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THE POLITICAL EFFECT OF CASEWORK ON CONGRESS, THE CONGRESSMAN AND THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

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THE POLITICAL EFFECT OF CASEWORK ON CONGRESS, THE CONGRESSMAN AND THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

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By

DREW MASON

Norman, Oklahoma

1987

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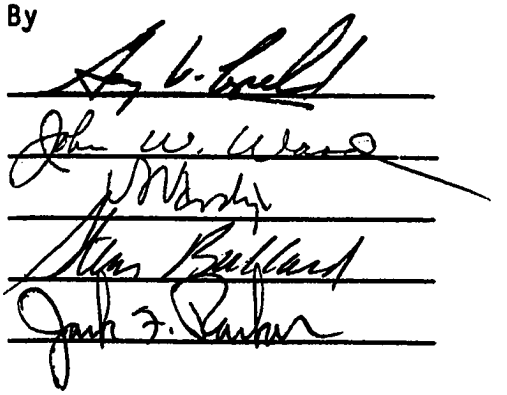
By



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My thanks must include all my friends and family, who by now have not the foggiest idea of what I have done but are quite aware that they never want to hear the word "dissertation" again. I apologize for being such a bore about it all and appreciate their feigned interest and self-control.

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THE POLITICAL EFFECT OF CASEWORK ON CONGRESS, THE CONGRESSMAN AND THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

By: Drew Mason

Major Professor: Gary Copeland, Ph.D

This dissertation inquires into the dynamics of the constituent service function that is part and parcel of every congressional office. It reviews the relevant literature, defines and describes casework, and establishes a methodology by which the impact of casework is measured and compared.

Public opinion sampling was chosen as the main research technique in order to take advantage of the availability of current case files in a congressional office. The case subjects were sampled and the results were compared with another survey of national reputation.

The purpose of this study was to test the primary hypothesis that by engaging in the casework activity, members of Congress stimulate within the constituent positive feelings of efficacy, trust and approval with regard to the member himself, his institution, the Congress of the United States, and the American political system in general.

Although it is acknowledged that the preponderance of

scholarly opinion contends that constituent service tends to lock in the political support of the affected constituent for the member, this dissertation concludes that casework does not necessarily make that kind of impact. It was not found that casework, in a general sense, generates feelings of support for the member or an attitude of approval or trust for either the Congress or the government.

THE POLITICAL EFFECT OF CASEWORK ON CONGRESS, THE CONGRESSMAN AND THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

CHAPTER I

CONGRESSIONAL CASEWORK ACTIVITY

> So long as representatives need electoral support, they can be held accountable to those they represent through the electoral process. If the represented do not get the kind of representation they want, they can remove their representative from office. Whether they will thereby get the kind of representation they want is another question. But the theory of electoral accountability holds that so long as representatives want to retain their office, the knowledge that they will later be held accountable at the polls will tend to make their representative behavior more responsive to the desires of their constituents (Fenno, 1978).

Introduction

Every two years, in November, the people of this nation go to the polls to elect their representatives to the national government. Most are reelected, but some are not. Incumbent members of Congress must account for the way they have responded to the needs of their constituents and not all pass muster. It is this regularly scheduled day of reckoning that insures that we get the kind of representation we want. The election is the keystone of our political system, and is the mechanism through which

accountability and responsiveness are processed.

From the first day of a representative's career in office he is on the slippery slope to political extinction. The environment in which he must do his work is hostile to his survival and the very nature of his work almost insures that he will be offensive to some parts of his constituency at any given time. To counteract this occupational hazard he has developed certain techniques of representation that he believes will ameliorate the debilitating consequences of position-taking. One such technique is casework. It is commonly seen as an insurance policy against the erosion of popularity that often results from the necessity of taking stands on myriad issues over time.

On the surface it appears that this perception is true. Numerous surveys and studies show that the individual representative is held in much higher esteem than the Congress in which he serves, or the political system of which he is an integral part (McCloskey, 1964; Fenno, 1975; Parker, 1979; Dye and Ziegler, 1981; Keefe, 1984). Further evidence suggests that the power of personal attention, which is the hallmark of casework, is at least partly responsible for the establishment of the popularity of the members (Fiorina, 1977).

There is yet another aspect of the influence factor at work

in the casework transaction. Congress is a complex association of varied local interests that represents policy consumers who demand that national problems be solved quickly and effectively. The institution, by virtue of constitutional strictures, is incapable of efficiency and the product that generally results from extended legislative processing is often victimized by the law of unintended consequences, exacerbating the problem at hand and contributing to the disdain with which the public views the Congress. As a result, the American political system often seems flawed and is held in low repute (Keefe, 1980). However, the public's negative attitude is softened somewhat by the positive relationship that develops between the member and his client constituent who receives personal attention from the member in the casework transaction.

A constituent who is satisfied by the treatment he receives at the hands of the individual member or his staff is persuaded that the political system that affords him the opportunity to confront his government and realize the fulfillment of his demands is a system that works. The Congress, as part of that system, should come in for its share of appreciation as well. The member, who is an agent of government, representative of the Congress, and broker in behalf of the constituent, serves as the conduit for the good will that is generated. Casework, then, seemingly becomes an act of representation that improves the image of

the member and generates feelings of approval for Congress and the political system.

Constituent service, or "casework," as it is called by its practitioners, is that aspect of representation that a member renders when he attempts to stimulate a favorable action by a governmental agency on behalf of a constituent with a problem. Helping constituents is not a new practice. It has been noted in the writings of officials at least as far back as John Adams (Smith, 1962). The 1st Amendment firmly establishes the citizen's right to petition his government, as well, but the eagerness with which the practice has been accepted and expanded by modern congresses deserves serious attention.

Accurate data on the scope of constituent service is difficult to secure. In the first place, the information gained from surveys is subject to a bias that reflects only the views of those who return the questionnaire. The information that might have been secured from those who do not respond could, indeed, be critical. Second, there is no commonly accepted definition of "casework." The term means different things to different congressional offices and is therefore not easily standardized. Finally, during the period under consideration, the casework function has been steadily expanding. This fact makes replication of research nearly impossible and provides scholars with ever-

changing data. In any event, the data that is available indicates ranges within which further observations can be focused.

The casework function consumes from 25 per cent (Saloma, 1969) to 50 per cent (Klonoff, 1979) of staff time in a congressional office which processes from 3,500 to 13,000 cases each year (Johannes, 1980). Of these petitions for help, information and direction, the member will be able to respond successfully to between 10 per cent (Gellhorn, 1966) and 40 per cent (Johannes, 1979) of them. Although it is virtually impossible to obtain an accurate figure on the cost of processing them, it is conservatively estimated that the expense of Congress's good works is at least $40 million each year (Breslin, 1977).

The growth of caseloads in congressional offices has been substantial in recent years. This increase has been attributed to the growth of the federal government (Fiorina, 1977), an argument which is not difficult to accept. The Great Society activism of the Johnson Administration gave rise to many new areas in which the citizen came face to face with his government. Between 1965 and 1975 the government grew by three new departments and a relatively large number of independent agencies and commissions, while the national budget increased two and a half times (Dodd and Schott, 1979). Additionally, the war in Southeast Asia,

which made a large contribution to ballooning government expenditures, necessitated the services of more than a half-million combat troops before it ended in 1973. The needs of military personnel and veterans commonly account for a large percentage of the congressional caseload and those generated by the Viet Nam war reflect the fact that it was one of the longest and costliest in U.S. history.

Two measures of the growth of caseloads are to be found in the startling increase of congressional mail and congressional staff. Constituent correspondence increased in the House and Senate from 15 million pieces in 1970 to over 300 million pieces in 1984 (American University, 1984). This burgeoning flow of correspondence reflects the expanded need of the constituent to communicate his problems with the bureaucracy to his elected representative. The personal staffs of the members, those employees most concerned with constituent affairs, have grown impressively, as well, reflecting the increased caseloads stimulated by the programmatic activities of the Congress. In 1967, the number of personal staff employed by the House and the Senate totaled only 5,804. By 1983, however, the total had risen to 11,665, an increase of over 50 per cent in just eighteen years (Davidson and Oleszek, 1985).

Casework: The Electoral Connection

As the statistics on casework suggest, members perceive it

to be worth their time and attention to deal with their constituents on a personal level. Whenever a member must cast a vote on final passage of a controversial piece of legislation he automatically separates himself from a given number of his constituents. Some issues, the Panama Canal Treaties, bussing or abortion, for example, are so big, and so prominent that a voting member of Congress has no place to hide. Making a choice in these instances can be as damaging to his chances for reelection as any event he will encounter in his whole career. Other events may also conspire to threaten a member's popularity with the folks at home. Adverse economic conditions can be blamed on Congress, and the individual representative is a most likely and convenient target for criticism, even though his culpability may be debatable (Tufte, 1975). In an effort to counteract this general kind of popularity erosion, he may establish a strong program of constituent service which gives him the opportunity to relate to his constituents in a safe and positive way.

It is not possible for a member of Congress to deal with each one of his constituents on a personal basis. There are simply too many. However, he is ever ready to extend the courtesy of his office to those who appeal for assistance of any kind, and it is an article of faith among sitting congressmen and senators that this casework is a key, if not the key, to getting reelected. This attitude is succinctly

captured by the following from Fenno's exhaustive study on the activities of the congressman:

> For the congressman's staff, whether located in Washington or at home, constituent service is the most time-consuming activity. For the member of Congress, it is a highly valued form of activity. Not only is constituent service universally recognized as an important part of the job in its own right, but it is universally recognized as powerful reelection medicine. Constituency service is totally nonpartisan and nonideological. As an electoral increment it is an unadulterated plus (Fenno, 1978).

With this attitude shared by virtually every member of Congress, it is little wonder that the institution should support the practice. Members are provided a broad array of resources with which to respond to, as well as to solicit, the constituent's call. Both senators and representatives now have the capability of sending a maximum of six annual postal patron mailings to their states and districts. This practice no longer requires the maintenance of mailing lists, which are always limited by faulty addresses and the near impossibility of creating a complete universe. Mailing to postal patrons means that <u>every</u> residence in the area receives the message from the member. The message, of course, is the Congressional Newsletter that often contains an invitation to the constituent to bring his problems to the member. This form of solicitation is widely practiced and undoubtedly accounts for some portion of the increase in caseloads.

In addition to the bulk mail privilege are other tools of

communication. Postage is supplied by the Congress in the form of the personal frank. The member simply adorns his envelope with his signature and the USPS carries the letter as surely as if it were stamped. With an ample postage allowance, constituents are assured of hearing from their representative on a somewhat regular basis. Newsletters, announcements, and general mail issue forth from congressional offices in Washington at a prodigious rate, each item clearly advertising the presence and availability of the member. For more urgent messages the congressional office has access to Wide Area Telephone lines that provide for unlimited long distance telephone use.

The public approach to the folks back home is also managed through the use of television clips and radio actualities. Each house of Congress has studio facilities for the production and dissemination of TV and radio tapes and radio voice transmission. Tapes of the member addressing an issue are created in the studio then mailed to the radio and TV stations for use on their news programs. A radio actuality is a tape of the member's voice speaking on some subject relevant to the day's interest. It is then plugged into a telephone answering device that responds to anyone calling in on that particular line. Radio stations are alerted to use this phone number at any time of the day for a timely quote from the member. Messages are changed frequently in order to keep the news value fresh. These publicity

approaches to the constituents keep the member in full view and enhance his image as someone who is there when and where he is needed.

In addition to the staff provided to each member to support his efforts in the district, in his Washington office, and in committee, he may also call on the services of the staff of the Congressional Research Service (CRS) and General Accounting Office (GAO). Created as a branch of the Library of Congress, the CRS responds to nearly any kind of request for information a senator or representative can come up with. It is often the case that a constituent will write for information involving complex issues and requiring an in-depth response. Researchers at the CRS are equipped to provide this information to the member on an emergency basis if need be, a service which assures a timely response to the constituent. If a constituent complains to the member that some agency of the government is being derelict, the member has the capability of launching an investigation through the auspices of the General Accounting Office. Although the GAO has program evaluation as its primary function it serves as the investigative arm of the Congress and can offer support for the member's constituent problems when the occasion warrants this kind of response.

Congress has evolved from an institution in which citizens took their turn at the sometimes onerous duty of

representing their district in the plague-ridden Capitol on the Potomac (Smith, 1962) to one in which the members have become fixtures, frightened at the prospect of having to return to a place among neighbors from whom they have long been separated. To counteract those forces which tend to weaken their security, that is, the unpopular vote, adverse trends in the national condition, association with a fumbling president, members of Congress have set themselves up in business as personal lobbyists for any constituent who asks for special attention. In the firm belief that serving constituents in this manner is a key to the retention of their collective seats, congressmen have provided themselves with a generous array of tools with which to accomplish their aims. The questions may well be asked, "Are those goals being met? Have we learned anything about how constituents respond to this treatment? Do they indeed, reward the member with their support because of the personal attention he may have paid to them?" The response would have to be mixed.

Casework Defined

Casework encompasses an almost infinite number of variations of personal and social problems, but, conveniently, they can be grouped in just five categories. Although this study will deal with only the last of these categories, individual casework, it is useful to identify the others in order to emphasize the limits of the project.

Legislative casework. The effort made by special interest groups, consumer advocates, trade associations, corporate lobbyists and other group representatives to persuade members of Congress to sponsor, support or oppose legislation has long been an important part of the political process. One of the earliest interest groups, the venerable American Medical Association, was established in 1847 and has represented the interests of its members before Congress and fifty-three state and territorial legislatures since that time (Hyde and Wolff, 1973). However, it was the rise of government intervention and regulation that stimulated the phenomenal increase in the growth of the lobbying industry. The great torrent of social legislation of the 1960s and 1970s, particularly, created an environment that gave rise to a dramatic change in the numbers. In the three years between 1977 and 1980 the number of trade associations headquartered in Washington increased from 1,700 to about 2,000. The number of corporations with public affairs offices in the capitol increased from 100 to more than 500 from 1968 to 1978. Political Action Committees, the financial arm of lobbying organizations, spiraled from 608 in 1974 to 3,371 in 1982. Perhaps the statistic which best reveals the lobbying sector's impact on Congress is the one that shows that the Washington Bar Association increased its membership from 11,000 to 38,000 between 1972 and 1983 (Berry, 1984). These hordes of agents, each with a special claim on some part of the federal larder, pose a significant

burden to members of Congress as they endeavor to carry out their representative function.

Direct contact between the member and these constituent groups has become a vital factor in the legislative process. It is an activity that is generally engaged in by elites and political activists on a relatively sophisticated, personal basis. Representatives of these organizations, which are created and maintained to exercise the power of persuasion, command a great deal of the member's attention and most congressmen spend significant chunks of their personal time communicating with them. In the average eleven-hour day of a U.S. senator, one hour and forty minutes is devoted to visiting with interest group constituents, or five minutes more than is spent in the Senate Chamber (Davidson and Oleszek, 1985). Activity in this area resembles casework on occasion, but generally speaking it is primarily a form of representation that has legislative output as its goal.

An excellent example of legislative casework is the effort made by the National Committee for an Effective Congress (NCEC) to seek passage of the Political Broadcast Act of 1970. The NCEC had been established for the purpose of electing liberal members of Congress and was generally organized to raise campaign funds. However, it entered the legislative arena at this time to effect a change in the way political campaigns were charged for media advertising. The

national director of the NCEC, Russell Hemenway, and the organization's Washington representative, Susan King, drafted the legislation, personally secured the co-sponsorship of thirty-eight senators and thirty-nine representatives, and lobbied the bill through the legislative process to its conclusion (Peabody, 1972) Although the bill was vetoed, the exercise illustrates the degree of access that advocates of any given cause can have to the members of Congress, and how the members sometimes respond to these kinds of external stimuli.

Another aspect of this advocacy process is the individual constituent request for private legislation. A private bill attempts to resolve an individual problem by the passage of specific legislation. An example of this might be a bill to exempt a constituent, by name, from immigration quotas. Claims against the government that are not subject to administrative resolution and claims for title to government property are other categories of private legislation. Members of Congress must sponsor private bills for their constituents in the same manner other bills are submitted. They are subject to committee consideration and are placed on the private calendar that is called up once a month. Private bills number in the thousands and the sheer volume requires special procedures to eliminate the frivolous requests and expedite passage of those remaining. In many respects, this legislative function resembles the casework

that a member performs for his constituents, but because of its legislative nature it is carried out by institutional process rather than by individual caseworkers (Oleszek, 1978).

Community casework. The Federal Government has often been a source of largesse, but since the advent of grants-in-aid, block grants, matching grants and revenue sharing, community leaders more than ever before feel it is in their interest to lobby their representatives personally in Washington for what they consider to be their fair share of the national resources. Competition for these federal funds is keen and many cities have hired professionals to seek out and secure any kind of funding for which the community may qualify (Lowi, 1979). Most programs of this nature are limited in the appropriated funds they may commit in any given fiscal year, so it is the proposal which is most convincing that attracts the attention of the bureaucrat who makes the final decision.

At the point when the paperwork has been completed and submitted the effort becomes Washington oriented. Representatives of the community may make regular pilgrimages to the Capitol City to keep their cause fresh in the minds of the administration. The member is called into action as an escort for the delegation when it visits the high-ranking official who must sign off on the project.

Often, a staff member of the congressman attends the visiting delegation, but frequently, the member himself joins the group in order to underscore the importance of the project to the bureaucrat.

Community assistance normally takes the form of some needed project such as a water reservoir, sewer system, city center remodeling or industrial park. These are important matters for congressmen because projects of this nature frequently affect nearly everyone in their jurisdiction, and they stand as constant reminders of the effectiveness of their work. As such, they are unparalleled opportunities for credit-taking.

Key elements in this member-constituent relationship are the Chambers of Commerce, merchants' groups, and associations of city and county officials. Membership in these groups represent the elites of the community, the very people whom the congressman must always strive to please. They are the opinion makers upon whom elections sometimes depend. It is doubly important, then, that the member look effective when attempting to represent his district's claim to federal assistance for community projects.

Commercial casework. Closely related is that type of casework that deals with commercial projects and problems. State and local industrial development officials have as

their primary goal the attraction of new industry to their community. When a likely prospect is found, it is often brought to the attention of a member of Congress so that he might act as a lobbyist of high caliber in the site selection process many companies initiate before making final determination for the siting of a new facility. His influence, when focussed on the management of the company in question, is perceived to be a strong factor in securing a positive final decision.

There are also many times in the career of a congressman when he is called upon to persuade the executive branch to select a certain architect or engineer for a particular project, or to offer a federal contract to this or that constituent for some service he wishes to provide. When a federal building is proposed for a community, the professional services necessary to complete the project are normally recruited by the General Services Administration, the agency in charge of maintaining federal facilities. It has been the practice for professionals to be chosen on the basis of their credits and experience, rather than on a dollar-cost bid, thus creating an opportunity for the contracting official to exercise considerable judgement. The perception that political influence can be the determining factor in the final decision is widespread, often stimulating requests from the vendor for the member to intervene with the bureaucrat.

Related to industrial development is the siting of military or other government facilities. The announcement of an effort by the Defense Department to establish an army training base or to select a home port for a major naval vessel is a case in point. When the aircraft carrier, USS Nimitz, was finally assigned to a port in the state of Washington, it was the culmination of a great competition between several announced prospects. The carrier, with its attendant cruisers, frigates and destroyer, six additional vessels in all, would make a significant impact on the economy of the state. It would mean that the families of 7,000 or more sailors would live in the vicinity; repair yards and ships services would be necessary to service the ships; many complementary civilian jobs would be created; the state and local governments would reap millions in taxes from the new commerce. The decision was extremely important, and the senators and congressmen from each state involved in the competition made an effort to help persuade the decision makers that their state was the best choice (Brown, 1986).

