first call they make, and you take care of it for them. You do your best to make sure that every effort is made to take care of the situation.

HM: Can you tell me what committees you served on while you were here?

CM: I pretty much stayed on the same committees. It was the Liquor Committee, obviously, I started off on in that, and the Environmental Committee. They were the two committees that I said I needed to be on. And I've changed my third and fourth committees around a few times. Urban Affairs, Local Government—can't even think of some of them now. But most of my activities, I believe, those two main committees. I was the Vice Chairman of the Environmental Committee, and I'm a Subcommittee Chairman on Energy, and these are all issues that I was spending a lot of my time on. And hopefully, I will continue to do that in the Senate, so you can see the two committees I'll be bucking for in the Senate. It was just two issues that; a) the Liquor Committee I

had a reason to be on that, and then with all the changes in the wine industry, I've grown to really love that sort of legislation. I have a pretty good understanding of a three-tiered system, so I want to stay on it. And, the environmentalist issues are never going to go away. There's always going to be something that needs to be addressed as we continue. It's something you can't fix one year, you just need to continue to push and strive for better and better environmental policies.

HM: What was the one specific issue in all your committee work that really stood out that came before you?

CM: I don't know if it was a specific issue. Environmental Committee was this series of Growing Greener packages that we were able to change. I was able to push the Energy Efficiency standards, too, out of the House, which eventually ended up being adopted in the National House, and it's a law right now in our nation, so to have Pennsylvania hop on that bandwagon early was a great feeling, but the two Growing Greener packages were the biggest investment in Pennsylvania's environment in the history of Pennsylvania. Probably if not the best, or probably the top two packages of any state in the nation. I know New Jersey did a pretty good package as well, but we're right up there, and I was very pleased to see that, and it's good through 2012, and hopefully, I'll be around then to make sure there's a Growing Greener III.

HM: Did you lobby to be on these committees?

CM: I went to then Speaker Matt Ryan [Matthew J.; State Representative, Delaware County, 1965-2003; Speaker, 1981-1982 and 1995-2003] and said that was it. And he put me on them, and I was coming in filling a spot. He threw me on a third committee; I forget which one it was—I think it was—oh, it was Urban Affairs, because Roy Reinard was the Chairman at the time.

HM: What were the major pieces of legislation in which you were involved?

CM: Well, I think we talked about a few of them.

HM: Yes, but I would like to specifically –

CM: The Open Records Law.

HM: Okay. Can we talk about that for a second?

CM: Okay, sure.

HM: Can you explain the problems that we're facing?

CM: What we never had was a real definition of what a public record is, and we never had a clear avenue to gain access to the public records. When we started the Open Records issue, we were going to declare everything to be open, and I could see there were

going to be some problems with that. The 9-1-1 tapes; the police were really concerned about ongoing investigations. So what I did is, I worked with the two sides, which is basically government and the Newspaper Association, and I said, "Listen, we're not going to get to this definition. There's just too many roadblocks. There's advocacy groups. There're victims assistance groups, just really clamoring about this issue, but everybody will agree right now that we need to have a better system to get the records that are currently considered open. You know, budgets, and all those things that you can normally get anyway. We need to have some sort of timeline in place because you're seeing some school districts and some townships and some government agencies just stonewall. They just delay it long enough, and then they release it a few months later when the, kind-of, the fervor dies down, and that's not fair. It's not right because, you know, its tax dollars being spent there. So, we put in place a pretty tight – it's about a one month schedule there; you make an application, they have five days to get back to you in writing. They can have up to 30 days to produce it, because if it's in an Archives, they got to get it. They have to put a reasonable fee on the photocopying. They can't charge you a buck a page to photocopy, you know, those sort of things. We put that together, and we passed it. And I was very pleased to get some sort of a package out of it. That said, it was always the intention to come back and try to address the second part of it, which is what we're trying to do right now – it's a few years now into it – to come up with some sort of a definition of what we can and cannot consider open records. I don't know we're ever going to get the perfect definition, but it's something that I'm willing to start working on over in the Senate.

HM: I'm sorry I interrupted you. You were going to say, maybe, more pieces of legislation?

CM: Yeah, over in the Senate, I'll try to continue that whole vein of defining what an open record would be.

HM: Do you want to talk about Growing Greener, specifically?