Congressmen are sometimes persuaded to oppose the siting of a facility if it is deemed by the community to have unsavory or unsafe characteristics. This situation might develop when site selection for a hazardous waste disposal unit becomes necessary. The nature of this type of facility makes it very undesirable for a community, and as a result,

strong opposition frequently develops (Murray, 1979). In this instance, the pressure is on the member to derail the process and to keep the unwanted facility from being located in his jurisdiction.

Commercial casework is almost always justified on the basis of enhancing or protecting the economy of the state or district. These are matters of critical concern to the constituent and even though the member's power to influence the decision cannot be taken for granted the perception that he can carry the day is real.

Requests. This category stretches the definition of casework to some small degree and could perhaps be more appropriately called "constituent attention." In any event, the member has at his disposal a number of items available for gifts or for sale to his constituents. Agricultural Yearbooks and contour maps for farmers, baby books for mother and American flags for anyone who wants one, are examples of congressional merchandise that constituents might receive. Although the variety of requests that constituents make is absolutely astounding, most members try to comply as best they can and respond with books, maps, tickets, passes, brochures, and information of every imaginable kind.

Perhaps the most frequent request for information deals with

legislation. Students, lobbyists and retirees are frequently in search of specific information relating to new legislation. Another request that is commonly made of members of Congress is for assistance in getting passes to the White House or to the visitor's gallery in the House or Senate. In addition, there are a number of other regularly scheduled events in Washington, such as the FBI headquarters tour, that require passes. Information on all the attractions of the capitol is readily available in any congressman's office and cheerfully dispensed by staff hired to make the visitor very welcome.

One of the more curious innovations of Congress is the arrangement that provides quantities of flags that have flown over the capitol. Employees of the Architect of the Capitol, the maintenance and housekeeping office, are regularly assigned the task of taking cartloads of flags to the roof of the capitol building and running them up and down two flagpoles that are specially reserved for this purpose. Each flag is then boxed and certified that it was flown on a certain date. It is a nice gift for a constituent, if the member wishes to be generous, or it is available to anyone who wants to buy one.

Some students have discovered that if they write their congressman for issue information they may receive an in-depth study of the subject prepared by the Library of

Congress. The Congressional Research Service, a branch of the Library, provides a research capability for members of Congress that is frequently utilized in order to satisfy requests from constituents. A catalogue of issues that have already been researched is available, and briefs may be ordered by number.

Requests number in the thousands over a year's time, and a good part of staff time is devoted to responding. The responsibility for this task is usually taken on a full-time basis by one staff member. It represents little effort or initiative to be able to comply with general requests and for this reason it is a good public relations factor in the life of a congressman. There is no risk to the member in this transaction.

Individual casework. This category of casework represents that kind of service a member renders when he attempts to persuade a government agency to resolve a problem in favor of the constituent's position. Frequently cited as an example is the case of the elderly person whose social security check has not arrived on time, or, perhaps, not at all. The member sets things aright with the Social Security Administration so that the check gets to the recipient as quickly as possible. During periods of national emergency when the selective service is operative constituents are quick to call their representative for help in changing a

draft classification in order to keep some prospective soldier from being called to active service. Veterans who have developed real or imaginary problems with the V.A. hospital often ask their representative to intervene on their behalf with the administrator of the facility.

It should be apparent that many constituent requests are not within the jurisdiction of the member to grant, but it is often the case that those who petition for help neither believe nor accept the fact that a member is quite limited in what he can do. The attitude that many have is that a member of Congress holds the key to the treasury and is personally responsible for all the laws of the land. Constituents who feel they are at the end of their rope typically hold to this point of view. Examples are many. The bereaved father of a son killed in Viet Nam, seeking revenge, refused to accept the rejection of his own enlistment in the marines and insisted that the member arrange an exception; a former supporter who was incarcerated in a minimum security prison for a white collar crime repeatedly requested the member to arrange for his early release; a campaign supporter and contributor requested a member to seek approval from the Queen of England to allow him to join her in her box at the running of the Derby at Epsom Downs; a constituent, unknown to the member, asked to be sent ten dollars because he is in need. The number and variety of requests is enormous and consumes

a significant amount of the resources available to a congressional office. Characteristically, casework which seeks to deal with significant individual problems usually requires several visits with the constituent and can only be resolved after a period of time ranging from a few days to many months. Occasionally, a case may last for a number of years before it is resolved.

It is the individual kind of casework, with all its variations, that is the subject of this study. Any effort to ascertain the impact of constituent service on constituent attitudes, by its very nature, requires that only cases dealing with individual problems be considered. The political payoff for a member who participates in attracting a commercial enterprise to the district may be significant, but the cause and effect relationship will be too blurred to be easily measured. Frequently, these projects are the result of a team effort, and one in which the players must share the reward, thus diminishing the chance that the constituent's response came only as a direct reaction to the member's part in the whole affair. In legislative, community and commercial categories, multiple competing appeals often emerge, making it difficult to evaluate a member's performance. One interest group might wholly approve of his response to its particular appeal, while an opposing group would likely have a different point of view. Individual casework, on the other hand,

immediately resolves to a one-on-one relationship with the member being solely responsible for representing the constituent before the unfathomable bureaucracy.

A second reason to limit the study to individual cases is that when a member actively pursues a solution to a matter in which interest groups or community and commercial interests are concerned the ultimate beneficiaries of his action may not even be aware of his efforts. This sort of group representation establishes a relationship between the member and process participants whose interests are brokered by an agent. When this is the case the member's actions are partially screened from the view of the constituent and cannot, therefore, be accurately evaluated.

Finally, individual constituent service is an activity over which the member has a good measure of control. When called upon he responds quickly. He initiates the problem solving process promptly, monitors those involved, and makes a report to his client as soon as possible. In the legislative process, however, he is limited by time, parliamentary procedure, and the presence of 534 competing members. In commercial affairs he is considered as an outsider to be treated politely, but one whose counsel is not solicited.

To conclude, individual casework will be isolated as the

subject for study because it is the one category with which the constituent is intimately associated. He will be able to respond with certainty to any question he may be asked concerning the member's participation in the resolution of his case. The measurability of this relationship is a critical factor in the development of this study.

The Casework System

The caseworker. The burgeoning volume of casework that Congress has had to contend with has resulted in an equivalent growth of staff support. Traditionally, when candidates were elected to the Congress of the United States they journeyed to Washington, D.C., established themselves in their offices, did their own work and went home at the end of the session. As late as 1893 members of Congress were still without staff support. However, bowing to increasing pressure from the membership, clerks were provided that year, for the first time, for those representatives who were not committee chairmen. Changes in staff numbers were incremental after that, but by 1946 there was still an average of only five clerks for each member of the House and six for the Senate. Responding to the needs stimulated by the Viet Nam War and the legislative deluge of the 1960s members of Congress allowed themselves greater numbers of staff. In the House of Representatives the current rule allows no more than eighteen staff assistants per member while a senator may appoint as many employees as

his office appropriation will allow. The appropriation for each senate office is governed by whether or not the state is determined to be large or small, as measured in terms of population. Large states are provided more space, material and money than are small states. At the present time the average in the House is nearly sixteen staffers per member while the size of personal staffs of the individual senators ranges from thirteen to seventy-one, with the average being about thirty-one. The total number of personal staff members in the Congress is nearly 12,000 (Davidson and Oleszek, 1985, p. 241).

The number of caseworkers on a congressional staff will depend to a large extent on the member's philosophy about casework. If a member insists that his staff give first priority to responding to the demands and requests of constituents, and that they do not leave a case unattended until it has been successfully resolved there will likely be more staffers involved in casework.

Another attitude shared by many members is that the primary function of a congressman is to provide service to his constituents, and in order to accomplish that task most effectively he must indulge in advertising. That is to say, he will advise his constituents that he is there to deal with any problem they may have and they are not only welcomed, but encouraged to bring them to his office for

resolution. Advertising takes the form of solicitation through the mail, the media and by field personnel circulating the word throughout the district, and although there are no current figures available that confirm the relationship between advertising and increased caseloads, there is a strong assumption that one does exist.

However the member views his casework responsibility he will provide sufficient staff to accommodate his goals. In general, a small state congressional staff with a total of fourteen or fifteen members may have as many as six staff employees working full time on individual cases while the offices of the senators from New York and California, the two largest states, would have considerably more. There is no set rule for how an office is organized and as a result there are 535 unstandardized units. Many sources (e.g. Fenno, 1978; Mayhew, 1974; Saloma, 1969; Clapp, 1963) indicate that some members spend their personal time trying to resolve constituent problems, but it would appear that the degree to which they do this is a matter of personal style and preference, the demands on their time by other responsibilities, and whether or not they serve in the House or the Senate. Senators have been found to devote considerably less personal time to casework than representatives (Breslin, 1977). Some types of problems require personal intervention by the member, but for the most part the staff handles casework almost exclusively.

The member is more likely to get involved in a case requiring high level negotiation, or a situation involving a special friend. In any event, generalizations are difficult, if not impossible, to make in this environment.

Caseworkers (as well as most of the rest of the staff) are usually inherited from the member's first campaign organization. It is extremely difficult for a newly elected congressman to terminate a highly charged, loyal campaign worker at the conclusion of a successful campaign. More likely, he will offer the person a job in Washington or in the member's state office, and, in all likelihood, the staffer will accept the offer. Much of the member's first staff is acquired in this manner and as a result he is surrounded by on-the-job trainees, a handicap that he is sometimes slow to overcome. In this situation, however, the problem of training caseworkers is considerably less important because the information necessary for a caseworker to do his or her job is significantly less complex than for many other positions in a congressional office.

Formal training opportunities do not exist for newly appointed caseworkers but it can be stated in general terms that casework specialists develop rather quickly in each congressional office. Mail is waiting for new members of Congress on the day they first take office, and part of the mail will likely be for the caseworker's attention. As the

mail piles up the caseworkers make calls to appropriate agencies and rapidly begin to learn their job. The caseload will be broken down into categories that represent the largest volume of work and staffers will be assigned the categories. For instance, social security problems are so prevalent that in an average size office one caseworker working full time may be required to handle the volume. Other main categories are military, veterans affairs, immigration, employment and retirement (federal employees), Indian affairs, and military academies. There are others, depending entirely upon the demands on the office. Categories are frequently related to the committee assignments of the member, or to the basic industries of the state. Districts containing coal mines, for instance, are likely to have a staff member who works with cases specifically relating to pneumoconiosis. Whatever it is that stimulates large numbers of cases will also stimulate the development of correlative expertise in the member's staff.

The District Office. The exploding volume of casework has also required the imposition of new office management techniques. Until the advent of the airplane most congressmen's visits to their state or district were rare. Over the years, however, travel improved to the extent that members can now get home every week if they choose to do so. This growing closeness to the home base encouraged the

development of the district office and it is now the case that most representatives and senators have more than one. District office space is not elaborate and is usually located in existing federal buildings. House members are allocated 2,500 square feet of space while senators are allowed to have from 4,800 square feet for small state members to as much as 8,000 square feet for large state offices (Davidson and Oleszek, 1985, p 133). Members frequently divide this space among two or three cities within their jurisdiction in order to spread their presence as much as possible.

With the establishment of permanent offices in the district came the inevitable decision to divide the work of the office along Washington-Home lines. Thus, in most congressional offices, the work done in Washington relates to Washington-based legislative affairs and the work done in the district offices relates primarily to work dealing with problems of constituents. Casework, for the most part, is now dealt with at home (Breslin, 1977). An exodus occurred in the decade of the seventies when caseworkers generally were shifted to district offices to accommodate the changing work pattern. In 1970 there were only a little more than a thousand caseworkers scattered about in district offices. By 1983 that number had jumped to 3,917 representing virtually all members of the House and Senate (Ornstein, 1984). In spite of the trend to isolate casework in the

district office, a Washington-based Legislative Assistant may handle a case that occurs in the normal course of his work, and rather than pass it off to the officially identified caseworker, he will attempt to work it out himself because it is in his area of expertise and a positive outcome is more apt to result.

A second innovation has had to do with the duplication of effort. It is common to observe a constituent with a serious problem taking his business to his representative as well as his two senators. He presumes that if he tells more people about his problem the chances of a satisfactory resolution are significantly increased. This plan results in all three offices spending scarce resources on the same constituent problem, and frequently confuses those people in the agencies who are responsible for responding to the congressmen. To avoid this situation members have occasionally tried to develop means of cooperation within their delegations, but too often the partisan nature of the office has prevented this from becoming an effective alternative. However, experience has shown that when two senators from the same party seek to establish a coordinated casework operation positive results can occur. Senators McGovern and Abourezk from South Dakota, and Senators Baker and Brock from Tennessee were early experimenters with this system (Breslin, 1977).

Personal observation revealed that Senators Bellmon and Bartlett from Oklahoma refined the joint office concept and used it successfully as long as they were both in office. They identified one caseworker to handle specific types of cases for both offices, which meant that a constituent who contacted both senators would have his problem processed by the same person, eliminating any chance of duplication. An added advantage to the cooperative aspect was the fact that the Senators expanded their physical presence in the state from three offices to six. The six offices were strategically located to service the largest population centers and each was identified as "the Senator's office."

Congressional liaison. Obviously, caseworkers must have counterparts in the executive branch because that is where they must take constituent problems. In every department there are people who respond to congressional inquiries. In some, such as the Department of State, it is formalized in the office of the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations. In others, the function may be in the public affairs office or may be dispersed among specific subunits. The Department of Defense, for instance, has placed representatives of the three branches of the military on detached duty to offices on Capitol Hill. These ranking officers have actually moved in with their client congressmen. However personnel matters are handled, there is always someone to be found who will be attentive to the

needs of the members of Congress and these individuals deal on a one-to-one basis with the caseworker in the member's office.

Agency caseworkers can generally be depended upon to respond quickly to congressional appeals for assistance; however, some agencies are more cooperative than others. In one survey of congressional caseworkers, 78 per cent of the respondents replied that cooperation was always good. The Labor Department, Internal Revenue and the Immigration and Naturalization Service were declared to be the least helpful while Social Security, Veterans Affairs and the military rated higher praise (Johannes, 1978).

The matter of cooperation is critical to a congressional staffer and certain protocols are generally observed in order to stimulate productive relationships. Courtesy and patience go hand-in-hand with the undemanding approach, and a congressional staffer who tries to command, or "pull rank" will frequently put unneeded obstacles in the path of success. As a rule, caseworkers are interested in seeing to it that constituents get only that which is rightfully coming to them and will not make unreasonable demands on agencies in behalf of a case. One problem, however, that congressional caseworkers occasionally have difficulty with is the meritless case, one in which the constituent believes he ought to receive a benefit of some kind that clearly is

not due him. An example of this is the bereaved father of a son who was killed in action in Viet Nam, who wanted the enlistment standards waived so that he could join the Marines in order to avenge his son's death. It is usually a simple procedure, and politically expedient, to send the request on and let the agency take the blame for turning it down, but it is an irritation to the agency staff to have to process this kind of case.

The critical tool for a caseworker is her list of agency contacts--she needs to know who to call within the bureaucracy to get a problem resolved. The establishment of usable contacts is mostly a function of time and is accomplished largely by the trial-and-error method. Initially, a caseworker will follow the same general course anyone would in trying to find the appropriate person with whom to negotiate a solution to the problem at hand and, given sufficient time, a caseworker will develop a list of contacts that will respond quickly and effectively to her call. It is not unusual for an experienced caseworker to have functioning contacts in nearly every department and agency in the federal government, including those in the regional and district offices.

To assist a congressional office establish its network of contacts, the Republican and Democratic support committees sometimes prepare lists of key executive department

congressional liaison people in the various agencies and distribute this information to their members (e.g. Policy Committee Memo, 1974). Newly elected members will also be called upon by representatives of many agencies for the expressed purpose of establishing liaison. These courtesy calls are particularly helpful in establishing the required network. Visitation works in the other direction, as well. Cabinet members in the first Nixon administration scheduled opportunities for congressional staff to visit the various departments to meet the principal officers and to help develop a better understanding of the administrative agencies. It is also the practice for the Defense Department periodically to host caseworkers who are responsible for processing appointments to the military academies to a two day on site visit to Annapolis, West Point or the Air Force Academy. This public relations effort is designed to help the congressional staffer better understand the quality of life at the institutions and to gain some insight that will be useful in the nominating process.

Caseload determinants. The caseload experienced in congressional offices varies from state to state. The size of the state determines to a large degree the volume of casework a Senate office might process. Senators from the large metropolitan states of the East, California, and Texas have more activity than most other states simply because

they have a greater population to serve. On average, congressional offices in the states with the smallest populations process between one and two thousand cases each year. In the middle-sized states the average is between two and three thousand, while the highly populated states range between eight and seventy thousand cases a year (Breslin, 1977).

The nature of the commercial enterprise within a district is another factor that impacts on casework. Large defense plants and military facilities experience government oriented personnel problems and can be expected to contribute more heavily to the caseload in a congressional office than would the agriculture interest in a quiet rural community in the middle of Iowa. The senators and representatives from the State of Washington, for instance, undoubtedly experienced an increase in their caseloads when the Boeing plant laid off thousands of workers as a result of the loss of government contracts.

The celebrity of the member also has a tendency to increase the caseload in congressional offices. Senator Kennedy has by far the greatest number of cases in Congress, logging 70,000 per year, about 20,000 more than the senators from California report (Breslin, 1977). Because of his personal and family history, Kennedy is a very popular person with a large segment of the American public and is therefore

honored by much more attention than are other senators. His fame and popularity enhance his reputation for being a powerful member of Congress who is able to solve problems, and the volume of casework he must contend with is a clear reflection of this perception.

Local conditions also affect the volume of cases from time to time. Natural disasters of large dimension create great numbers of needy constituents, and even though federal relief teams are sent to the area, the member's offices often receive requests for help in securing aid. More often, however, important changes in the status quo of a community, such as those wrought by the economic fallout of the Penn Square bank collapse, the demise of Continental Bank of Illinois, or the precipitous decline in the oil and agriculture economies, account for an increase in constituent appeals for help with job-seeking, benefit applications, and tax relief.

Caseworkers' success rates. How successful are caseworkers in their efforts to negotiate positive results for their constituent's problems? Earlier in this chapter it was pointed out that estimates vary. In 1966, Gellhorn thought that only 10 per cent of all cases were successful while a Johannes survey in 1979 indicated that 40 per cent met with positive resolution. In some offices the estimation may be significantly higher given the fact that there is no

universal definition of "success." The term can mean almost anything one wishes it to. It can mean that the constituent received everything he asked the congressman to get for him; it can mean that the constituent did not get what he wanted, but he was treated so courteously that the pain of rejection was totally ameliorated; it can mean that even though the constituent was extremely unhappy with the inconvenience (and consequently estranged from the congressman) he still got what he wanted; it can mean that the constituent's request was unmerited, therefore not possible, but not counted as a negative effort on the caseworker's part; or it can mean a combination of any of the above.

Another factor impacting on the success rate is the commitment that the member has to seeing a case through to a positive end. If it is the policy of his office to not take "no" for an answer from any administrative agency the likelihood of a higher success rate is much greater. To be sure, many cases are meritless, but many times they can be negotiated away by counselling the constituent, and where this is done the rate of success will be higher.

In this study, success is defined by the caseworker and, as noted on her record of the case, accepted by the researcher. In those instances where the outcome is not noted the correspondence is reviewed by the researcher to determine the outcome. If the constituent realized his goal, the case

was defined as a success. If the constituent's claim was rejected, it was judged to have been a failure. If the constituent received some consideration, but not all of what he hoped for the case was considered to be successfully resolved.

The congressional office which provided the raw data for this study experienced a reorganization at the time the data was being drawn. A change in several staff positions gave the member an opportunity to redefine the mission of her field offices. At this time new record keeping procedures were instituted to monitor better the caseload and to record the win-loss ratio. In addition, a policy demanding a 100 per cent success rate, or a rate as close to that as possible, was developed. Weekly status reports are now required and reviewed by the Washington based administrative assistant.

Constituent motivation. In the context of this study a constituent problem, or case, is typically a situation where an individual citizen must confront a federal agency in an effort to wring from it a positive response. On the surface this might seem to be a simple matter, but when one weighs all its aspects the problem becomes all but insoluble for a large number of American citizens. Consider the problem of a misplaced social security check. What does a person do if his check, upon which he is presumably dependent, fails to

arrive at the expected time? The constituent most likely makes an attempt to notify the authority responsible for the issuance of the check. If the contact is by telephone the first obstacle is locating a number for Social Security in the directory because it is listed under "Health and Human Services, Department of." If that hurdle is overcome and the proper telephone number is located the caller is usually confronted with the problem of an incessantly busy number. Finally, when the call is connected it will be answered by an automated message and placed on hold. Often the wait is excessive and as the client sits holding the unresponsive instrument the intimidation and frustration can be profound. If he does not give up at this point he will eventually receive instructions to submit specific identifying information. Having done this a tracer will be put on the check to determine whether or not it was cashed. If it was, a variety of steps follow by which the client must prove he did not cash it, and providing he did not, the money will eventually be forwarded to him. This procedure takes many months to complete. If the check was merely lost, the client should still expect a delay of at least sixty days. If a congressman represents the constituent in this matter, priority attention from the social security office will be accorded the case and the process will be shortened. The most significant benefit to the constituent is the elimination of inconvenience and wasted time. He does not have to penetrate a system which he most likely does not

understand. The client merely makes one telephone call, or writes one letter to the member and prompt, eager, courteous attention is the result. To be advocated in this fashion can be most rewarding.

This problem is not unlike most others that result from government action or inaction. Procedural delays are unavoidable, but just knowing where to go and how to proceed is information that someone with limited capabilities is not likely to develop very easily. It is the sense of frustration and the feeling of intimidation that result from dealing with faceless bureaucrats that persuade some people with problems to contact their congressman.

Not everyone takes his problem to his representative, of course, but those who do may be stimulated by a variety of other factors. One reason a troubled constituent might seek help from his representative is because he actively supported the member in his campaign for office. Politically active people at the congressional level have been made aware of the capabilities for problem solving that exist in Washington, and they are sufficiently tuned in to the system to feel comfortable asking for assistance. Although most activists refrain from the practice it is not uncommon for them to request special favors. Campaign volunteers who have spent time knocking doors in behalf of a candidate, raising money for the race, or organizing

meetings and rallies oftentimes feel that they have a vested interest in the office and therefore have no compunction about reminding the member of their former service.

Related to this is the aspect of general partisanship. A constituent may seek out the representative simply because they both belong to the same party. This commonality infers a sense of brotherhood or fraternity, and help from the other person in this relationship ought to be expected.

Others bring their problems to a congressman because they are invited to do so. Periodically, perhaps three or four times a year, most members of Congress send a newsletter to all postal patrons in their district or state. Invariably, they include an offer by the member to help with any problem the citizen may have and advise precisely where to reach him. A variation of this communication is the district visit in which the member will be at a specific place at a certain time to receive all constituents who wish to visit with him. Notices of such meetings are placed in the appropriate newspapers in advance of the appointed hour. The Bellmon-Bartlett group, referred to earlier, prepared a forty-five minute slide presentation on the virtues of the joint office concept and displayed in detail how the casework function benefited the state. The show was scheduled at as many civic luncheons as possible over a two-year period and was used as a graphic invitation to all who

viewed it.

If a congressman has one or more offices situated in the district or state, it is quite likely that a field person is attached to each. These individuals have, as a primary function, the responsibility to circulate in the district, visiting with and speaking to individuals, Chambers of Commerce, church and professional groups and civic clubs. This kind of high visibility representation reflects the member's desire to serve his constituents and the field representative expressly invites one and all to bring individual and community concerns to the member's office for official attention and, hopefully, satisfactory resolution. There is little doubt that these invitations stimulate some business for the congressional office, but the extent of their importance in this regard needs to be documented.

Another manner in which a constituent becomes aware of the availability of a congressional office is through the experience of others. If a friend has had the good fortune to have had a problem solved with the help of the representative, one is likely to hear about it. By the same token, if the experience was not satisfactory, that tale will also probably be told. Dealing with one's congressional office is a bit out of the ordinary daily routine and the experience will often be shared with others.

The statistics which reveal the casework relationship between the citizen and the member are impressive, but they must also be read with an understanding of what is not happening as well as what is. If the average representative receives 12,000 cases of all kinds per year (Johannes, 1980), and if one made a reasoned guess that a third of those were of the individual variety, then this would mean that about seven-tenths of 1 percent of the constituency (4,000) of an average district (551,000) in any given year contacts his representative for help. Does that mean that only seventh-tenths of 1 percent have problems, or that only seventh-tenths of 1 percent hear about the service, or that only seven-tenths of 1 percent have the temerity to ask for help? The clearest message to be read in these figures is that most people do not ask their representative for help.

The Casework Process

The process of problem solving begins with the first contact with the congressional office. If the contact is by telephone the receptionist determines the nature of the problem and refers it to the appropriate caseworker. It often happens that caseworkers on a senate staff are scattered about the state in three or more different offices, so that a caller will have to have the call returned from some other city. This fact often impresses upon the constituent that the member is willing to help no matter where he is and a returned call from long distance is

doubly appreciated.

At this point, the caseworker hears the problem and solicits all the information necessary to negotiate with the executive agency. She will frequently ask for the information to be sent by mail in order to establish the file and to have a ready reference to the facts of the case. In addition, federal agencies are quite sensitive to the requirement of privacy that must be accorded to a citizen's record and they either require a copy of the constituent's original letter asking for help, or they will insist upon an authorization form of some kind with the constituent's signature. On the occasion of a walk-in constituent an interview with the caseworker takes place and the file is established with the accumulation of all pertinent information.

It is always the aim of a caseworker to process a case as quickly and successfully as possible, and with as much grace as she is capable. There are at least three reasons for this. First, the impression that the constituent oftentimes develops of the member depends on the manner in which the caseworker executes her responsibilities. In this sense, her job is political and the ramifications of how she performs can be critical. Second, case resolution provides her with a real element of job satisfaction. Casework represents a problem for the caseworker to solve, and to

find a positive solution brings rewards to the client, the member and to herself. Finally, her job can be quite tedious at times and the closing of a case and moving on to something else provides refreshment. With this goal in mind, then, the caseworker plans her strategy. She has a number of alternatives.

If the problem at hand is not unusual, or notably urgent, the caseworker may decide to simply attach a transmittal form to the letter and forward it on to the agency. This is called a "buck slip" and indicates to whomever receives it that it has a normal priority for attention. An important point to make here is that the "buck slip" in no way infers callousness on the part of the caseworker. She knows that it will be handled efficiently by the agency, but that it will have to take its turn for attention inasmuch as the agency in receipt of the case is most likely working at capacity trying to resolve problems of this or a similar nature. It also suggests that the caseworker sees so many of these kinds of cases that to type a transmittal letter anew every time a request comes across her desk would be less efficient.

A second alternative is to draft a personal letter to accompany the constituent's letter. This method emphasizes those points the caseworker wishes to make about the case and gives her an opportunity to raise the importance of the

case to a higher level of priority. The agency will then respond to those specific points, and, hopefully, respond more quickly. Another benefit of this method is that the constituent receives a carbon copy of the caseworker's letter and is reassured that something is being done on his behalf.

Another option is the telephone call to accompany the letter. This is used for two quite different purposes. If the constituent has made an impossible request, but the caseworker does not wish to take the responsibility for rejecting it she can write a letter asking for help, so that the constituent will later have a record of her fidelity, and then call the agency to let them know she is not expecting a positive response. This method is intended to retain the working relationship between the agency person and the caseworker while not jeopardizing the political relationship between the member and the constituent. This particular technique has also been criticized by the agencies because they feel that they are put in the position of having to take the blame for something the member imposed upon them through the legislative process. More often, however, the phone call which accompanies the letter is used for a positive emphasis and has the effect of letting the agency know that the member thinks the case is very important.

Occasionally, a case will surface with all the elements necessary to enlist the services of the member himself. The constituent will have written a letter on a letterhead that immediately identifies the writer as a personal friend, or a known elite from the state or district and it will describe a problem with serious consequences for the life and well-being of the constituent if it is not resolved immediately. Furthermore, the problem may lie in an area in which department heads are involved and where the caseworker has no dependable contact. The situation may be slightly more urgent if the member is an incumbent who is in a tight race for reelection and election day is just thirty days away. In this case, the responsible staff person may be safe in assuming that the member himself will call the constituent and perhaps accompany him to visit the department in question. When that happens the department head gets the message that this is important for the member and he will do everything he can to accommodate him.

After the caseworker has initiated the process with the executive agency the case is placed in a tickler file so that she will be reminded to call the agency with a follow-up inquiry before an undue amount of time lapses without a response being received. When a reply has been received the constituent is notified by phone or mail, depending upon the urgency of the matter, and the case is either closed or continued. At this juncture, additional information may be

needed from the constituent in order for the agency to continue the process.

When the agency gets a case from the member it normally responds with alacrity because it has a selfish interest in maintaining the goodwill of Congress. Having to contend with a displeased congressman is not a happy prospect for any agency administrator. When he was Secretary of Health Education and Welfare, Casper Weinberger personally told each member of Congress that it was the responsibility of the first person a member contacted at HEW to secure sought after information, and that he "wouldn't countenance any response" which directed the member to contact someone else (Weinberger, 1974). This attitude is typical of department secretaries, and although one might expect a deterioration of commitment commensurate with the distance in rank from the secretary, adherence to the policy is the norm rather than the exception.

When communicating with constituents, caseworkers in some offices are admonished to always sign the member's name to the correspondence giving the impression that he is personally involved in the matter at hand. This not only allows him to take credit for resolving the problem, but it is intended to eliminate confusion in the mind of the constituent. It was the member who was addressed in the first place, not the caseworker, therefore it is the member

who should respond.

A different philosophy exists in other offices, however. Some encourage the caseworker to sign her own name on the correspondence to the constituent. It is felt this helps to establish a working relationship between the caseworker and the client. Care and concern can be demonstrated in a more personal way in this manner, it is suggested, and it more truly reflects the situation as it exists. Another practical reason for identifying herself with a case in this manner is to avoid duplication of effort within the office. If subsequent mail from the constituent to the member is addressed to the attention of the caseworker, there is little chance that another caseworker will intercept it and treat it as a new case.

The same rule applies when communicating with a federal agency. If a caseworker were to sign her own name to the correspondence, she might not get the desired effect. If the member signs the letter, the response is almost always quite prompt even though the agency personnel understand that the letter was probably written by a caseworker. By the same token, agency personnel, when communicating with a caseworker, usually address the letter to the member. This protocol is important because it provides the authority required to motivate response and keeps the elected official in the primary position.

Constituent problems have three possible conclusions and all are common. A case may result in a positive solution, a negative solution, or it may remain unresolved. The effect each or any of these outcomes has on the constituent depends to a great degree on how it was handled and not always on how the case turned out. A constituent who has a case resolved in his favor might be expected to be grateful to the congressman and his staff for their successful effort, and for the most part they usually are. However, if a case was resolved successfully only after a great deal of determined agitation by the constituent it is entirely possible that he might feel resentful. When a case is not successfully resolved the caseworker may salvage the constituent-member relationship by handling the situation in a sympathetic manner, but there are always those who will be disappointed with any outcome that does not properly resolve the problem at hand and no amount of sympathy will prevent the development of a negative attitude.

A caseworker has to be very careful that she does not predetermine the outcome of the case. At the outset it may seem to her that there is no chance whatsoever that the constituent's request can be honored. It may seem on its face to be unreasonable, or the caseworker may have had a previous experience that led her to this conclusion. In any event, a practiced caseworker will view every case as a serious problem that needs immediate resolution . . . and

she will convey her concern and sympathy to the constituent. If it becomes apparent along the way that the case will indeed result in a negative outcome, the caseworker may begin to prepare the constituent for the inevitable, but always in a way that protects her role as advocate. Once the caseworker slips into an adversative position she will have damaged the member-constituent relationship. It is on this point that the critical role of the caseworker becomes crystal clear. She is the link between the citizen and his government at a time when he is vulnerable to new ideas and liable to form lasting impressions.

Summary

The casework process is perceived to benefit the member and constituent alike. The member is given the opportunity to represent his clients on an individual basis, a situation that is calculated to develop feelings of loyalty in the constituent. The service can be provided at very little personal cost to the member, with hardly any risk, and the performance of this kind of service can enhance his reputation for caring. The constituent, on the other hand, is treated to personal attention by the member and his staff that often results in a positive resolution of his problem at a net savings of time and inconvenience. To maintain the process the Congress has provided its members with all the tools it needs, including staff, facilities and support systems. Additionally, the executive branch has cooperated

by creating its own network of operatives who expedite problem-solving on the other end of the system. All in all, it would appear that problem solving for individual constituents has a great potential for helping a congressman overcome the adverse affects that accrue as a result of participating in the legislative process.

Questions arise, however, that challenge the premise that casework is universally beneficial to the member. What is the impact of one dissatisfied constituent on the reputation of the member? Does it offset satisfaction on a one-to-one basis or is it inordinately powerful? Is it possible to define correctly the successful resolution of a case? Or to say it in another way, does the successful resolution of a case necessarily result in a satisfied constituent? As the casework systems in Congress and government have developed over the years, the general acceptance of the value of the practice has grown, and although the tendency to question the general perception has grown more slowly, it nevertheless demands attention. It is important, therefore, to review the evolution of casework.

CHAPTER II

A STUDY IN REPRESENTATION; THE EVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF CASEWORK

Introduction

In order to understand better the phenomenon of constituent representation it is beneficial to review the course by which casework has worked its way to its present state of prominence from its inception in the minds of the framers of the constitution when they provided everyone with the right to petition the government for redress of real or imagined wrongs. Chapter II will review this progress by looking at the literature from the perspectives of those within Congress and those scholars who would study it from without.

In the second section of the chapter, a theory will be developed to show why members of the Congress of the United States should be significantly benefited by doing casework. The realities of human response to the dynamics of single person and group interaction will be discussed and related to the concept of constituent representation by utilizing the Almond-Powell demand classification system.

Casework: As Seen From Without

The perception that casework could provide benefits for the member was slow in coming to the Congress. The concept dates to the Constitution, at least to the degree that a case is an instance of a citizen petitioning his government, but it is only in the last forty years or so that its volume has expanded to the point that it attracted much attention of scholars. Casework, up to that time, had been handled by the Congress in a fairly casual manner and was often seen as more of a bother than an important element of the representative function.

An early reference to casework can be found in the 1946 legislative reorganization effort. At issue was the question of additional staff to accommodate increasing work loads. The specific question of attending to constituent problems was raised in a report by the American Political Science Association's Committee on Congress which was published in 1945. It had become clear by this time that casework was consuming significant portions of the member's personal time. In the subsequent committee report of the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress in the 1st session of the 79th Congress, it was acknowledged that casework was a legitimate part of the representative function and properly lodged in Congress (Pauls and Carlile, 1982).

Later literature of significance relating to casework was more or less centered in the decade of the 1960s. A typical discussion of the workings of Congress (Young, 1958) dealt with the external influences on Congress in terms of the president, states, bureaucracy and lobbyists, with little reference to the constituent and his demands. Indeed, it was Young's observation that the critical task of Congress was legislating and that it had effectively erected certain barriers to "protect itself against excessive outside interference" which would threaten their ability to perform this function. Among these safeguards were listed guards and doorkeepers, rules restricting access to the floor, rules governing member's ethics, legal restraints preventing government agencies from encouraging the public to "write or wire your congressman," and reporting procedures for lobbyists. The institutional attitude, as Young saw it, was to withdraw to an inner sanctum, isolated from outside influence, so that the main job of writing laws could proceed apace.

Another similar presentation (Matthews, 1960) dealt only with the Senate and provided a good description of the institution, its folkways, clubbiness, and the forces that impacted upon it. Although it recognized the importance of constituent demands it tended to discuss them in terms of their nuisance factor and even suggested that the costs of doing casework for the Senator were ". . . lost time,

dignity, and self respect. . . ." In the House, constituent service was viewed in similar deprecatory terms. Davidson, writing toward the end of this period in 1969, called it the "Errand Boy function" and offered a member's view of it as a colorful definition:

> (It is a) secondary job--such as 'secretary to all the district's Chambers of Commerce,' 'employment agency' for the district, and 'problem analyzer' for disputes between constituents and federal agencies.

At the same time others expressed their conviction that even the constituent placed the legislative function at the top of the list of things that motivated him. Senator Hugh Scott (R.Pa) observed:

> Most voters do not mark their ballot on the basis of how much was done for or against them or on who got what. They vote for the candidate they can trust to exercise good judgement. They do not all expect that a Senator's judgement will coincide with theirs 100 per cent of the time, but they hope that over a period of time he will provide them with fair and reasonable representation (Preston, 1969).

As unenthusiastic as his respondents were, Davidson also observed that a member of Congress spent about 25 per cent of his time in performance of the "errand boy" function and a full three-fourths of those surveyed rated it as one of their most time-consuming responsibilities.

This was a period of ambivalence--one of transition from an overwhelming emphasis on the legislative role to one in which constituent service was beginning to compete for the attention of Congress. The result of Davidson's 1969 survey is an indication of the significant growth of caseloads in

the congressional offices as the demands for assistance began to flood in from constituents caught up in the Great Society and Viet Nam dislocations (Fiorina, 1977a).

Two rather thorough accounts of the casework activity (Clapp, 1963; Gellhorn, 1966) demonstrated the growing number and variety of constituent demands on the members. Gellhorn reviewed the phenomenon from the perspective of the bureaucracy, while Clapp discussed it as one of several congressional functions. Significantly, they each mentioned the growing perception that casework pays off in reelection dividends. Meanwhile, Davidson found agreement with his assertion that Congress was spending a quarter of its time doing casework (Saloma, 1969) while others presented a picture of the institution at work doing nothing but constituent service (Vinyard, 1967). Saloma's survey also revealed that 75 per cent of the congressmen interviewed felt that casework was a major time-consuming task and that nearly 60 per cent said that it was one of the most burdensome parts of their congressional experience.

As constituent service began to impose on congressional offices, criticism of the process grew as well. It was deemed to be inefficient, inasmuch as 535 offices were each maintaining staff, equipment and facilities to respond to caseloads. Other critics offered that casework interfered with the legislative function and consumed time and

resources more properly put to use making policy. The need for additional staff was cited as an unhappy consequence of increased constituent service and finally, some even suggested that casework would only benefit elites and in so doing would reinforce public cynicism and suspicion (Breslin, 1977).

Perhaps the most important criticism was leveled at the episodic aspect of casework:

> Since triumph is the usual goal, casework tends to go no further than the case at hand, leaving untouched the problems that generated it. Ordinarily, investigation is superficial. Implications, if not altogether unperceived, are in any event likely to be ignored. So long as the present case has an appropriately happy outcome, tomorrow's case is left to its own devices; anyway, it may involve some other Congressman's constituent. Always pressed for time and almost always untrained generalists in a world of trained specialists, Congressmen pass on to other things and so do administrators. Unless the Congressman is pertinaciously reform minded, casework comes and goes without greatly improving the conduct of public affairs (Gellhorn, 1966).

Gellhorn was specifically addressing the need to connect casework with oversight. Casework naturally focusses attention on weaknesses within the administrative agencies, and members, if only they would pay attention, could follow through by initiating corrective action, thus justifying the expenditure of congressional resources on the casework function. Gellhorn's conclusion, however, was that Congress has not effectively used casework in this way.