CM: Growing Greener was – what happened in Growing Greener was we couldn't get enough votes for just open space preservation. So, we had to put a package together that got the urban votes and got the rural votes. So, what ended up happening, which was kind of unique, I was kind-of new out there, but I was willing to make any deal I could to try and get everybody together. I was on the Urban Affairs Committee, met a lot of the city legislators. They were worried about this economic development – basically torn down houses, the KOIZ [Keystone Opportunity Improvement Zone] – so I was working on the KOIZ zones, which some of that legislation was mine as well, to give the tax free areas, but also to give economic stimulus. You needed a big package of that. KOIZ was to actually give grant money into these areas. The rural communities were worrying about their mine land, the acid mine drainage and mine land reclamation, and we wanted open space money, so as the package ended up being was a 600 million dollar package, and it was 200 million dollars for open space, 200 million dollars for mine land reclamation, and 200 million dollars for economic development, and that package is what passed. [It] wasn't quite unanimous, but it was like 180 votes or so. It's a 600 million

dollar package and I'm back in Doylestown talking about the 200 million of it, not really talking about the other two, but that was the only way we were going to get that amount of money to start preserving our farmland in Bucks County, was to kind of give the three sides what they wanted to have, you know.

HM: Could you tell me specifically what you were able to accomplish with the liquor licenses?

CM: The liquor license – we did away with the resort liquor license. What was happening was, by a lawsuit, you could go out and make an argument in Commonwealth Court that your town is a resort area based on people coming to visit it. What ended up happening was every township in Bucks County was eventually a resort license, which meant there was unlimited numbers of liquor licenses to be had just by making an application of 15,000 dollars or so, lawyers' fees, everything included, and you got a liquor license. And, I mean, that can help stimulate the economy in an area. The problem I was seeing was when we were getting up to 28 liquor licenses in the Doylestown Borough in historic areas, those restaurants and those taverns were fine establishments, but what would happen in an economic downturn? Would they start becoming a shot and beer joint, a New Orleans? And the problem I had was that the Borough, the local town fathers, so to speak, had no say. There was no standard, they could not fight it, they could not argue. The Liquor Control Board would not even listen to any objections made by a township or any municipality, and I said, "That doesn't kind-of quite jive with the whole point of zoning and redevelopment, economic development

sort of areas. They want to, you know, funnel it into this part of town, and we're doing all these KOIZ and all this urban youth initiatives with economic development, and then we're just going to allow somebody to start, you know, a restaurant outside the area that they're trying to push them into." So basically, my attitude was either this is a control state, or it's not a control state. So, there was two options on the table; either you can just, no more liquor license; you can just have it like you can open up a Denny's, you can open up a loud bar, or we're going to have to start controlling it again, and we're going to have some sort of limit and quota, so we went to a county-wide quota. You're allowed to transfer liquor licenses amongst the municipalities within one county. Each township or municipality has to give its approval before accepting anything over their quota. So obviously, a quota's three based on population, so Doylestown Borough would have a say, then, if any other ones could come in. Now, I'm pleased to say that two have since come more in. We now have 30 in Doylestown Borough, which is fine because they came in areas that the town wanted them to come in, so it wasn't, you know, the big impact, and I wasn't worried about them putting bars up against neighborhoods and, you know, starting to create the change over from neighborhood settings into a commercial setting.

HM: Thank you for those explanations. Would you like to comment on anything else?

CM: I think that's it. It's been a tremendous experience I've had up here.

HM: Well, I wanted to ask you about an interesting proposal that you put forward was to create a Pennsylvania medal for World War II veterans as well. How did you come up with that idea?

CM: Well, what was happening, I started spending some time campaigning, while I was in the VFWs [Veterans of Foreign Wars] and the [American] Legion posts, and I started having a lot of conversations with a lot of the World War II guys, and I ended up befriending a lot of them. And then every few months, I'd end up going to another funeral. And at some point, before I did this, I did an archive show, just like you're doing here today, and I've done a few of them since, both with the House and privately to try and just get some of them on record, some of their stories. And it's fascinating that there were so many veterans of World War II that were living in my senior centers in the middle of Doylestown and all the stories they had, and I just had a tremendous—this past Friday, Veterans Day breakfast for about 70 of them that showed up, and I gave them a medal for any war that they were in. Some of them got a couple medals because they were in a couple wars. One got three. But the stories that they saw – one was a woman who was actually in charge of the Red Line, the phone between Roosevelt and Churchill. She was in London, and she got bombed in a bomb shelter, and everybody but her and another person died in that blast and, you know, she didn't think twice. She had to get the phone back up. There was a gentleman that was in Iwo Jima. There's another one that was in Anzio. There was one that – the best one, because there was a gentleman that's in my district that was in the Kasserine Pass, which was in Africa, which was the start of the War. I mean, we got our butts kicked in that one by the Germans, but just the

history that was in that room was just tremendous. And they brought a lot of their memorabilia that they took, and one gentleman – actually, I’ve got to get somebody from the museum to actually go down there and take a look at it –but he’s got a scrapbook of real pictures that he took out of the Wolf’s Lair³ from Hitler. And when you’re looking at that book, I don’t know if there’s another copy of that book anywhere because it’s the original pictures pasted into it, and they’re pictures of Hitler, you know. So, it’s a lot of history that’s living amongst us and made me recognize it and I wanted them to have them all come out and be recognized, and I wanted to give them something when they came up to be recognized. So that medal, I think, was an important part that they get the recognition they deserve.