Institutional concern. As the criticism of casework grew in intensity so too did the call for change. Reform was in the wind; many critics proposed institutional solutions to handle the influx of cases. Senators Hartke and Gravel introduced legislation in 1973 (S. 2500) to centralize the constituent service function of Congress in an Office of Constituent Assistance. As they envisioned it, this congressional agency would receive information about constituent problems from individual senate offices and deal with each as required. The office would also have an oversight function designed to correct systemic deficiencies represented by constituent problems. However, they lacked adequate support from their colleagues so their approach to the problem was rejected (Breslin, 1977).

General awareness of the problem brought a new element of reform to the debate. The ombudsman concept of Scandinavian origin attracted a good deal of attention during this period (Hill, 1973) and separate efforts were made by Congressmen Culver and Aspin to impose the ombudsman concept upon the American political system. In the first instance, Culver proposed a plan that would centralize the service function in the hands of a "citizen's representative" who, in addition to handling constituent problems would also function as a special congressional prosecutor, to investigate "charges of corruption and abuse of power in government" (Breslin, 1977). Representative Aspin proposed

legislation that would have expanded access to the process for the constituent by creating an ombudsman for every congressional district. These service personnel would be appointed by the individual congressman and paid for out of the member's staff allowance. Aspin's bill would also have provided training and means of evaluation for each ombudsman.

These reform efforts met with little enthusiasm and no institutional support. Members of congress were persuaded by this time that they were reaping electoral benefits from casework and were not eager to relinquish the process to some centralized office that might become politicized by others. There was also the belief that by creating an ombudsman a new layer of bureaucracy would emerge to consume scarce resources and further confuse an already complex procedural maze. Finally, a non-political constituent service was held to be devoid of the political clout necessary to encourage bureaucrats to respond to constituent complaints.

Congress, except for a handful of members, did not respond as though a problem existed. Indeed, what was conceived to be a problem to political scientists and other congressional observers was in reality perceived by most members to be an advantage to be protected, nurtured and exercised at every opportunity. Therefore, institutional response to the

casework burden was of low intensity and instead of reform the Congress responded by formalizing the existing process. The House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, in its very first advisory opinion, issued in 1970, discussed the manner in which members should communicate with federal agencies and concluded:

> As the population has grown . . . government has enlarged in scope and complexity . . . citizens find it more difficult to obtain redress by direct communication with administrative agencies. As a result . . . congressional offices devote more time to constituent requests than to any other single duty.
>
> --specific cases arising under these conditions test the legislation and provide a valuable oversight disclosure to the Congress.
>
> --often a citizen simply does not know the appropriate office to petition.
>
> For these and similar reasons, it is logical and proper that the petitioner seek the assistance of his Congressman for an early and equitable resolution of his problem.

As one might expect, then, congressional literature, reflecting official concern for the need to reform the process is narrow indeed, restricted primarily to 1965 Joint Committee Reports, a series of Congressional Research Service monographs (Yacker, 1976; Carlile, 1981; Pauls and Carlile, 1982; Newman, 1982) and a Commission Report on the Operation of the Senate (Breslin, 1977). The Joint Committee Reports resulted from hearings on the ombudsman plans forwarded by members of the Senate and House, while the Congressional Research Service references are basically

cursory informational pieces. Newman's monograph, for instance, is entitled Grants Work In A Congressional Office and deals with an explanation of how to apply for grants and how to assist constituents in the application process. Carlile's work is simply a description of a congressional office in which she outlines the various functions, one of which is casework.

Only Breslin deals with casework as a problem demanding a solution. She analyzes the congressional casework system in a comprehensive manner, identifying its strengths and weaknesses, reviewing the attempts of members to correct some of the problems and, finally, making recommendations for change. Not surprisingly, inasmuch as she was commissioned by the U.S. Senate, she argues for an improvement of the status quo rather than a radical change in procedure. Although she seems to favor decentralization over the long term she emphasizes short term improvements. In the first place, Breslin suggests that the Senate review and improve its service systems to respond more ably to constituent needs.

Breslin's second suggestion is to professionalize the caseworker. Caseworkers, she offers, need training, recognition and to have a higher value placed on their positions. Typically, they are women with no particular professional qualifications or training who bring to the job

those skills that were acquired as secretaries, office support staff, and political campaigning. With proper training and orientation it would be more likely that satisfactory case resolution would improve and that the oversight function would be embraced as part of the process.

Recognizing that her call for centralization of the constituent service function would not be looked upon with any degree of interest, Breslin realistically closes her report with "The Senate will not relinquish its one direct tie with the people. The challenge to the Senate is to provide a service that is efficient and responsive to constituent needs."

Casework: The View From Within

The view that constituency oriented tasks are rewarded in some way that ultimately enhances the incumbent's reelection chances is one that is frequently expressed by members of Congress. Typical of this attitude is former Representative Abner Mikva's statement:

> Many members devote a substantial portion of their staff and funds to performing the ombudsman role. Referred to as casework, it is the stuff of which successful politicians build large and grateful pluralities. Indeed, concerned caseworkers often succeed even when they fail by making the constituent feel that his congressman is 'fighting the pointy-headed bureaucracy' that keeps him from getting his due. Most important, many commentators argue that good casework can counteract a congressman's unpopular votes and positions (Mikva, 1983).

In his survey of what goes on in the congressional district,

Home Style, Richard Fenno catalogues a variety of responses focussing on the value of casework, but one of the most telling is that of the Republican member representing a Democratic district. He always "teetered on the brink of defeat" but successfully retained his seat because "The biggest part of getting reelected is casework (and) I have the best case workers anywhere, in the district and in Washington." When asked who his strongest supporters were he claimed they were all those people for whom he had done casework. Finally, he expressed his conviction that his party "wouldn't stand a ghost of a chance to win (my seat if I retired). My strength is the result of the casework and all the visits." This member clearly believed that casework was more important than party or any other outside factor.

Many members have come to cherish the casework experience for the personal satisfaction it gives them. Senator Scott, for instance, carried a letter around with him for a long time that expressed the profound gratitude a newly naturalized citizen felt at receiving his letter of congratulations upon her swearing in. He took a great deal of pride in his being able to recognize that person (Preston, 1969).

Senator Weicker's experience, however, illustrates how satisfaction and reward can often go hand in hand. One of his constituents had shipped her dog by air and discovered

that it was dead on arrival. Her complaint led the Senator's staff to investigate to determine if this was an isolated incident or if it had happened to others. It was learned that many others had similar experiences over time, but that no one had ever really tried to do anything about it. The Senator introduced legislation authorizing the Secretary of Transportation to issue regulations governing the shipping of animals by air so that their safety would henceforth be assured. His attack on the problem was front page news at home, because of its human interest aspect, and the publicity stimulated a great expression of support from pet owners and other sympathetic constituents. Senator Weicker was most pleased by the letter from a voter in the other party who had never crossed party lines to vote before, who said that he loved animals and would vote for Senator Weicker in future elections (Davidson and Oleszek, 1985).

There is another sort of recognition that prevails in the minds of at least some congressmen, suggesting that casework might be a cause for job dissatisfaction. Simply stated, it says, "I feel the errand boy function is contrary to the Founding Father's intent, but it's necessary for election" (Davidson, 1969). In a recent study alluding to its negative aspects, one researcher asked his respondents if casework had become so burdensome as to have contributed to the former member's decision to leave the Congress.

However, he observed that there was little evidence to support the conclusion that it made an impact in the area.

> Though I did hear comment that constituents could be quite shrill, on the whole the retirees vigorously disagreed with the notion that the burgeoning amount of constituency service chores was a factor in their retirement decisions (Hibbing, 1982).

Although dissatisfaction might develop from having to contend with an unwarranted obligation it is more likely that members who hold this attitude probably accept it as part of the job they have to do even though they get little joy out of doing it.

Over the years casework has come to be accepted as a legitimate function of the representative's role. It has been grudgingly accepted by some and heartily embraced by others, but in any event, it is believed to have at least some electoral benefit for the member. Additionally, there is some feeling that it needs to be made more efficient and less costly. The majority in Congress, however, prefer the status quo and have gladly participated in the institutionalization of the casework process.

Analyzing casework. When congressional scholars began to analyze casework in terms of the whole political process important questions of a different sort emerged in the literature. Previously, constituent service had generally been viewed as a function, and as such had been thoroughly weighed and measured. The impact of casework on the

Congress had been noted and the resulting concern had led to proposals that would have enhanced the function (Klonoff, 1979; Olson, 1967), removed it (Reuss, 1965; Joint Committee Hearings, 1966; Senate Hearings, 1966, 1968), or abolished it (Joint Committee Hearings, 1965). However, with the publication of Mayhew's study, "The Case of the Vanishing Marginals," and his book, The Electoral Connection, research into the subject of casework took a new direction. The literature began to look at the external impact of constituent service and what it was doing to the political system.

Mayhew (1977a) noted that the number of congressional districts with close elections dropped significantly between 1956 and 1972 and that this drop was part of a longer, but slower decline. The marginal districts were vanishing, he suggested, incumbents were getting stronger, and he wondered why. Nearly the first to frame an answer was Mayhew himself (1977b). He delineated three ways in which incumbents try to improve or maintain their position with constituents ... advertising, credit-claiming, and position taking. All are ways in which the member can relate to his district, but credit-claiming, of which casework is an example, is an activity for which he carefully organizes because it is a one-on-one situation that he perceives has a direct electoral result. In Mayhew's opinion, casework was part of a conscious strategy of self-preservation and not simply a

casual response to constituent needs and demands.

Fiorina (1977a) focused on constituent service as well and pointed out that opportunities for casework exploded at about the same time that the marginal districts vanished. The period 1956-1972, selected by Mayhew, coincided with the extravagant growth of congressional staffs and of the government in general. The two events combined to offer every member of Congress new ways to help his constituents, and his constituents many new reasons to ask. Fiorina too, suggests that casework is a deliberate effort to enhance the likelihood of reelection when he says a congressman will help "establish a federal program, fund it, then help constituents get as much as they can get out of it."

Another significant contribution to the literature, Home Style, (Fenno, 1978), was more in line with Mayhew's, focusing on the salesmanship aspects of the member-constituent relationship. His observations of a number of congressmen at home in their districts led him to the conclusion that an incumbent goes through two stages of development . . . the expansionist period and the protectionist period. In both he is concerned with the devices he uses to represent his constituents (style), how he allocates his time and resources to his district, and how he explains his Washington activities. These components of the congressman's career were seen to be the focal points

for his energies and if he manipulated them wisely, he became much less likely to suffer the agonies of defeat.

It is generally recognized that the incumbency factor is strong and getting stronger. The advantage of incumbency to a candidate has been measured to be at least two percentage points (Erickson, 1971) and considering that every two points added is also two points subtracted from the opponent's total the margin can be quite decisive. Even so, a consensus has not yet developed on the importance of casework as the cause of that strength. As persuasive as Fiorina's argument was (1977a) it was not enough to convince everyone and a sometimes heated exchange developed. One effort in particular (Johannes and McAdams, 1981), using multiple regression to control for the effects of a number of variables, found that " . . . casework has no statistically significant effect and further find that a substantively important effect is unlikely, given our estimates." Thus, Fiorina and Johannes-McAdams bracket an area of disputed research and one in which a number of variations are found.

A qualified agreement with the casework hypothesis (Cover, 1982) indicates that although casework has a positive, measurable effect on how the constituent thinks about his representative, the effect is only temporary and after a period of time the recipient of the member's attentions will

be indistinguishable from any survey respondent who has not had a casework experience. In line with this research, Cover, in an earlier analysis (1977), presented evidence to show that the aggressive use of available techniques with which to confront their constituencies, failed to improve their recognition factors over the years.

As research continued from Mayhew's beginning more divergence occurred as new paths were pursued. One study (Yiannakis, 1981) concurred that casework is an important factor, but that party identification and issue compatibility are more significant. Another study (Epstein and Frankovic) argued that issue compatibility is less important than response to constituent needs, but that in any event, casework is an insurance policy that every member would be well advised to adopt.

Payne (1980) even offers the thought that incumbents have become stronger over the years because they have experienced a "motivational shift" and as a result, they try harder. Although there seems to be a slight trend toward the position of Johannes and McAdams and away from the dogmatism of Fiorina much of the literature can be found on cautious middle ground suggesting that it is a combination of variables that accounts for the strength of the incumbent and not just one apparent factor like casework (Sullivan and Uslaner, 1978; Mann and Wolfinger, 1980).

Summary. Constituent service was born with the Constitution which gave every citizen the right to petition his government for the redress of grievances. From the beginning it was recognized as a bothersome chore that competed with the considerably more important legislative tasks of Congress, but it was, nevertheless, accepted as part of a member's responsibility. As government became more active, caseloads in congressional offices increased to a burdensome degree and the call for reform was heard. Congress was faced with two options. It could either devise a new mechanism along the lines of the ombudsman by which casework could be processed, or it could increase its own capabilities to handle the responsibility. Exploring both solutions, it found little support for putting the fate of the constituent in the hands of any outside entity. Congress, therefore, chose the latter course of action and substantially enlarged its staff by means of periodic reorganization and reform legislation.

Inasmuch as constituent service was perceived to be an advantage for incumbent congressmen that could be translated into votes at the polls, members found many ways to increase the casework burden. Advertising for casework became commonplace; the creation of constituent oriented federal programs provided new opportunities for the member to help the home folks; increased staff generated more work. As the ever-increasing caseloads took on a life of their own the

perception that constituent service enhanced the congressional career grew proportionately.

Recently, however, the electoral advantage of casework has begun to be questioned by scholars, and with their questions, many new doors of inquiry have been opened. The literature relating to the casework function of Congress has given us much that we need to know about the institution and its members, but it is apparent from what has already been written there is still more to be done.

Clearly, the work done by Johannes and McAdams suggests the need for a greater effort challenging the commonly held perception that casework is of great benefit to the member. We have seen from the reactions of the members themselves that casework has almost attained a level of acceptance approaching something akin to "the ultimate truth." However, there is sufficient doubt to stimulate more study, and it will be the purpose of this project to approach the question from a different direction.

Constituent Service and the Represented

This study is designed to observe the political effect of casework on Congress, members of Congress and the American political system in general. At this point, casework has been defined, the process explained and member attitudes about constituent service discussed. The literature has

provided insights into the way representation is provided, but little has been said about the nature of constituent demands and how they relate to the way citizens feel and act about government.

In this section a theory of casework will be developed showing why congressmen feel the way they do about constituent service, that is, why they want to do casework. A typology combining the Almond-Powell demand classification with a continuum measuring member advantage will be employed to demonstrate this phenomenon. Evidence drawn from National Election Studies and other sources will be presented to show how Congress as an institution, members of Congress, and the government are regarded by the constituent. The study will theorize why these constituent attitudes prevail, demonstrating particularly that it is the congressman who is constituted most appropriately to respond to particularized demands.

Finally, the study will theorize that casework is a positive act attracting positive responses from the constituent, and inasmuch as it is a positive force it actually has a tendency to ameliorate negative attitudes about government and its institutions. Indeed, by doing casework, the congressman is improving the general public's attitude about Congress and the American political system.

A Typology

It has often been said that the United States is a nation of consumers. Unquestionably, this is so. The economic system under which we live is designed to operate on commercial enterprise and the buying and selling of goods and services, and it is necessary for the maintenance of the system for each to participate by consuming the product of others. Ironically, as we have succeeded in our enterprise we have created the need for a rather large measure of protection from each other as we get on with our daily business of producing and consuming. As a result, our free enterprise system is no longer as free as it once was, but the standards by which we live have been enhanced because of this protective intervention.

Few aspects of our lives today are immune from some form of government regulation. A recent study of government created a scenario that follows an average citizen through a portion of his day and points out each time he is confronted by federal restriction. The list, of course, is impressive, covering many aspects of health, hygiene, entertainment, transportation, housing, education, and employment. "No part of a person's life is left untouched by the entity called bureaucracy" (Meier, 1979). As the nation has grown the government has kept apace by passing more legislation, creating more programs and imposing more controls. This condition has created many new opportunities for the

individual to interface with his government in order to request that it correct some mistake in its administration of the law, to perform some additional service for the community or individual, to alleviate some oppressive condition, or generally to improve life. We have come to expect these things from our government and as a result, we are in constant communication with it as we express our demands.

The demands that are made upon the government by the governed are many and varied, but they can be categorized conveniently as general or particular and, depending upon the nature of their source, as individual or organized (Almond and Powell, 1966; Mezey, 1976). Generalized demands are those which, if adopted as policy, will affect the whole nation. Particularized demands, on the other hand, are much more specific and more likely to be of interest to a region, community, small group or individual. If the source of the demand is a group, it is determined to be organized, otherwise it is classified as individual. The result is a four-celled matrix defining all constituent demands.

General-Organized: An organization of concerned scientists appealing for an end to the use of nuclear energy.

General-Individual: An irate citizen writing a letter to his representative demanding that he do something about crime in the streets.

Particular-Organized: The local Chamber of Commerce sending a delegation to Washington to lobby for a

federally funded water purification plant for the city.

Particular-Individual: A taxpayer asking his senator to get the IRS to send him his refund check.

These classifications are to be found on a continuum of advantage measured from least to most. Those demands which are most advantageous for the member to respond to are those in which the least risk is involved and which are presented by an identifiable constituent. Those with the least advantage are non-specific issues on which a position must be taken, and which are presented by an entity rather than an individual.

General-Organized Demands	Least Advantageous
General-Individual Demands	Moderate to Least Advantageous
Particular-Organized Demands	Moderate to Most Advantageous
Particular-Individual Demands	Most Advantageous

These classifications are of assistance to us in understanding the perception members of Congress have about the dynamics of the relationship between the represented and the representative process. It has been made clear from reviewing the literature pertaining to constituent service that congressmen believe casework is worth doing because it is usually a demand providing the greatest advantage for them as they seek to respond. Most seem to be convinced, that in addition to a personal sense of satisfaction to be

gained from helping someone, they will be rewarded for their good works on election day. Justification for this perception can be found by looking more closely at the constituent demand classifications. In each case we will review a classification from the perspective of the representative to try to arrive at some understanding of how he interprets and responds to constituent demands.

General-Organized demands. Constituent interests in this category are characterized as broad issue concerns that are designed to change the national condition. Examples might include programs of the scope of Social Security, tariff legislation, and comprehensive tax reform. There are a number of reasons for a member of Congress to be unenthusiastic about being approached with these generalized demands from groups and organizations. In the first place, a representative is virtually powerless to comply immediately with the demand. If one were persuaded to undertake the task of initiating and coordinating the necessary legislative activity to remodel the Social Security Act, he would most likely be looking at a very long term project which could easily endure beyond his regular term of office. A member with a six-year term might have a better opportunity to see it to the end, but even then, it wouldn't be too unusual for the effort to extend into his next term or even beyond. The initiation of the revenue sharing concept occurred in 1969 during the first year of

the Nixon Adminstration, but it wasn't passed until 1972. A more compelling example can be found in the case of Medicare, which was first proposed in 1948 but wasn't passed until 1965, seventeen years later (Edwards, 1980). There are, of course, many examples of General demands that are dispatched within the term of one session of Congress, but the time involved makes complying with this kind of demand relatively less advantageous than others.

A second reason General-Organized demands are of less advantage to the member is because he cannot accomplish the desired end by himself. He must comply with the rules of the legislative activity, over which he has very little control. In the process, he may become lost in the crowd and discover that someone else got all the credit for getting the job done. Dealing with the big issues is a group effort, consequently the payoff is not at all certain for the individual participant.

Third, General demands require a member to take a position. This is a risk that must be considered. Each position taken attracts the attention of those who may not share his viewpoint, thus representing a political problem of some degree or other. There are two areas in which a member's perceived position on an issue is critical. The first, obviously, is in his constituency. If a General demand is made that is not compatible with constituent attitudes, the

member must choose to offend the petitioner in order to remain in concert with what he believes to be the majority back home. If the issue is controversial and the district is divided on the subject, the choice the member makes will assuredly be disapproved by a large segment of voters. Secondly, it is not an infrequent occurrence for a representative or senator to be caught between his constituents in the district and his party in the Congress. An excellent example can be found in the activity surrounding President Reagan's 1981 tax bill. A number of Democrats, notably Congressmen Phil Gramm and Ken Hance of Texas, felt compelled to cosponsor the President's program because it was embraced by the people in their districts. This meant that they had to seriously offend the Democratic leadership in the House. As a result, Gramm felt obliged to resign his seat and change his party affiliation. He later successfully regained the seat as a Republican (Ripley, 1983). Clearly, members can't avoid taking positions, but because risk taking is inherent in the exercise responding to General demands it is at the lowest end of the advantage continuum.

Finally, those who make General-Organized demands appear as groups rather than individuals, making it more likely that communication will become an impersonal act. Depersonalizing the relationship between member and constituent blurs the lines of responsibility, removing the

certainty of a payoff. An organization can respond to a member with a promise of certain kinds of material support, but the spokesmen for the organization cannot say with any assurance how individuals within the group feel about the congressman. The member of Congress, therefore, might feel more eager to deal with an individual with whom he will be better able to develop an unambiguous relationship. Furthermore, when confronting groups, the member cannot always be certain that he is dealing with his own constituents. Individuals tend to become subservient to the expressed interests of the group and, consequently, much less prominent.

General-Individual demands. The response to General-Individual demands is conditioned, first of all, by the nature of the individual, of which three types might be mentioned. The most important individual a member must respond to is the Distinguished Expert. This person may be in the private sector with a constituency all his own. He may be the publisher of the local newspaper, a well-known entertainer or a Nobel prizewinner. When Dr. Carl Sagan, nationally known and respected Professor of Astronomy and Space Sciences at Cornell University, writes about the climatic and atmospheric consequences of a nuclear war and describes the effects of multiple nuclear explosions his appeal for ridding the earth of the weapons of nuclear destruction (Ehrlich, et al., 1984) must be given some

credence. The member to whom an appeal such as this might be presented can do little to comply, but he can express interest, sympathy, concern, and agree to cooperate with any reasonable effort to accomplish the goal. He may even respond with a number of symbolic gestures such as speechifying, holding public hearings under the Congressional imprimatur, or introducing legislation which he knows has no chance of passing.

The second type relates to the known political friend. This person may have been the member's earliest or most generous supporter and who is valued as friend, counsellor and important to his political future. He may be a recognized member of the community who enjoys a certain level of esteem and occupies a position of some substance or may simply be someone whom the member is interested in knowing better. Again, when this kind of individual makes a general demand the most a member will usually do is respond with concern and interest, and a pledge to join with others to attend to the problem, although symbolic responses are not to be ruled out. Finally, the third category of individual is the person who is unknown to the member and can best be described as an average constituent. His call for congressional action may take the form of a letter or personal communication and will be received and responded to politely and sympathetically, but it will not be likely to stir the member to action.

Another factor conditioning the response to this kind of demand is the congressman's degree of interest in the matter at hand. If the member has determined to lead the charge on the issue he will respond eagerly to those with similar concerns and perhaps even try to enlist them in the cause in some way or other. General issues usually require a great deal of national support and organization, in and out of Congress, and as a consequence the admonition that "every little bit of help counts" is accepted as faith. Existing organizations will be contacted and solicited for support at the same time new groups are being created. Coalitions will be structured to be as all inclusive as possible.

In the event the member has no position established on the issue he will weigh the risks involved in taking a stand before proceeding. This may involve no more than an automatic response if current attitudes in the district are clear to him. If the issue is strong and constituent views are compatible he will likely respond positively. If he feels that he can advantageously spend his resources on a long term proposition, he may even take the initiative. In this case he may calculate that the publicity he gets as leader in a popular cause will clearly be more valuable than the time and effort it takes to be the leader. Whatever he does he can expect certain inconveniences. He may find that those in the district and Congress who do not agree with a position he takes can, and will, hurt him politically. He

can expect to spend great amounts of energy and effort on a long term proposal, often to the detriment of other priority items on his agenda. Finally, by doing little or nothing he may offend his own conscience as well as those of his constituents that want him to take a position. The advantage to the member in this situation is not at all predictable.

Particular-Organized demands. Although holding a certain element of risk, the Particular demand has the benefit of being within the realm of possibility for the member. Another positive aspect is that it can often be dealt with on a short term basis, however, there are common examples of long term projects, such as dam construction, that are included in this category. The risk, of course, is that all constituent groups within the district might not agree upon the desirability of the particular item which is the focus of the demand.

In the 1970s the Congress, with the collaboration of the nominally conservative Nixon and Ford administrations, indulged in a veritable binge of governmental activism and created many new federal programs of particular relevance to urban centers. The urban oriented legislation resulted in great programs to rebuild cities, re-house city center inhabitants, feed the poor, retrain the unemployed, build schools, control pollution, make the work place safer and to

attend to many other elements of the health and welfare of American citizens. The scope of this federal involvement can be revealed in the observation that during the years 1970 to 1975 the number of pages in the Federal Register, the public chronicle of new laws and regulations, grew from 20,000 to 60,000 annually. By contrast, there were only 2,400 pages in 1936 (Lowi, 1979). This massive intervention created an environment which significantly stimulated particularized demands. Delegations from the cities . . . mayors, councilmen, representatives of all kinds from the communities of the nation . . . beat a path to Washington to seek assistance from their congressmen in the application for federal largesse. Requests for urban renewal funds, model cities money and public housing projects were all laid before the member, and he responded.

Urban oriented programs having a specific human element are normally implemented by means of an unsophisticated application process that expedites the redistribution of resources. A member who is solicited to help expedite an application for subsidized housing units can reasonably anticipate an early resolution of the problem. When a congressman is asked to help a community seek disaster aid after some natural disaster he expects that his efforts will be responded to rather quickly. Particularized demands are characteristically short term affairs, and as such are of some advantage to the member in that it represents an

economical expenditure of his resources.

It is often the case that Particular demands are of interest to some or all of the other members of a state's congressional delegation. This suggests that the member's ability to accomplish the task at hand is multiplied by the inclusion of others in the project. By combining resources the members expand their influence significantly, while at the same time, reduce the degree of their own personal effort. In addition, the risk, if any, is shared. It has been observed that members of state delegations join together in advocating a position, as the occasion demands, to secure the safety that is provided by a group (Truman, 1956; Moen, 1981), reaffirming the adage that "there is safety in numbers." Sharing the effort required to respond to particularized demands has advantages, but it also means that credit must be shared. In most cases there is sufficient to go around.

There is a large variety of particularized demands that can be made upon a member of Congress, but those presented by organized interests are often opposed by other groups in the community because they represent a draft against the common treasury. A clear cut ideological division takes place where money is concerned and forces are quick to line up in opposition to or support of big programs that redistribute resources. Urban Development Action Grants, for instance,

might find favor with the community political leaders, architects, engineers, builders, and area merchants. The expenditure of federal money to rebuild a small city center would tend to benefit these groups who would participate in the distribution. On the other hand, conservatives, taxpayers unions, and those who dislike the idea of federal involvement in local affairs would be more likely to object and let their feelings be known to the congressman. In this regard, then, the element of risk in Particular-Organized demands can be recognized by the member and dealt with, and inasmuch as they are within the realm of possibility on a short term basis they may be classified moderately advantageous.

Particular-Individual demands. It is in this realm that casework is found. "These demands emanate from individuals; they do not seek new laws but rather a discrete action by an office-holder on behalf of a citizen confronted by a specific problem" (Mezey, 1976). This kind of demand is most advantageous for the member to deal with for at least five reasons. In the first place, he has control of the process. Specially assigned staff members are responsible for receiving and expediting the constituent's request and they have all the tools they need with which to accomplish their task. Congress has provided each office with adequate space, sufficient staff, electronic and telephonic equipment, stationery and mailing services, and if

necessary, transportation allowances. In addition, caseworkers have developed profitable connections within the federal agencies which offer the constituent a clear advantage in the petitioning process.

Second, Particular-Individual demands can normally be resolved within a day or two, and a majority within a month. A quick phone call by an experienced caseworker to an associate in the proper agency can often get the problem cleared up immediately. The problems individuals generate with the federal bureaucracy frequently occur because of a misunderstanding or a misinterpretation of the law. When the points of contention are explained most people reasonably accept the verdict and are satisfied with the outcome.

Third, involvement is limited. Casework is a simple transaction between three people, the petitioner, the caseworker, and the agency representative. The lines of responsibility are clear and the resulting relationship is influenced by their interaction. At the conclusion of the case, assignment of the credit for its success or failure is unambiguous. There is no one to share the credit or the blame with the caseworker. If she was successful in securing fulfillment of the demand the constituent gives her the credit, but if she is not successful she is faulted for not being able to persuade the bureaucrat. She, after all,

represents the member and he has the power to get things done. It is at this point that the constituent takes leave of the caseworker and assigns the ultimate blame or credit to the member, a ritual of transference that defies logic. A hidden benefit in having the relationship limited in this way is that if the case is not successfully reconciled the result is not widely broadcast and the members's reputation is not unduly jeopardized as it might be if he failed to bring home a dam construction project for his thirsty district.

Related to this is the fourth reason members like casework. If the caseworker handles her job adroitly she can frequently manage to get high marks for her effort from the constituent even if the outcome of the case is negative. In other words, a good caseworker can get credit for just trying to help the constituent. The member cannot expect to be immune from the negative fallout that often results from doing his job in a hostile environment. Casework, to the contrary, represents an opportunity for him to do his job in a relatively risk-free environment and anticipate positive responses for his efforts.

Finally, casework is a desirable function from the point of view of the member because it is viewed as a legitimate form of representation that any citizen has the right to ask for. It is a source of satisfaction to be able to help someone

who has a problem that is causing some degree of inconvenience or pain, particularly when that person seemingly has no other alternative. One former member expresses the feeling:

> The biggest satisfaction of the job is the opportunity to help the people. We were a service oriented office, and I am proud of that. I could tell you some very heart-touching stories about the things we were able to do for some people. I loved that part of the job, and my staff was a great help (Hibbing, 1982).

All of the reasons why the member likes to do casework translate to what he perceives to be an advantage on election day. These kinds of "favors," he believes, are rewarded with votes and campaign support by grateful citizens who could not have had their problems resolved any other way. By being generous with his time, and that of his staff, and by being polite, attentive and concerned, the member cultivates his constituency for the good they both can do each other.

How Do Constituents Really Feel?

Congress is the embodiment of representativeness in the American political system. It is this institution, above all others, that links the citizen to his government and is the repository of his political power. In their labors in Philadelphia the framers sought to keep power from the executive while consciously assigning it to the Congress, and emphasized the importance of their actions by making the legislative article the first order of business in the

Constitution. From this high point in the minds of men, the Congress of the United States has fallen into deep disfavor with the American public. Progression of the decay in esteem has been noted and reasons for it cited. They range from Congress's performance in domestic policy, its handling of its relations with the President, its ethics, perceptions of its self-seeking ways, and its style and pace (Parker and Davidson, 1979).

Congressional reforms have wrought changes in the institution which have affected the way the public views the Congress. The great diffusion of power and authority that came in the 1970s with the move to make nearly every majority member a chairman of a committee or subcommittee has resulted in weakening the capabilities of the elected leadership in Congress and obscured responsibility for the execution of the legislative function. This has given the public the perception that Congress is a rudderless craft at sea in a storm of continual controversy. Furthermore, by weakening the leadership so vital to welding 535 members into workable coalitions, Congress has placed itself at a distinct disadvantage in its relationship with the White House and falls into deep disfavor with the general constituency when placed in an adversative position with the President (Keefe, 1984). The public has definitely not been unmindful of how Congress has performed its duties and, generally speaking, it accords the body a great deal less

respect than it does the individuals who serve therein (Fenno, 1975; Parker, 1979). Indeed, in just the past twenty years public approval of Congress, as an institution, has fallen at an alarming rate. In 1965, 64 per cent of the public expressed positive feelings for Congress. By 1980, however, only 18 per cent would make a positive response (Dye and Ziegler, 1981).

Perhaps it is inevitable that as we watch the legislative sausage being made we should turn up our noses at the process. Certainly, there is little that is not observed at close hand by the media, and reported on a regular basis. We see what often appears as parochial obstructionism, unwarranted delay, surrender to special interests, and blatant self-dealing. These conditions may have always existed, but contemporary congresses have had to do their work in a fishbowl and the results have not been in their favor.

Paradoxically, it is reported that while we may have strong negative feelings for Congress, we have a high regard for our individual representative. Table 2-1 shows the results of a congressional survey that indicates that 22 per cent of the population believes that Congress has done a good or excellent job while 40 per cent, or nearly twice as many, rate their individual congressman that high. On the bottom end of the rating scale 65 per cent of those surveyed

responded that Congress does a fair to poor job while only 23 per cent rated their own congressman that low.

Table 2-1
Public Rating of Congress and Individual Members

How would you rate the job Congress as a whole has done over the past two or three years--would you say Congress has done an excellent job, a pretty good job, only a fair job, or a poor job?

Excellent	1%
Pretty Good	21
Only Fair	45
Poor	20
Not Sure	14

Overall, how would you rate the job the Congressman who has been representing this area during the past two or three years has done--would you say your Congressman has done an excellent job, a pretty good job, a fair job, or a poor job?

Excellent	13%
Pretty Good	27
Only Fair	17
Poor	6
Not Sure	38

Source: Final Report of the Commission on Administrative Review, U.S. House of Representatives, 95th Congress, 1st Session, 1977, pp. 816, 818, as adapted from Congress and the American People, Wm. J. Keefe, 1984, p. 37.

Is it possible the reason for this apparent contradiction is that Congress is most often evaluated in terms of policy formulation, which frequently has negative connotations, while the congressman is evaluated on the basis of constituent relationships, which are usually positive in nature? Recognition of the need to evaluate the member and the institution on the basis of divergent criteria open up

the possibility for other interpretations of the data. Perhaps constituents are not necessarily registering disapproval of Congress so much as they are saying they do not like the policies it adopts. If the member were to be evaluated on the basis of the same policy-oriented criteria, it is possible he might share some of the disapprobation leveled at Congress. If this hypothesis has merit, it would follow that if Congress could be evaluated as an institution on its ombudsman role, the American people might have a higher regard for it. It is possible, then, that recipients of casework transfer some degree of their appreciation of the member and his caseworkers to the Congress because they see him as a part of the institution. In this arrangement, constituent service can be recognized as an important factor in the legitimization of Congress and would have a positive influence on the public's attitude about the institution.

What of the broader political system? It is one of the paradoxes of American politics that the public can be counted on to register a high level of cynicism about politics in general yet express an extremely high level of confidence and faith in the system. More than 50 per cent of the subjects in a major study published in 1964 claimed to believe that politicians look out for themselves above all else, and 65 per cent said they thought that many politicians are bought off. Majorities thought that just a few people run the country and that politicians do not mean

what they say. In spite of this negative attitude almost 90 per cent had confidence that the government could be counted on to do what is right (McCloskey, 1964). Today, survey results are comparable. The National Election study of 1984 revealed that only 15 per cent of those surveyed expressed approval of Congress while the remaining 85 per cent neither approved nor disapproved, or strongly disapproved. On the other hand, 68 per cent believed they actually have a say in what the government does, while 57 per cent thought that public officials care what they think. What are the determining factors of this contradiction?

It is reasonable to hypothesize that the ready access the public has to the government stimulates its belief in the efficacy of the system. There are two closely related aspects of "access": (1) the public's ability to get at, or remove government officials; and (2) being approachable. There can be little doubt that the remarkable stability of the American political system stimulates the belief in the strength of the central government. The government has experienced change every four years on a regular basis for almost 200 years, prevailing even over the cataclysmic events of the Civil War and the threatening disorder of the Great Depression and Watergate periods. A recognized factor in this phenomenal record of peaceful, orderly change is the Congress, composed as it is of those representatives to which the public has access every two years. It is clearly

understood and accepted that if we do not approve of what our representative is doing we can vote him out of office at the very next regularly scheduled opportunity. Acutely aware of this, the elected representative responds to the needs and demands of individual constituents. Therefore, when a constituent needs the help of his representative, he receives unhesitating attention. In turn, the constituent has his belief in the efficacy of the system reinforced. Casework, then, quite possibly leads to the development of strengthened attitudes about the American political system as well.

These attitudes can be better understood perhaps, when examined in terms of the Almond-Powell Matrix. The four categories of demands were shown to produce a variety of reactions by the member, ranging from polite indifference to aggressive advocacy. The question now is, "how does the constituent view the member's response to his demands?" It is at this critical juncture, where citizen responds to member action, that the Congressman's performance is weighed and evaluated by his constituent.

General-Organized demands. Citizens who make General-Organized demand of their representatives are characteristically members of a group which expects to develop a solution to what the group feels is a problem of national importance. The group may be large or small, but

as an organization it has assumed the responsibility to lobby for the cause of its concern. Presumably, the organization has a plan of action that includes the presentation of its position in a way that will most effectively appeal to the member. Regardless of how the group implements its plan, it expects results. The investment of human and material resources in the creation of any organization bespeaks the existence of a purpose and expectation of some level of goal realization.

These three characteristics may be examined individually to determine their impact on attitude development. First of all, the citizen is a member of a group. This fact infers a degree of anonymity, which in itself suggests that a personal relationship between the member and the constituent is not likely to result from the transaction. The petitioner may even be a single representative of the group who is chosen to make the appeal to the member, but his name is indelibly linked to the organization in the mind of the congressman who, as he talks, is visualizing the thousands of members of the organization. By this very act a veil is being drawn between the two negotiators that inhibits the possibility of a personal relationship. If the petitioner is a member of a visiting group the anonymity factor is intensified. The congressman, if he addresses his remarks to the spokesman, will appear to ignore the others, and if he shares his attention with all who are present, he may

sound vague or disconnected.

The lack of relationship which leaves the member feeling as though he is dealing with a stranger and the constituent feeling like the member is aloof and distant, creates an atmosphere in which the member takes on the dimensions of an institution--remote, cold, big, impenetrable, unyielding--and the petitioner no longer sees him as the individual he was led to believe would really go all out for the cause. What he hears are the institutional responses to warm human concern: that the congressman alone cannot solve the problem at hand; it will take the work of many members over a long period of time to accomplish the goal; the people of the district are not of one mind about this issue. The member is acutely aware that demands of this nature can only be addressed institutionally, but it is difficult to be persuasive to a group which is single-minded in pursuit of a goal to which it is firmly committed.

Second, the manner in which the group is received makes a decided impact on the attitude constituents develop about the congressman. In the first place, the organization may be told the hard facts about the chances for immediate, or even eventual, resolution of the issue. If the member discourages the group in its quest it will perhaps be persuaded to approach Congress from some other direction. Another common outcome of the delegation visit is for the

member to be encouraging. The situation may arise where he is sympathetic to the cause and earnestly wishes to participate, but if he is not plugged into the sockets of power in the Congress, his efforts may be ineffective. In this case, the organization, which left Washington with such high hopes, waits at home for something that will never happen.

Finally, the level of goal realization impacts on the way constituent attitudes are developed. If the member demonstrates his interest in the project at hand and gives the impression that it is high on his list of priorities, the group presenting the demand will in all likelihood give him high marks for making the attempt at accommodation. If his efforts result in the success of the project, his reward will probably be outspoken group support. On the other hand, the member will gain little, and may even be damaged, if his effort is half-hearted and unsuccessful.