HM: That’s wonderful. Do you think your issues have changed over the years?

CM: I still think it’s the same quality of life issues. They want low taxes, good government, responsive government, nonintrusive government, at least that’s what Bucks County’s looking for, and I’m hoping I’ve been able to at least fight for that for them.

HM: What do you think your hardest issue was as a Representative?

CM: The hardest issue? I don’t know. I’ve had a good run of luck on the issues that I’ve tackled. I haven’t not accomplished something that I’ve – tooting my own horn

³ Camouflaged, 80 building fortress in Poland, used by Adolf Hitler during WWII, which he subsequently dynamited as the Nazi’s retreated the region in 1945.

here, huh? Every major issue that I've gone after, we've had some success with getting something done. I don't remember now; I'm coming up empty-handed completely.

HM: What do you think the hardest issue is before the Legislature right now?

CM: The issue's going to be the medical insurance issue, and it's not a campaign rhetoric. Flat out, we have one company. The rates are going up, more and more people can't afford it. The private companies are not providing it anymore. They're giving cash in lieu of. If we don't address it, you know, the doctors aren't getting their reimbursement. It's a real serious problem, and the problem isn't just that, "Oh well, people don't have insurance anymore." It's an economic problem, because the workers aren't going to stay here, the businesses aren't going to stay here. If we don't do something to keep the people happy about having coverage, they're going to go take a job in Phoenix, which is going to hurt our area. It's going to hurt our economy. We've had a strong economy, at least, in Southeastern PA, it's been, you know, a growing economy. If we don't address this insurance issue, then we're in jeopardy of losing that momentum that we've had in our economy.

HM: What do you think is key in your mind to getting legislation passed?

CM: Being open-minded. It is a compromise. One of the biggest issues with open space and development – there's a quick story there. I came out here to talk about the curative amendment lawsuits that were just sending developments up all through Bucks

County. And I'm talking to a gentlemen – I'm not going to say who it is – but I was talking to him about how we have to stop these curative amendments, and they're breaking our zoning laws, and they come in, and they fly 30 lawsuits on the same piece of property, and one of the bills I passed was to just limit it to one cure per parcel at any time. You can't just file 30 lawsuits. You file one lawsuit for what the town's not providing it, and the gentleman out here looked at me – and I'm trying to explain what curative amendments are – and he says, "What's zoning?" They don't have zoning to have it broken by curative amendment laws. I find out 40 percent of the townships in Pennsylvania have no zoning laws. I mean, you build what you want, where you want, when you want. They don't even want the informed construction code that we just went into, so you got to go out, and you got to almost educate people and just talk to them. In the end I say, "Can you just vote for it as a favor for me?" And he did, too, he goes, "Oh." I said, "It doesn't affect you. If you don't have zoning, it just doesn't affect you," so he did. So, that's the relationship you end up having to do. It's a diverse state. They have different issues, and if you don't talk to, you know, their issues, then why should they be paying attention to yours?

HM: Was it ever frustrating when your issues didn't get the attention you thought it deserved?

CM: No, I never got frustrated with it because it was always an educational process. I mean, I didn't explain it to enough people yet, and it was "yet" because you always go back and keep on trying to educate and just, you know, find a way that it doesn't bother

them. It doesn't, doesn't matter. "Okay, I can give that vote, Chuck, because it doesn't impact my district adversely." You know, you find those changes and those tweaks, or even if you have to carve out certain counties to do it, but.

HM: Since you'll be leaving the House at the end of this Session, is there any legislation that you would like to see passed?