In the worst case scenario the result can have a negative impact on the attitudes the constituent develops about Congress, the member and the system. He has been unhappily turned away, given false expectations of success, and been worn down by the process. The citizen who approached his congressman with a General-Organized demand has, instead of becoming a happy subscriber to the legislative process, become a cynic. The member is a neuter; he was unable to

offer the advice that was sought, and he was not effective in the effort he did expend. The Congress is a place where nothing gets done; the legislative process is a complicated system of committees and subcommittees that generates more confusion than it does solutions to the outstanding problems of the day. The system, although working, grinds exceedingly slow and by the time a response does emerge from the policy processes of government it does not seem to be what we had in mind.

The general demand has certain requirements that most petitioners are unable to fulfill and as a result negative attitudes often result. It is incumbent upon the constituent to understand the dynamics of the legislative process in a pluralistic society. Most, however, do not, and expectations, therefore, are unrealistic. The member's vulnerability to the vagaries of shifting public opinion on issues that matter should be appreciated, but usually it is of little importance to the petitioning group. As a consequence, members often appear to have little conviction as they attempt to steer a safe course through political shoals. Finally, anyone who seriously advocates and presses for fulfillment of a general demand needs to be prepared to stay for the long pull. Organizations accommodate to this need by their very nature, but the individuals involved are often unprepared.

General-Individual demands. An individual who stands alone and cries for the government to come to the aid of the nation by organizing its might to resolve some problem of major dimension is often frustrated in his efforts. Three considerations militate against his success. In the first place, one voice is hardly distinguishable from all the others that are similarly demanding. Second, any medium for open discussion might be utilized in an effort to get the message to the government, but successfully focussing it is extremely difficult. Third, the member is virtually certain to be unenthusiastic about accepting a leading role in the task if he is not already involved.

One individual expressing the need for the federal government to move against a national condition may be a distinguished member of society, a personal or political friend of the member, or simply an average constituent. Whatever claim may be made against the member the critical fact is that the petitioner in this case is an individual. The member will certainly respond politely, perhaps with even a touch of apparent enthusiasm, but his effective response will be quite limited because there are just too many causes of great concern for the member to deal with. He must consider the priorities he has set for himself in order to make the best use of his resources. Without an organization to back him up the petitioner will have a difficult time motivating the member. Therefore, the

obvious way to circumvent this obstacle is to organize and this, of course, will change the nature of the demand from individual to general. Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD) coalesced around the fury of one mother who lost a daughter in an accident caused by a drunk driver. Her individual effort was soon transformed into a General-Organized demand as she enlisted many to her cause. She was no longer an individual, but a large, vocal group whose voice was quite distinguishable in the halls of Congress.

An individual who is truly concerned about finding a proper resolution for the problem he identifies must take pains to plan his strategy, as much as any organization would. There are others who probably share the concern he expresses, and it is these individuals who must be located and contacted. There may be an effort already underway in Congress to address his concern, and it is to those who are involved that he should make his appeal. If he talks to the right members his interest tends to reconfirm theirs and the response he gets will be considerably more satisfactory. To address an unconcerned member is not likely to produce the desired results.

Finally, a general demand, whether it is generated by an organization or by an individual, is a difficult matter for a congressman to deal with. The position-taking aspects make it risky, while the time requirements are excessive,

two real considerations for a representative or senator who has the concern of a whole constituency to worry about.

The individual has little insight into the considerations of the member and as he makes his general appeal he fully expects to be extended a polite hearing, to receive an encouraging response, and, hopefully, to realize some progress toward the solution of the problem that concerns him. Not too much to expect, perhaps, from his point of view because he probably sees his effort as engaging in his civic duty. He is writing his congressman, or writing a letter to the editor, or going to the expense of visiting the member in his office. In some way, significant to him, the constituent gives vent to his deep concern and the member is expected to respond in a manner appropriate to the representative-constituent relationship.

How does the constituent feel, then, about the response he stimulates? In the first place, the member is dealing with him on a one-to-one basis. He is an individual, not a group or representative of an organization. It is a negotiation between two egos that must be executed with considerable care if both positions are to be enhanced. The initial response of the member, therefore, is warm and friendly, filled with assurances of sympathy and concern. If the response is in a letter it is subject to interpretation, but it can be expected to offer as much support as the member

can honestly muster. If it is a personal encounter it can be made to be much more intimate. In any event, this part of the transaction tends to equalize the actors somewhat, placing them on the same person-to-person level, discussing something of concern to both. The member anticipates that the constituent will view him as someone with whom he can relate and, therefore, support.

Having been received warmly and given a response that he invariably can interpret as encouraging, the constituent wants now to see some results. The member knows about the problem, he expressed concern and sympathy, he suggested that he would support any effort that was made in the Congress to alleviate the offensive situation, and he even appointed one of his staff members to keep track of events and report to the constituent. If the constituent persists in a determined effort to push the cause the member will now be constrained to show the results of his effort, and if there is none to show he may suggest that the problem lies with the institution, the process or members of the opposite party. The member has a large degree of control over how the relationship develops from this point, and depending upon the relative importance of the constituent to his career, he will make every effort to see that it progresses positively, always balancing it against his other priorities.

The nature of the relationship in this transaction enables the constituent to evaluate the member from a somewhat personal perspective, and inasmuch as the member is trying to forge a strong link, he is likely to develop a positive attitude about his representative. On the other hand, the petitioner's attitude about Congress will probably be less positive. If his demand remains unfulfilled the member will probably have shifted the blame to the institution. If the constituent's general concern was addressed it probably took a great deal of time to accomplish and it did not emerge from the process in a form that was totally compatible with the plan he originally had in mind. Whether or not the demand was met, the constituent may feel that he had his day in court, that the American political system gave him an opportunity to voice his feeling in a way that could have made a difference, and in the doing, his belief in his government was reinforced.

Particular-Organized demand. This demand is typified by the community facility project and can be quite varied. Dams, as part of up-stream flood control systems, recreation facilities or water conservation and utilization programs are common examples of items that may be on a locality's shopping list. So, too, are water treatment plants, urban development grants, subsidized housing projects, and airport development and expansion funding. Disaster relief and emergency loans, military facility siting and expansion, and

Indian hospital and school construction are others. However, particular demands are not necessarily restricted to material requests. Environmental groups may wish the government to stop some specific instance of industrial polluting, or to prevent the development of a local nuclear power plant, but this kind of demand is very often associated with a national issue and, therefore, more appropriately treated as a General-Organized demand.

It has already been pointed out that the member sees some disadvantage in dealing with this sort of constituent problem. It may be risky in that the community is divided on the issue of its desirability and the position he takes will be criticized. It is an activity that is public at every step of the way, and consequently, he risks being blamed if his effort fails. Finally, he has little control over the process and must cast himself as the negotiator with the federal agency in behalf of his constituent clients. However, the rewards are great. In addition to enhancing their reelection chances by responding to particularized demands, many congressmen have lived to see their names chiseled in stone on the facades of the facilities they have brought home.

The singular factor about most Particular-Organized demands is that the member is forced by circumstances to respond. The constituent in this case is most likely a group of local

leaders representing the chief political and commercial interests in the district. It is an organization, perhaps, that has the responsibility for attending to the needs of the community. It might be a chamber of commerce, a city council, or a group of officers of a rural water district. The demand is grounded in the community's need and can be fulfilled by employing existing provisions of some federal program for which it qualifies. Furthermore, there are few, if any, alternative sources of assistance to which the organization can appeal. Given the publicity attending these kinds of efforts, generally stimulated at the outset by the constituent, the member must be seen as an aggressive advocate of the cause. There are exceptions to this involuntary aspect of constituent service, but they would mostly concern controversial social issues that the member would try to avoid.

Examined in the light of these conditions, then, how can the constituent be expected to react to the response he gets from the member? As noted, the member's acceptance of his responsibility in this case is conditioned by the degree of unanimity he observes among the constituents in his district. Assuming that the project is desirable in the eyes of most and little opposition is expressed, the member will be very aggressive in pursuit of the goal. This posture will stimulate within the organization a feeling of gratefulness and appreciation which will be manifested by

appropriate stories of his faithfulness in the local newspaper, recognition of his helpfulness at meetings and in internal communications of the organization, and in overt displays of appreciation such as testimonial dinners. The ultimate expression, of course, occurs when the organization expresses public support for the member's reelection.

If the project succeeds, the appreciation that has been regularly expressed throughout the process will be confirmed by more of the same. However, if it fails, and the organization's will is thwarted, the member will experience some diminution of public acclaim. The opportunity for continued publicity and credit taking throughout the construction process will be foreclosed, and ribbon-cutting ceremonies will be precluded. The community participants in the effort may give the member credit for trying, but the degree to which he succeeds in maintaining his credibility with the community leaders will come as a result of how successful he is in shifting blame for failure. Frequently, failure to fulfill the particularized demands of an organization is laid at the doorstep of the administration, especially if the member is of the opposite party. In any event, damage control procedures are relatively unsophisticated and the member can usually escape with more pluses than minuses.

The process of negotiating the Particular-General demand is

another instance of the individual, and his organization, being able to interface with the policy-makers of his government and getting away with something to show for his efforts. It is proof that his government works the way it is supposed to, and for this blessing he is generally grateful. On the other hand, Congress, the institution, is a relatively unimportant part of this transaction. Congress made the law that authorized the resolution of the problem, but was an inactive player in the process of implementation. The sophisticated organization representative may, in retrospect, offer thanks to the Congress for providing the opportunity, but more likely it will be addressed to the author of the legislation that created it.

Particular-Individual demands. The relationship that develops with the member, or his caseworker, during the course of this transaction can be very rewarding for the petitioner. In all likelihood, he has been favored with individual attention by an important elective officer and his aide, he has been responded to in a positive and agreeable way, and his problem has been dealt with in a timely fashion. The constituent has come to his representative asking for a favor and has received the red carpet treatment. How does he react?

The recipient of casework attention responds to his situation in two expected ways. In the first place, he may

be happy with the outcome. He petitioned the member for help, it was generously provided, the problem was solved, and he is pleased. The alternative mood is just the opposite. He asked for help, but the problem was not solved and he is very unhappy about that fact. Within these categories, however, are two very different outcomes that need to be probed. In the first instance, the problem was solved, but it may have come after a long and inconvenient experience. Some cases take years to reach a conclusion and by the time it arrives the participants may be exhausted with the process and as a result, the caseworker of the moment is deprived of the grateful thanks she may think she is due. The delay may have come because of bureaucratic red tape or ineptness, miscommunication between any of the three participants, or for other reasons. In any event, the petitioner may feel that "justice delayed is justice denied" and not be pleased with the process.

In the second situation, the case was not resolved to the satisfaction of the client constituent, but the caseworker had so aggressively and sympathetically advocated the cause that he felt appreciative of the effort. This is not an uncommon reaction. A caseworker can play the role of advocate in such a manner that the constituent develops a "them against us" attitude in which the caseworker and petitioner are in league against the giant, impersonal bureaucracy. With this bond established, the caseworker can

expect to get a great deal of credit for just trying to get a proper solution to the problem. When the caseworkers do their jobs in a professional, aggressive, sympathetic manner they can please their clients most of the time. The product of their labors not only satisfies the constituent, but is perceived to be responsible for the political support these constituents offer during the course of the member's reelection campaign.

The satisfaction the constituent manifests for his representative can easily be transferred to the political system. The citizen with a problem has the opportunity, as well as the right, to petition his government and he is witness to the fact that it will support his claim if it is legitimate. It is a system he can be proud of and happy with. Furthermore, it is just a short step to the conclusion that if the member provides effective service in an open, functioning system that allows effective recourse then he, as an agent of the Congress, can also influence the development of positive constituent attitudes about the institution itself.

Summary

Casework, then, becomes a major factor in the process of building attitudes about the American political system, its institutions and those within it who perform vital governmental functions. It is a conduit through which the

representative can reach the represented in an intimate way and legitimize the fundamental purpose of Congress. Where Congress is frequently regarded in disapproving terms because of the confusion of its process and profligacy of its product, it can be seen in a different light through the casework ministrations of a caring member. Just when an individual begins to feel that the system is outsized, unrelated and unapproachable a member of Congress may step in with the right help at the right time and reconfirm that government is, after all, for the people. Casework is representation that benefits the represented and representative alike, and as a very welcome spinoff, contributes to the development of positive feelings about the Congress and the political system in the minds of those who are served.

In the relationship between the member and his constituents, it is this factor of intimacy which inevitably leads the member to conclude that the simple act of helping automatically translates to electoral support. However, we have been introduced to another point of view along the way (Johannes and McAdams, 1981). Furthermore, a review of existing literature dealing with the matter reveals that other methods that might have been used to confirm the conception have not been fully employed. Given these considerations, the following chapter will define the methods by which the viability of casework can be measured

as a determinant in the development of attitudes regarding the Congress, the member and the American political system.

CHAPTER III

DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

A study of the constituent service typically provided by a member of Congress to the residents of his district offers a great deal of information. It has been accumulated in a variety of ways including personal interviews with members (Mayhew, 1974), surveying the general public (McCloskey, 1964), analyzing the procedures within the Congress (Breslin, 1977), and content analysis (Parker, 1980). More than one scholar has used the National Election Studies as the fundamental source of data for the study of the casework relationship (Yiannakis, 1981; Fiorina, 1981; Hinckley, 1980). It appears, however, that little, if any, data has been developed by contacting individuals who have themselves been the recipients of casework attention. This omission will be partially addressed by this study. Chapter three will establish the data sources and the manner in which they will be utilized.

Sources and Utilization of Data

Three primary sources of information were utilized in this study: the case files from the office of a member of Congress pertaining to those constituents who had received casework attention between 1982 and 1985, a questionnaire returned from a survey of 723 individuals whose cases were contained in those files, and the National Election Studies of 1984.

Case Files. The case files of a congressional office were made available for the purposes of this study. This particular office was selected because of the personal relationship between the member and the researcher which had developed over a period of twenty-five years. The researcher devoted five working days to a review of these files and retrieved information on 723 cases involving thirty-eight separate agencies. Permission for their use was granted in exchange for a guarantee of confidentiality. For this reason there is no reference to the member, her district, or the state in which her district lies. At the conclusion of the study, the raw data was returned to the member. Let it be said, however, that the member represents a compact district in a small midwestern state that has a diverse economy and which boasts no other remarkable characteristics.

While it is recognized that the validity of this study would

have been enhanced if the files from a large number of congressional offices had been available for analysis, the expense of investigating the files of many offices would have been prohibitive. In addition, these files were made available as a result of a unique set of circumstances coupled with a long term relationship with the member. It is highly unlikely that the situation could be duplicated to provide a similar opportunity. In any event, access to even one set of files provides a rare chance to inspect the attitudes of a specific part of the public which, under normal circumstances, is not readily identifiable.

The files were searched for cases which were three years old or younger. Inasmuch as the researcher retrieved the information from the files in August of 1985, no case that was closed before August, 1982 was recorded. The importance of the three-year limitation is relative to the measurement of the decay of constituent attitudes over time and was arbitrarily determined to be a sufficient period of time in which to make the observations requisite to the study. Another practical reason for limiting the records to three years is the tendency for the mobile American public to move its residence at the rate of about 25 per cent per year. The rate of returns on the survey that was subsequently mailed was anticipated to fall off to the extent that the sample would not provide valid results in any category that went beyond the three-year date.

All files that met the three-year requirement were recorded except for immigration cases that involved foreign nationals, and military cases that related to active members of the armed services. In the case of foreign nationals, it was felt that their lack of association with the American political-electoral process would invalidate their responses to the survey. Additionally, many immigration cases of this type deal with the problem of foreign nationals who are being denied entry or are being deported. The likelihood of even locating this type of constituent was determined to be not very promising. The same consideration was given to active members of the armed services. Many military cases relate to problems that occur in some remote place of the world to nominal constituents that move from place to place on a relatively frequent basis. Their relationship to their home place is tentative at best during this period in their life and so it was decided to eliminate the category. The military cases that are included in this study are generally related to veterans whose problems occurred during their period of active duty.

The work sheet that was utilized by the researcher (Fig.3-1) asked only those questions which could be considered to be common to all cases. The full NAME and ADDRESS was necessary in order to create the mailing list that was subsequently mailed the questionnaire. The DEPARTMENT is a reference to the administrative agency in which the

constituent problem was lodged. For example, if the matter dealt with income taxes the appropriate designation would be IRS.

DATE INITIAL CONTACT means the date when the office received the letter of appeal or when the initial telephone call was made. Every letter coming into the member's office was stamped the day it was received. DATE CLOSE CASE is the date on the caseworker's letter to the constituent that announced the final resolution of the case. LAPSE TIME is the difference between the two dates, indicating how long it took the case worker to complete the job.

The top category on the right hand side of the form, NO., is for the number which was assigned to each case by the researcher. POS, NEG, and UND all relate to the final outcome of the problem. The researcher noted whether or not it was resolved POSitively, NEGatively or whether it was UNDetermined. Occasionally, a case would occur where the caseworker processed it, the department responded asking for some additional information from the client, or perhaps informing the client of his next step in the process, but the constituent failed to follow through and left no indication of how he would proceed. If the client could be located and counselled, the case would be considered as still open, but if he was out of communication the UNDetemined designation was applied.

Figure 3-1
Case File Work Sheet

NAME _____ NO. _____
ADDRESS _____ POS _____
_____ ZIP _____ NEG _____
UND _____

DEPARTMENT _____
DATE INITIAL CONTACT _____ LAPSE TIME
DATE CLOSE CASE _____ _____

The breakdown of cases by work sheet category (Table 3-1) immediately reveals three facts: some agencies have more traffic in constituent problems than others, constituent problems are mostly concerned with basic needs, and members are asked to help in areas outside the federal establishment as well as in those within.

Table 3-1
Breakdown of Administrative Agencies
as the Source of Case Problems

Source	No.	%
Social Security Administration	180	26.78
Internal Revenue Service	142	21.13
Veteran's Administration	79	11.75
Military Affairs	64	9.52
Office of Personnel Management	40	5.95
Medicare (Blue Cross & Blue Shield)	37	5.50
United States Postal Service	21	3.12
Department of State	20	2.97
Immigration and Naturalization Service	12	1.78
Information	10	1.48
Department of the Treasury	8	1.19
Department of Labor	8	1.19
Bureau of Indian Affairs	7	1.04
Federal Aviation Administration	6	.089
Railroad Retirement Board	5	.074
Department of Health & Human Services	4	.059
State Agencies	4	.059
Consumer Affairs	4	.059
Department of Energy	3	.044
Federal Emergency Management Agency	2	.029
Office of Workmen's Compensation Programs	2	.029
Department of Transportation	2	.029
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	2	.029
National Institute of Health	1	.015
Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation	1	.015
The White House	1	.015
Department of Housing & Urban Development	1	.015
Department of Commerce	1	.015
Department of Defense	1	.015
Federal Trade Commission	1	.015
General Services Administration	1	.015
Civ Health & Med Pro for Uniformed Services	1	.015
National Flood Insurance Program	1	.015
Total	672	100.00

The agencies having the greatest number of cases are those which are in the business of dispensing government benefits or collecting taxes. They are also the biggest. It seems reasonable to assume that there would be a greater number of mistakes or disputes to contend with in the Social Security

Administration and Internal Revenue Service, than there would be in an agency such as the Federal Trade Commission, that deals with only a limited portion of the population. The military establishment and the Veteran's Administration are other examples of large, complex organizations that deal with the lives of many people, consequently stimulating greater numbers of cases.

The nature of constituent problems is rather narrow. They do not range far from the fundamental concerns of jobs (Civil Service, Office of Personnel Management) and benefits (Social Security, Medicare, Railroad Retirement). There are other concerns, to be sure, such as unsatisfactory postal service or the immediate need of a passport for an unanticipated foreign trip, but for the most part, when the member is called upon to help solve a problem the constituent's concern is more often than not related to his basic needs.

Two of the thirty-three categories refer to agencies outside the federal establishment. The first contains a small assortment of state agencies, while the second, Consumer Affairs, categorizes those complaints about goods and services the constituent may have purchased from commercial establishments. A member of Congress has no jurisdiction in these areas and usually very little clout, but this is a fact that many constituents do not fully comprehend. The

reason for this perception is probably related to the way that campaigning congressmen tend to oversell their influence in an effort to convince voters to support them. The idea that all will be well in Washington if only Member X is elected is one that has become institutionalized in the election process and many who do vote for Member X may really believe that the power of the office is adequate to effect immediate and dynamic change. From there it is only a short jump to the conclusion that if Member X can make great changes in Washington he can make changes anywhere, even outside his jurisdiction.

When a member's constituent makes a request for help outside the congressional jurisdiction, the appeal is honored as any other would be, and the caseworker will make every effort to negotiate a solution with the relevant authority. For example, if a citizen seeks help from a member to intercede with a state agency, he will in all likelihood do so. However, when the constituent of another member writes to a congressman different rules are observed. It is not uncommon for a member to receive appeals from outside his district, or even his state. This usually occurs for one of three reasons. First, congressmen, and more particularly, senators, who have gained a measure of fame such as that accorded Senator Edward Kennedy (D, Mass.), receive a great deal of mail from admirers outside their jurisdiction. Second, congressmen who have become identified with a

particular area of concern may receive appeals from individuals in other districts who have problems dealing with that particular subject. As an example, Representative Claude Pepper (D, Fla.) a well-publicized octogenarian who has fashioned himself as the spokesman for the elderly citizens of America, can expect to receive letters from retirees living in other places. Finally, a constituent may simply not know for certain who his representative is and will contact a member in a neighboring district. In all three of these instances, it is customary for the member who receives an appeal for assistance to forward it on to the member in whose district the constituent resides.

Members of Congress have an overabundant volume of casework to contend with and as a practical consideration they are quite willing to relinquish the responsibility for resolving the problems of another member's constituents. A second reason, of course, is the reality that there is no benefit to the member to deal with constituents in other districts. They cannot vote for him. Given the disincentives these protocols of congressional courtesy are seldom transgressed.

It was noted in Chapter II that a redefinition of office policy emphasized our member's determination to achieve a case resolution success rate as near to 100 per cent as possible. This would appear to be a very worthy goal, but an effort that would most likely yield more in improved

public relations than it would in substantive gain for the constituent. The success rate revealed by the case files is currently running at 65 per cent (Table 3- 2), and if one can anticipate that the UNDetermined cases will resolve at the same rate, the ultimate success ratio will be closer to 70 per cent.

Table 3-2
Caseworker Success Rate

Percent cases resolved positively	64.70
Percent cases resolved negatively	24.90
Percent cases currently unresolved	10.40
	100.00

The overall success rate in this study is considerably higher than Johannes' 40 per cent estimate in 1979 and may be about as efficient as the office can expect to get, inasmuch as there are always a certain number of cases that do not lend themselves to a successful conclusion. Disputes with IRS, for example, are frequently predicated on misinformation or a misunderstanding of tax laws. When this occurs, the constituent has no hope of an exception and the case will have to be classified as negatively resolved. It is difficult to make a generalization on this point because of the variance in office practices, definitions employed in the casework process, and the lack of information on categories of constituent service.

A majority of our member's cases are resolved within the

first three weeks, and over 90 per cent are closed within 180 days (Table 3-3). It would appear that the kind of case that takes only a day to resolve has a low problem factor and a positive resolution can be expected about 93 per cent of the time. The longer it takes to process the case the greater the likelihood of diminished chances for a successful result.

Table 3-3
Percent of Cases Resolved by Time Period

Period	Cases	Cum. Cases	% Cases	Cases Cum	% Success
0- 1 Days	150	150	22.8	22.8	92.8
2- 7 Days	79	229	11.7	34.5	85.5
8- 14 Days	87	316	12.1	46.6	56.2
15- 21 Days	65	381	9.9	56.5	78.7
22- 31 Days	67	448	10.3	66.8	74.2
32- 60 Days	95	543	14.4	81.3	59.7
61- 90 Days	44	587	6.1	87.4	51.2
91- 180 Days	40	627	5.8	93.2	56.7
81- 365 Days	33	660	4.9	98.2	66.6
366- 730 Days	6	666	.09	99.1	16.6
731-1095 Days	5	671	.07	99.85	40.0
1095 + Days	1	672	0.15	100.00	00.0

Survey research. The second source of data was a survey of constituents who were identified as having had casework experience with our member. The congressional files were reviewed to identify as many subjects as possible who had received casework attention from the member in the past three years. In this particular situation, 723 constituents were qualified and a questionnaire was subsequently mailed to each one. In order to stimulate the maximum number of responses it was determined that three mailings would be

required. The first contact with the respondent was made by the Assistant Director of the Carl Albert Congressional Research Study Center on September 17, 1985. His letter simply announced the fact that a study was underway and that a questionnaire would be mailed the following week. The announcement was intended to stir the interest of the respondent in the project.

The second contact, which was mailed one week later on September 24, 1985, contained a letter from the researcher explaining the nature of the project, a questionnaire which the recipient was asked to complete, and a postage paid envelope which could be used to return the information to the Carl Albert Center at the University of Oklahoma. On October 18, 1985, approximately one month after the second mailing had been posted, the third contact was mailed. This mailing included a questionnaire that was identical to the first, a new letter asking again that the recipient respond by completing the requested information, and a business reply envelope. The third mailing was sent to 475 respondents, or all those who had not yet returned a questionnaire. A final total of 217, or 43.7 per cent of all those who had been retrieved from the case files, responded to the questionnaire.

The questionnaire (Appendix One) was comprised of thirty-seven questions, generally broken out into four categories.

The first category solicited expressions of attitude about Congress, the government, and congressmen. These questions probed the fundamental relationship between the constituent and the three entities. Question 2, for example, asks for an "agree" or "disagree" response to, "I don't think my congressman cares much what people like me think." They are fashioned in such a way as to determine the constituent's feelings about them. How does he feel about them; does he like them or dislike them?

A second category asks the respondent to rate Congress, the government and the member in the performance of their respective jobs. Question 16 is typical. It asks, "In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress handles its job?" The group of questions does not ask for specifics and the respondent is required to make his evaluation in general terms on a four point scale ranging from "not at all" to "very much." These questions are intended to establish the basis for an investigation of the paradox of conflicting feelings the public holds for the member and the institution.

Questions in the third category are specifically related to the casework experience the constituent may have had with the member. Thirteen questions are devoted to why the member was contacted, if the member responded, whether or not the constituents's problem was solved, and whether or

not the constituent was satisfied with his treatment. The responses of satisfied and dissatisfied constituents will be compared to see if the casework experience effects their attitudes about the political system, Congress and the member. In addition, these responses will be matched against the information taken from the case files to determine if the constituent's perception of how his case was handled coincides with the member's.

Finally, the respondent is asked for information about himself. These questions are mostly concerned with the political, educational and employment status of the constituent and were asked with the intention of helping to determine what kind of constituent uses the services of the member's office.

There were 210 responses to the first questionnaire. Including the fifty-one letters sent to those who had moved and left no forwarding address, this amounted to 29.0 per cent of the total 723. The second questionnaire, mailed about thirty days after the first, resulted in an additional 107 responses, or a total of 317 (Table 3-4).

Table 3-4
Response to Questionnaire

	Mailed	Response	% Response	Undelivered
1st Mailing	723	210	29.0	51
2nd Mailing	475	107	14.7	00
		317	43.7	51

The National Election Study of 1984. Every two years since 1978 comprehensive surveys of the electorate, preceding and following the national elections, have been conducted by the Center for Political Studies at the University of Michigan. NES surveys conducted in 1984 were selected as the third source of data for use in this study.*

Responses to specific questions relating to constituent attitudes about Congress, the member and the political system were selected for review. These questions were copied verbatim from the NES surveys for use in the questionnaire which was mailed to our member's case subjects. For instance, the first response called for in the congressional questionnaire was an "agree" or "disagree" answer to the statement, "People like me don't have any say about what the government does." This same statement, exactly worded, was Variable 1070 in the 1984 NES study. In all, there were eighteen identically worded questions in the NES studies and the questionnaire.

The National Election Studies, then, served as a control group for the experimental congressional survey of casework recipients. When responses to questions rating Congress were recorded in the NES surveys, as an example, they were compared to those of our member's constituents provided by the questionnaire in order to determine if the casework experience might have influenced their attitude about that

institution. Furthermore, by cross-tabulating the responses from the NES surveys it was possible to remove all those respondents who had contacted their congressman or received help from him, thus making the comparison with questionnaire respondents, all of whom had received help, all the more cogent.

Evaluation of the Research Design

A number of benefits were derived by structuring the research in this manner. In the first place, surveying constituents by means of a questionnaire whose files had already yielded certain information provided an opportunity to investigate and compare perceptions held by the member and the constituent. For example, instead of being required to accept the constituent's view of whether or not his case had been successfully resolved, the research design allowed the investigator to observe the facts of the case for himself because he had access to the congressional case file. The insight provided by the ability to compare is profound. If the member operates on the basis that he successfully resolved a case and the constituent believes he failed to get satisfaction then the whole underlying premise that casework enhances the congressional career is in jeopardy. How could it actually benefit the member if his perception of success is so at odds with his constituent?

A second thought of some importance is that by having access

to the NES Study this research effort is able to approach the district constituent with identical questions asked of the general population. Thus, comparisons can be developed without fear of misinterpretation of similar, yet different, words and phrases.

Clearly, however, the greatest limitation in the design can be discerned when one becomes aware of the very large question that is not asked by this study. It has been hypothesized that casework enhances the congressional career by creating supportive constituents, but no effort is made to test the opposing position: what happens to the congressional career and constituent attitudes if the member does not provide the casework function? One might postulate that if the member does not engage in casework he would lose the support of those constituents who approached him. That question, however, is left for others to investigate and makes no effort to stake out that territory.

Summary

Data for this study was derived from congressional case files, responses to a questionnaire mailed to those case subjects, and the National Election Study of 1984. Responses to the questionnaire were analysed in terms of how the respondent feels about the Congress, the individual member and the American political system as opposed to those respondents to the NES studies who had not experienced

casework attention from their representative. A comparison of attitudes between those district survey respondents who had experienced a positive case resolution and those who had not was made, as well as a comparison of attitudes between those respondents who expressed satisfaction with the help they received from the member and those who were dissatisfied.

Analysis of the data acquired from the sources available to this study was organized as a matched comparison between the respondents from the member's district and those responding to the 1984 NES survey. In addition to comparing responses to identical questions, answers to questions were grouped in categories reflecting attitudes relating to trust, efficacy and approval of government, Congress and the political system. Related variables were combined to create scales of intensity of feeling to provide a more focussed view of the impact casework makes on constituent attitudes.

E N D N O T E S

*The NES/CPS American National Election Studies were conducted by the Center for Political Studies of the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan. The data were collected under a grant from the National Science Foundation. These studies, were designed by a Board of Overseers comprised of distinguished scholars in the Political Science discipline, and were conducted under the general direction of Warren Miller of Arizona State University.

The major components of the studies were a pre and post-election survey panel, and continuous monitoring of respondents, an effort which consisted of 3,496 interviews taken in 46 consecutive samples. The pre-election survey was administered by in-person interviews, while the post-election phase was administered half by telephone and the other half in person. The continuous monitoring was all done by telephone. Telephone respondents were selected by a random digit dialing procedure while in-person interviewees were determined by a process described as a multi-stage area probability design. Four levels of geographical units, each subsequently decreasing in size, served as the bases from which to select respondents for the fifty-minute interviews. The four categories consisted of SMSA's, counties and county groups; census blocks or census enumeration districts within

the first level; groups of housing units within the second level; sample households within the third level. Once a household was selected all persons residing there were listed by the interviewer, and a respondent chosen from the politically eligible adults.

The period selected for the administration of the pre-election sample was broken down into four periods in order to level out the effect of responses from reluctant or hard to reach respondents. The concern here was that if all hard to get responses were not recorded until the last moment before the election there might be a contamination of the information dealing with late vote decision making. Therefore, this problem was spread over four two-week quarters beginning on September 5, 1984 and ending on October 31, 1984.

CHAPTER IV

CONSTITUENT CHARACTERISTICS

Introduction

It is important at this point to review the make-up of the congressional district that we are concerned with. It would be expected that the characteristics of the residents would influence the way they respond to the questionnaire. Therefore, any analysis of constituent attitudes must take note of these qualities and compare them to the general public as reflected by the 1984 NES survey. Differences in the two groups may help to explain any notable variances in their responses.

The underlying hypothesis of this study suggests that those people in our society who are moved to call upon their congressman for help with a problem are more apt to respond positively to the political system and its several parts as a result of that contact. Indeed, it is posited that if a constituent has received casework attention from his member, he will develop a more positive attitude toward his representative and the good feelings engendered by that activity will produce within the individual strengthened

attitudes about Congress and the American political system in general. It is not unreasonable to believe that when someone performs a service for another, the latter will be grateful and all those institutions of which he is a part and which collaborated in the service should come in for their share of approval. However, if significant differences exist between the two groups being surveyed it is quite likely that they may be determining factors in the way each feels about these matters.

In general, congressmen are most tenacious in their defense of the concept that if one takes care of his constituents they will take of him. The practical application of this attitude consumes great amounts of congressional resources, as Breslin has pointed out, and it is firmly believed that the ultimate payoff of what we identify as casework is a contributing factor to member support. In support of this theory it is hypothesized that constituents who have received casework attention will have a higher regard for their member than those who have not, and that they will develop a greater trust and heartier approval of their representative. It would also stand to reason that if a constituent were able to stimulate his congressman to intercede successfully with the government apparatus on his behalf that he might develop the belief that he is important enough to be taken note of; that his government is as much for him as it is for the big special interests; that the

government cares what he thinks; that he has some say in the scheme of things. These hypotheses depend on knowledge of the constituent . . . whether or not he has experienced casework attention; whether he has been politically active; whether he ever knows who his representative is. Therefore, before we seek to understand political attitudes it is necessary to look more in depth at those whose responses are so important to this study.

Respondent Characteristics

Party preference. The political make-up of the sample is decidedly Republican. Respondents to the questionnaire claim to be 45.4 per cent Republican while the general population, as registered by the NES survey, was 27.1 per cent Republican in 1984. Significantly, however, the number of Democrats in the sample varies from the general population to a much smaller degree. Respondents identified themselves as Democrats about 33 per cent of the time while the NES study identified 37 per cent of the public from that party. Respondents from the district seemed to be more certain of their political allegiances in that only 18.1 per cent claimed to be Independent and only 3.6 per cent said they supported some other party, whereas, the public is counted as having about 25 per cent Independents and 10 to 12 per cent supporting third parties (Table 4-1).

Table 4-1
Party Preference of Respondents

Party Preference	1984 NES	District
Republican	27.1	45.4
Democrat	37.0	32.2
Independent	25.2	18.1
Other	10.6	3.6

The political make-up of the district is somewhat different from that of the group responding to the questionnaire. State Election Board statistics reveal that 54 per cent of the district is Democrat, 43 per cent is Republican and 3 per cent is Independent.

Table 4-1.1
Party Preference of District Inhabitants

Party Preference	District Inhabitants
Republican	43.0
Democrat	54.0
Independent	3.0
Other	0.0

Political activity. Responses to the questionnaire indicated that 94.8 per cent were registered to vote, which is considerably higher than the average for the general public and 6 per cent higher than the rest of the state. Figures solicited from the State Election Board in the state in which the district is located show that 89 per cent of the eligible voters were registered as of January 1, 1986. These figures, which are strong indicators of an appreciation for the importance of political activism, are

confirmed by other items in the casework survey. When asked if they had "ever gone to a political meeting, rally, speech, dinner or things like that" those respondents from the district responded "yes" 67.4 per cent of the time compared to just about 8 per cent for the general population, and 43.6 per cent claimed to have worked for a party or candidate compared to 4 per cent of the public which had participated in that way (Table 4-2).

Table 4-2
Indicators of Political Activity

	1984 NES	District
Are you a registered voter?		
yes	60.1	94.8
no	39.9	5.2
Has respondent been politically active?		
yes	8.0	67.4
no	92.0	32.6
Has respondent worked for party of candidate?		
yes	4.0	43.6
no	96.0	56.4

Employment and education. A comparison of the employment and education status of the respondents to the NES survey and the district questionnaire reveal other significant differences. There were 5 per cent fewer employed among district respondents than in the general public, about 2 per cent more unemployed, 12 per cent fewer listed in the "housewife" category, but about 14 per cent more retired

people. In addition, there were considerably more respondents from the district who claimed to be permanently disabled. Finally, the education level of district respondents is about 2.5 years higher than the general public (Table 4-3).

Table 4-3
Employment and Education Status of Respondents

	1984 NES	District
Employment Status		
Employed	60.0	55.0
Unemployed	5.4	7.1
Temporarily laid off	1.7	.3
Retired	15.2	28.0
Permanently disabled	3.0	8.1
Student	2.1	.6
Housewife	12.6	.9
Mean Level of Education in Years		
	12.17	14.5

Contact with the member. Information provided by the respondents to the questionnaire sent to district constituents who had received personal attention from their representative stimulates a variety of interpretations. Keeping in mind that every person who received a questionnaire had been a casework subject in the member's office between the years 1982 and 1985, it is a curious fact that only 91.5 per cent responded in the affirmative when asked if they had ever contacted the member. It is possible, given the relatively high numbers of retired

people in this group that some may have suffered a lapse of memory for one reason or another relating to advanced age. Or another possibility might be that the constituent may have categorized his contact as having more to do with requesting information than requesting help. A greater number, however, were unable to name the incumbent representative in the last congressional election. This, of course, would have been the member who had helped the respondent with his particular problem. A full 40 percent of those asked could not identify their representative.

When matched against the general public, in one way the district respondents fare better. Whereas 60 per cent of the district could name the incumbent congressman, only about 27 per cent of the general public could match that feat. However, when compared in another way, the district respondents do not do as well. If one considers that only 14 per cent of the public contacted their representative, as opposed to 100 per cent of the district respondents, the ability of 27 per cent to recall his name compares favorably with the district respondents' result. In other words, of those respondents to the national sample who had contacted their member, twice as many could remember his name, while only 60 per cent of those in the district who had contacted their member knew who he was (Table 4-4).

Table 4-4
Recognition of Member and Member Contact

	1984 NES	District
Has the respondent ever contacted the member personally or by mail?		
yes.....	13.9	91.5
no.....	86.1	8.5
Does the respondent happen to remember the name of the candidates that ran in the district in the last election?		
no.....	74.2	40.1
yes.....	25.8	59.9

When asked why they had contacted their representative, the public response indicated that of the 14 per cent who had done so only about 50 per cent had sought help. The other half had asked for information or offered an opinion to the member. However, 91 per cent of the respondents to the district questionnaire said they were seeking help with a problem. District respondents who had taken their problem to the member were also asked whether or not it had been resolved. Of 319 cases observed in the member's office, 56.7 per cent claimed theirs had been satisfactorily resolved. By contrast, the member claimed that 69.4 per cent had been disposed of in a successful manner. In other words, 13 per cent of the member's constituents differed with him over whether or not their problem had been resolved.

A final question asked if the respondents knew anyone else who had ever contacted their member. The public response to

the NES surveys showed that between 18 per cent and 20 per cent knew of others who had done so, while nearly twice as many, or 41.8 per cent of the district respondents had this knowledge. Word of mouth advertising appears to be an important factor in the establishment of the level of recognition the district has for the member.