CM: I didn't have any pending that I was really jumping on. There were a couple that I was about to propose, a lot of environmental issues, but the reality was you could tell early this year that this wasn't going to be a big legislative year. It was going to be a big campaign year, and it wasn't going to be anything controversial that I was going to be able to tackle, you know, prior to the elections with – you know, again, I'll mention that pay raise issue kind-of took front and center of everything, and everybody was kind-of playing defense all year instead of trying to push forward and make some changes. But that's politics, you know. That's the way it was, and it was a watershed year across the nation, and I was very pleased to have made the jump from the House to the Senate in a year where a lot of Republicans didn't quite even retain their own seats, including my Congressman in my county, actually, lost his seat when I made the jump over in the same district, so I'm very pleased about it. And I'm told—I think it was—Texas is still having a race decided, but if that race does not hold up or goes the wrong way for the Republicans, we'll be the only Democratically elected body in the nation that didn't have a Democrat gain was the Pennsylvania Senate that I was running for. Every other body

had lost seats to the Democrats, so it's something, you know, I'm pleased about and feel real blessed that it worked out well for me.

HM: And you can take those issues over to the Senate?

CM: Yep.

HM: So, we'll just, we'll just keep watching and see what happens next. What were the memorable events in the House during your tenure here?

CM: Well, we established Growing Greener, but you know what happened during my House stay? On a more personal level, there was Tom Ridge was our Governor, and I worked hard for him when he first ran, but then when 9/11 came, he left and became our Homeland Security Advisor or Chairman, I forget his exact title, in charge of Homeland Security. Governor Schweiker [Mark S.; Lieutenant Governor, 1995-2001; Governor, 2001-2003], who was a close friend of mine from Bucks County, who I actually drove around during his campaign for Lieutenant Governor. I was his driver. He became Governor, and it had a huge impact on my life, it really did, because I became – you know, not too many legislators are going to walk up to the Governor's Office, say, "Is Mark in?" and then have him say, "Hey, come on in." You know, it was access, in unprecedented, you know, fashion, and through his help, we were able to get a lot of things back into Bucks County those 18 months; best 18 months of my legislative career. And I thought he did a real good job, in that as noted with the miner incident out in

Western PA where he saved all the miners. And it was a pleasure working with him, but it really stands out as the most dramatic changeover, those, I guess, couple years there from 9/11 to now. We're actually, you know, arguing about the war and how its drug on when everybody knew it was going to be a long war to begin with, but it's funny how a few years can really change the national opinion.

HM: What is, in your opinion, the changes with the technological advances that we've witnessed?

CM: Oh, geez, I remember coming here, and I couldn't get into my seat stepping on papers. You'd sit down there, and every bill that we voted on and every amendment we voted on had to have a copy, 203 copies for every Member of the House. They would wheel out just big trays of papers, and by the time you got to read it, the vote was up and, you know, you're moving on, and you're getting more papers handed out, and amendments, and schedule A. And I guess right before Matt Ryan passed, he instituted the laptop computers on the desk, which suddenly did away with all the paper. And I was very happy about it, because I kept on asking. I never got an answer for three, four years, whether or not we recycle all that paper, that being an issue for me. They never wanted to tell me the truth, and the truth was they weren't. And they kept on saying, "Let me look into that. Let me look into that." Months would go by, "Yeah, I'm not sure," but when we went to the electronic computers, I was very pleased not to see all that wasted paper going down to the trash.

HM: Do you think it's helped or hindered the process?

CM: I think it has helped being able to see it and scan back and read the bills, and when you have that many papers, you put it aside, and you lose it in the pile. Now, I can look it up, you know, go back-and-forth on the computer, and I think it's been much more efficient system that we have a rolling House Calendar.

HM: Do you have a Website?

CM: I do have a Website, yeah. That's changed. I actually started – I was one of the first people way back, I was surprised to know this, but that first year was 1991 when Prodigy⁴ came out, and they had 10,000 members across the county and the world. I was one of those that first year, and it was a very antiquated 200 to 400 bps [bits per second] modem. You'd get up. It would just take forever for this, you know, very poor quality image of just words, just text to kind-of load up on your computer, but it's kind-of funny how things have come to almost interactive, you know, town hall meetings that you're seeing happen now, so it's changed a lot, but I've been pleased to use my Website from the beginning. I've had a Website when I first ran, and it continued to evolve. To this time, I was actually taking donations online, so.

HM: What aspect have you enjoyed the most?

⁴ Prodigy Communications Corporation dial up internet service

CM: You really can make a difference. To say one vote doesn't matter, it does. You know, I've been out here and have only been one vote, and, you know, and I won the election by 297, so every vote can count. But you do have an impact when you're out there. You make what you can out of this, and if you put the effort in, you get the results. You're not going to come out and change the world if you're a legislator, but you can certainly shift it a little bit.

HM: What have you not liked at all?

CM: You know, I wish I had a better relationship with the press, but I guess my attitude is still the same is this is what I think is right, and this is what the people elected me to do, and, you know, I'm standing by my track record, my votes, and you want to write an article about it that you disagree, well, go ahead and do it. I really don't care. So, that attitude has led them to write a lot of articles criticizing me, and I have fun with it, though, because, you know, you go back. It's still the right thing. I'm walking in the town, I said, "Yeah, you were right, you know." My district says I was right. When I'm knocking on doors, they say I was right, and the newspapers were wrong, and some of the best phone calls I get is when they criticize me for doing something, and I get 30 phone calls, and they don't call up and yell at me. They call up and say, "Chuck, I read that article. Can you tell me what really happened?" Because they don't believe the newspaper's side of it, so that makes you feel good at least that you can explain yourself, and I get to talk to more constituents.

HM: When you recount your experiences in the House, do you have a favorite story?

CM: I don't know if I have a favorite one. I have a lot of them, but it's just been all good experiences, quite frankly.

HM: Okay, here's the next one: do you have a fondest memory?

CM: A fondest memory?

HM: Yeah.

CM: You know, I don't have a single fondest memory. It's a compilation of a lot of good times, good friends, you know. I think some of the bad sides is when you're sitting there at four AM, and you're dead tired after you've gone into Session at ten AM, and you're looking up at the ceiling, and you're starting to doze off, which is right when they throw the pay raise vote up there, but it's all inclusive. It's part of everything you do here, so there's really no single memory or single bad event that happened here.

HM: Well, I think you, you were pretty – you voted against the pay raise.

CM: Yes.

HM: And you've been talking about it, so.

CM: Yes. I was pretty vocal against it and gave the reasons why, said it up front. It was just a – what happened was, it wasn't that we didn't deserve a raise. It's we didn't deserve it at that time. We did not complete any property tax reform. We still had issues with the doctors and with the doctors leaving, so all these things that we failed to do that budget year that some of it we subsequently fixed, but we decided to give ourselves a pay raise. So, we couldn't do all this stuff, and it came on the heels of a tax increase just the year before. So if you didn't have enough money to balance the budget, and you had to raise taxes, you don't turn around and give yourself a pay raise that time. So [if] we had accomplished a few more things, and the pay raise was a little bit more equitable in what it was actually granted, then I could have seen supporting it, but as it was, we didn't do anything at that point to earn it. And so, I wasn't going to take it, so I didn't vote for it, and the rest is history. I ended up being a Senator now.

HM: Well, what is your advice for new Members that will be starting soon?

CM: I think, just kind of take it all in. You know, take your time with it. You're not going to have all the answers. Listen to some of the senior Members that have been here, and I don't mean me, I mean the guys that have been here 20 years that really have seen a lot of it happen before. You know, listen to their advice. [It] doesn't mean that you got to agree with them 100 percent of the time. You never agree with anybody 100 percent of the time, but, you know, listen to what they're saying, and try to understand both sides

of the picture there because, you know, just coming from a single point of view from your district isn't going to get anything accomplished out here.

HM: What are your thoughts as you plan to start a new chapter in your political career?

CM: Getting ready for it, getting ready to go do it. You know, you can't really take time to ponder over it. You just need to do it. I just came from Leadership elections. I was pleased to support the guys who won, and if I didn't, I guess I'd be in trouble because I was pretty vocal. I seconded the nomination for Joe Scarnati [Joseph; State Senator, 2001-present] for Senate Pro Tempore, and, you know, I felt right about it, thought he was the right man to do it, and it's a good thing he won because I'd be in an office in the basement, I guess, if he didn't.

HM: Well, we'll talk to you about the changes that you've witnessed at another time. How would you like your tenure as State Representative to be remembered?

CM: Just that I worked hard for the people back in Bucks County; that when they had an issue, they could call me. They could get a hold of me; I was easily accessible. If you didn't see me in a weekend at some public event, you could certainly call me, and I'd get back to you, and hopefully, I was responsive. I mean, that was the key. If you're not going to be responding – you're a Representative; you're not the Governor. You're just the representative branch of government, not the administrative, so they're not looking for you to lead them into some new frontier. They're looking for you to look out for their

interests, and that's your job, and I've made no bones about the issues. It's your district first, Pennsylvania second. You're not here to lead Pennsylvania. You're here to worry about your constituents that sent you here, and if you run for statewide office, then you can worry about all Pennsylvanians.

HM: Well, thank you very much.

CM: Thank you for having me here. It's been a pleasure.

HM: This concludes – I appreciate it.