An Analysis

The obvious differences between the respondents to the NES surveys and the casework recipients responding to the questionnaire lead to a number of questions. What accounts for the differences in party preferences between the samples and why, for instance, is there such a preponderance of Republican cases reflected by the questionnaire? The large number of Republicans which had contacted the congressman, who happens to be a Republican, indicates that constituents of a particular party probably tend to call upon representatives of their own party to help them out. If the member in question had been a Democrat we might have expected the division between Republican and Democrat cases to more closely parallel the national sample of 27 to 37 per cent. Accounting for the disparities in the "Independent" and "other" categories is a bit more chancy, but it is likely that these lower than average figures are diminished because casework recipients appear to be more politically active than other groups. If this is true, as we shall try to point out, then political activists would less likely be

Independents because the opportunities in that quarter are significantly fewer.

Why is it that those who receive casework attention from their representative are more politically active? Political activism is first noted as a characteristic of the respondents to the questionnaire by the percentage of registered voters which are recorded. At 95 per cent, casework recipients are clearly among those who intend to vote. The figures for the national sample are somewhat misleading however, because registration is not universally applicable. Each state has its own system and in some places it is not necessary to register. Therefore, there may be a number of voters who would respond in the negative to the question of registration.

In any event, the activism of the respondent is reinforced by other questions in the survey. Sixty per cent more of the district respondents have attended and participated in political functions that the general public, and about 40 per cent more admit to having worked for a candidate or a party. These numbers imply two things. One, that politically active people know about constituent service and how to use it for their own purposes. Two, that constituents who have received casework attention from their representative repay the favor by being politically active in behalf of the member.

The first of these suggests that those who have been politically active are sufficiently practiced to be aware of the availability of their representative to deal with constituent problems. It is probable that a person in this category would discover the possibilities of the office through the various opportunities that exist for the dissemination of political information. The member aggressively advertises the service in newsletters and through the activities of field representatives, for instance, while the media continually logs the activities of Congress and its members. Campaign events also serve to bring related information to the attention of those who are interested in political affairs. For some, politics is an advocation that absorbs their attention as religion, sports or education does others. Politics is the milieu in which they are most comfortable, and, therefore, they know about political things. This knowledge extends to an awareness of the congressman and how he can be of service to the public. Armed with this knowledge, they use it for their own purpose.

This idea is strengthened by the fact that respondents to the district questionnaire are more highly educated than those in the national sample. Whereas the general population has an average of twelve years of schooling, the case recipients averaged two and one-half years of college. This level of educational achievement would suggest that the

group could be expected to take a greater interest in, and have a greater knowledge of, politics. This lends itself to the theory that political activism and sophistication brings an awareness of the member's constituent service capabilities.

The other possibility is that after one has received casework attention he is sufficiently grateful to the member to become politically active in his support. This seems like the least probable of the two to occur because political activism requires a certain degree of sophistication and interest if it is to be successfully engaged in and these qualities do not necessarily result from a non-political association with the member's office. The figures would seem to support this theory. Of all case recipients, nearly 24 per cent more claim to have been politically active in ways that do not include campaigning for the member or party than those claiming to have supported the member (Table 4-2). If the gratitude theory were valid, one might expect more respondents to have claimed to have campaigned for the member than claimed to have been active in a general way.

By reviewing the employment status of those people who have had casework experience at the hands of their representatives and comparing it to that of the general public a better understanding of casework can be developed.

The three categories that record greater numbers than the NES study are "retired" (+ 13 per cent), "permanently disabled" (+ 5 per cent) and "unemployed" (+ 2 per cent). In Figure 3-1 it was noted that the administrative agency that was the source of the most case problems was the Social Security Administration. This office deals with lost checks, certification of retirees, and many other matters of great importance to the "retired" category of cases. In addition, there are four other agencies that are concerned with the problems of retired people (Medicare, Railroad Retirement Board, Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation, and the Veteran's Administration). One would expect, then to discover that there are more retired respondents to the questionnaire than there are in the general public. By the same token, the Veteran's Administration was cited as the third greatest source of case problems. This agency deals with disabled veterans and their medical problems, among other things, a fact which is reflected in the Employment Status figures. Finally, there are no less than four agencies that deal with unemployment problems, including the Office of Personnel Management, Department of Labor, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Office of Workmen's Compensation Programs. Clearly, the government agencies with the most traffic from constituents of this district are directly related to the makeup of the constituency as defined by the responses to the questionnaire.

Two categories on the Employment Status table that register fewer respondents to the District Questionnaire than to the NES study are "housewife" and "student." The comparison shows between 12 and 16 per cent of the NES studies being responded to by housewives, while less than 1 per cent of those responding to the questionnaire fall into that category. Excepting the Social Security Administration, one might presume that the government has had less involvement with housewives as a class of people than it has with other groups, such as business, veteran's or ethnic groups. Hence, the likelihood of problems arising that would affect the housewife group would be somewhat diminished. The fewer number of students in the casework sample might be related to the idea that students are young people, generally, and have had insufficient experience and information to as yet be aware of the congressional office. As a group they may be too young to have discovered the service aspect of the representative's function. These are speculative observations, however, and merit further investigation.

Many other questions arise concerning the matter of constituent contact with the member. The sample taken from casework recipients, for example, reveals that only 91.5 per cent admit to having contacted the congressman. This, in spite of the fact that 100 per cent of the names were taken from actual case files. Does this mean that 8.5 per cent do not remember, or will not admit to having done so? Further,

only 91 per cent of those admitting to contacting the member say their reason for doing so was to seek help. This means that only 83 per cent (.91 x .915) of those who were assisted by their representative admit or remember having been helped.

More curious, perhaps, is the fact that slightly more than 40 per cent of the recipients of casework attention do not remember their benefactor's name. This compares favorably to about 73 per cent of the public who cannot name their representative, but even though their performance is much better than those who have had no such experience, it suggests that the recognition problem might be related to a lack of understanding of the political system. The question was phrased:

> Do you happen to remember the names of the candidates for Congress--that is, for the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C.--that ran in your district in the last election? Please name them if you can.

It is quite possible that many people do not connect the established congressman, who was contacted at the local level to help out with a problem to a candidate for an office in Washington, D.C. Given the lack of information that many people seem to have about politics, and which is regularly noted by political observers, it is not outside the realm of possibility that 40 per cent of the casework recipients are not aware that they have been assisted by their Washington representative.

Another possible explanation might be that the constituent is simply contacting his congressman . . . the name being unimportant. The first contact is made with a staff member who receives the case. The relationship that develops between the caseworker and the client, for the most part, precludes the necessity of any intervention by the member and tends to render him irrelevant to the transaction. In this situation, which is most often the case, the member may well, indeed suffer the ignominy of having his name forgotten.

This argument may find support in another observation. First, it was noted that 41.8 per cent of the case respondents said they had known of someone else who had contacted the member. This may indicate that some or all of these cases were referred to the member's office by a friend or acquaintance. If this were so, the referred individual would be less likely to have known who the member was or anything else about him. In which case, the member's name would not have been important to him in the first place, thus having a high probability of being forgotten. This line of reasoning, however, flies in the face of our anticipated responses to casework experience. The caseworker at every opportunity, in a variety of ways, brings the name of the member to the attention of the constituent. The letterhead, the content or the letter to the constituent, the telephone greeting, the telephone

listing . . . all announce the name of the member. One would expect a higher degree of recall than 60 per cent.

The question of why the disparity between how the client views the outcome of the casework effort, and how the member counts the result is easier to deal with. Apparently, there is a large area for opinion as to whether a case has been resolved satisfactorily. In the client's case, anything less than the result that he initially expects will probably be judged as not satisfactory. However, many cases that are brought to the attention of the congressional office are founded on misinformation or misunderstanding. If a constituent thinks he should be receiving a greater amount on his social security check and requests help in securing it, but is told that he is now receiving the full legal amount to which he is entitled, he will likely feel that he is not being treated fairly, and the case, in his opinion, will be a failure. On the other hand, if the answer from the Social Security Administration was correct, the member is probably going to call it a successfully resolved case. In any event, and contrary to the way the member evaluated them, 13 per cent fewer of the respondents felt they had not had their cases resolved satisfactorily.

Summary

When compared to the general public, the respondents to the casework questionnaire are revealed to be a significantly

different group of people. They are approximately 13 per cent more retired, 2 per cent more unemployed, 5 per cent more disabled, and register 12 per cent fewer housewives and 2 per cent fewer students than does the general public, differences that can easily be related to more and different kinds of problems than are normally found in the population. Additionally, this group is considerably more active in political ways, but it is unclear whether that is a cause or an effect of the apparent member-constituent relationship founded on the casework activity.

CHAPTER V

DEVELOPING ATTITUDES ABOUT GOVERNMENT AND CONGRESS

Introduction

The data from the 1984 National Election Study are particularly helpful in providing an insight as to how the public views the government, but when compared with the responses from the District Questionnaire, it is often the case that more questions are raised than answered. It was anticipated at the outset that any panel of respondents having experienced the casework relationship with their representative would develop attitudes which would set them off from the national sample of those who had not had the experience. It was hypothesized that inasmuch as the service rendered by the member was a beneficent activity the results could be measured in terms of increased good will and approbation for the government. What has been discovered leads in a different direction, however, to different conclusions. The discussion of the data will be presented in Chapters V and VI, and center on how casework affects attitudes about American government, the Congress and the Representative. Within this format these attitudes will be measured in terms of efficacy, trust and

performance.

Political Efficacy: A Definition

A government, in any political system, is that structure in the process which has the responsibility for the maintenance of order and the allocation of resources. To the degree that it succeeds, an environment is created in which the individual can live in a state of relative peace with his neighbors, utilize his talents in a manner that pleases him, and be secure from threatening forces from without. The government adheres to the needs and demands of the individual and attempts to convert them into policy that best accommodates accepted goals of society. The government thus strives to stimulate prosperity, health, education, invention and progress.

In a pluralistic society, as we know it, the government has an extremely difficult task finding its way to accommodation. As the myriad interests continue to develop their capacity for making a sustained impact on the governmental process, it often appears that the strong, the persistent, the committed, develop an inordinate advantage over those who are less so. The policy that emerges is often perceived as not being universal, but accommodating too often and too much to special interests.

Even more difficult, perhaps, is measuring the success of

Even more difficult, perhaps, is measuring the success of government as it attempts to accomplish it purpose. There is first, the perceived product of government with which one has to contend. It can be seen in terms of economic indicators, market trends, farm surpluses, trade imbalances, productivity, technological achievements, summit meetings and how votes are cast in the General Assembly of the United Nations. The scorecard on how the government is doing is continually updated as new events take place, governments rise and fall, foreign products invade the domestic market, and it is monitored daily by professionals on Wall Street and Madison Avenue as the impact of events is calculated.

In the second instance, in an effort to grade its effectiveness, one must take account of the real product of government. It is observed most often and most effectively at the level of the individual, and is measured in terms of taxes, prices, costs of education, insurance premiums, house payments and sundry other real life indicators. It is here that the demands of society take shape as individual needs are experienced, and it is here that the real report card on government is written as those demands are met or ignored. It is here that political efficacy, the feeling that what one does can make a difference politically, is defined. The costs of the real life indicators are compared to the benefits of apparent governmental activities and the gap that results is the measure of the individual's perceived

political efficacy. That is to say, if one is unemployed he will probably disapprove of his government's free trade policies; or if he has an illness he cannot pay for he will probably wonder what good advanced medical technology does; or if he lives in sub-standard housing he will perhaps wonder why the government does not make decent housing available instead of building space stations. Government responsiveness to fundamental needs is viewed in very personal terms. If the individual's needs are largely unattended, he will perhaps conclude that his political efficacy is wanting.

These are exaggerated examples, of course. It is just as possible to have a full belly, enjoy good health, live in a mansion and still feel ineffective before the monolithic, impenetrable, immovable, unfathomable thing we call government

A next logical step, then, is to inquire about alienation in our society. If it exists, is there any way to diminish its effect? More specifically, in terms of this study, can a congressman affect a change in public attitudes about government by interfacing with his constituents in the service-oriented function of casework?

The public's perception of its effect on government. Members of the general public, who have not had the

experience of being given personal attention by their representative in the constituent service mode, inexplicably view their potential impact on government in more sanguine terms than do those who have. The attitudes of the respondents to the district survey, as revealed in Table 5-1, decline significantly from those of the 1984 NES respondents, and are from 18.5 per cent to 33.2 per cent more negative about their efficacy in the short run.

Table 5-1
Respondent's Perceptions of Political Efficacy

	1984 NES	Dist.	Dif.
People like me don't have any say about what the government does.			
Agree	33.2	51.7	+18.5
Disagree	66.8	48.3	-18.5
I don't think the government cares much what people like me think			
Agree	40.8	61.1	+20.3
Disagree	59.2	38.9	-20.3
How much do you feel that having elections makes the government pay attention to what the people think?			
A good deal	43.9	24.1	-19.8
Some	42.2	56.2	+14.0
Not much	13.9	19.7	+ 5.8
Over the years, how much attention do you feel the government pays to what people think when it decides what to do?			
A good deal	17.1	10.8	- 6.3
Some	58.5	57.3	- 1.2
Not much	24.4	31.9	+ 7.5

In order to bring these attitudes into sharper focus the responses to questions measuring respondent's perceived efficacy with the federal government were consolidated and presented as a scale. The comparison between the NES survey of 1984 and the survey of casework recipients from the district is presented in Table 5-2. The scale was constructed by utilizing the four questions in Table 5-1. Respondents who replied positively to all four questions were recorded as 0; those who responded positively to all but one were recorded as 1; all but two, 2; all but three, 3; to none of the four, 4. In this way, a scale of positive feelings ranging from 0 to 4 provides a different perspective as to how the public regards its impact on government.

Table 5-2
Scaled Perceptions of Political Efficacy

How much impact or effect does the respondent have on the government?		1984 NES	Dist.
0	(A lot)	60.2	6.0
1	(Quite a bit)	10.0	35.8
2	(Some)	14.1	38.4
3	(Not Much)	9.5	18.2
4	(None)	6.2	1.7

By scaling attitudes in this manner it is much easier to demonstrate the significant difference between those who

have experienced casework attention and those who have not. The unexpected discovery, however, is the indication that those whom we might expect to feel more efficacious actually feel less so. If, in the interests of reducing the distinctions between the extremes on the scale, levels 0 and 1, and levels 3 and 4, are combined, the figures are changed somewhat, but the broad difference still remains between district respondents and the rest of the country.

An answer to this riddle might be sought in the area of political activism of the respondent. About 60 per cent more of the district sample claims to have been politically active, having attended speeches and rallies and other related events. About 40 per cent more said they had worked for a particular candidate or party (Table 5-2). This may indicate that district respondents had a general feeling that something needed to be done about government and they were willing to pitch in to bring about change. However, in spite of their political activity they observed that their efforts made small impact in affecting changes that they believed were needed in government, hence their cynicism grew. The public, on the other hand, had not been sufficiently motivated to engage in political activities to affect change and was, therefore, not alienated by the lack thereof. In other words, being better educated, district respondents recognized the shortcomings of government and wished to do something about them, whereas, the general

public, with less understanding of the political process, assumed a more passive political posture. Having thus engaged less in politics, the public was not to be disappointed with the ineffectiveness of its efforts.

Table 5-3
Political Activity and Political Efficacy

	1984 NES	District
ACTIVITY		
Ever gone to a political meeting in support of a candidate?		
Yes	8.0	67.4
No	92.0	32.6
Ever work for party or candidate?		
Yes	4.0	43.6
No	96.0	56.4
EFFICACY		
I don't have any say about government.		
Agree	33.2	51.7
Disagree	66.8	48.3
Government doesn't care what I think.		
Agree	40.8	61.1
Disagree	59.2	38.9
How much do elections make government pay attention?		
A good deal	43.9	24.1
Some	42.2	56.2
Not much	13.9	19.7
How much attention does government pay to what people think?		
A good deal	17.1	10.8
Some	58.5	57.3
Not much	24.4	31.9

In looking for the reasons for this difference one must also consider the partisan relationship of the district to the government. If the district were of one party and the national leadership of another, then one might not be surprised to observe a certain degree of negativism.

Would, however, the fact that the district is a relatively strong Republican area suggest a reason for alienation from a Republican President, Republican Senate and Democrat House of Representatives? Not likely. The state, although predominantly Democrat in numbers of registered voters as well as office-holders, has voted for a Republican president in every election since 1952 except one. The district is strongly represented by a member who is of the same conservative branch of the party as is the President, and who received 68 per cent of the vote in a three-way race in 1980. The district, also in 1980, returned a 66.3 per cent margin for the conservative Republican U.S. Senate candidate. Therefore, given the political allegiance the district apparently has to prevailing party and administration philosophy, partisanship can be discounted as a contributing factor to the difference between the district and national surveys.

Perhaps the answer can be found in the fact of casework itself. The major difference between the district sample and the NES sample is the fact that district respondents

have all had a problem with the government in some way, and that problem has been taken to the representative for help in finding a solution. Perhaps the fact that they have had to endure the major, or even minor inconvenience of an event of this nature has instilled a deep negative feeling about how they effect government. In 56.7 per cent of the cases, the respondent felt his case had been resolved successfully, but even if it had he might still feel impotent in dealing with a system that created the problem in the first place. About 33 per cent more of the district sample than of the 1984 NES sample felt that government is run not for the people, but by and for a few big interests. Is this a natural response to a situation in which one was inconvenienced by the system, but ultimately treated fairly? Perhaps, but given the relatively high education level of the district sample one might have expected more forbearance.

It appears then, that respondents to the district survey, those who have had a casework relationship with their congressman, feel significantly less effective in their dealings with government than others of the public who have had no personal attention from the member.

Don't trust anyone over thirty. A claim made by anti-war demonstrators, political protestors, hippies and assorted other dissidents during the period of the 1960s and 1970s

was that "you can't trust anyone over thirty." This statement cum slogan expressed the feeling that the young people of the nation had come to the conclusion that their elders were using them for their own unwholesome purposes, like fighting wars, and they needed to be wary so as to avoid being taken in to camp on other issues as well. Events surrounding the civil rights dislocation, the war in Viet Nam and the Watergate scandal lent some credibility to the expression and it was an underlying theme in much of what transpired in this country for a decade or more.

But, the admonition to not trust anyone over thirty can be seen as a euphemism for "you can't trust the government" . . . or "the establishment" . . . or "the system". In spite of its personification, it is more clearly seen as a reaffirmation of the public cynicism that has been noted by scholars for some time. Crooks have long been supposed to make up a significant portion of the government, and believing that politicians were bought off by special interests in some unethical manner has almost been a matter of faith with the public (McCloskey, 1958).

The 1960s and 1970s apparently introduced additional damage to our national psyche. McCloskey reported that in 1956 a full 90 per cent of the respondents to his national survey admitted that they "usually have confidence that the government will do what is right." By 1985, only 28.2 per

cent of our district respondents could agree with that premise (Table 5-4). Distrust is stimulated when the trusted one fails to perform in an expected manner. Our government has a number of functions that it is expected to perform. Some are expressed or implied by consitutional provisions, while others are legitimately anticipated by the public. Depriving certain classes of citizens of their civil rights, not protecting others by sending them into military combat that had long since lost its purpose, and lying to the public from the highest office in the land violated contemporary standards of leadership behavior and was seen as government performing in an unexpected manner, to say the least. Distrust of government was endemic in society at that time and the effects, which linger unto this day, are easily detected in the survey data.

Table 5-4
Trust in Government

	1984 NES	District
Do you think that quite a few of the people running the government are crooked, or that not very many are, or do you think hardly any are?		
Quite a few are	27.0	49.7
Not very many are	42.0	42.7
Hardly any are	13.0	7.6
How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington, D.C. to do what is right?		
Always	.03	.03
Most of the time	35.0	27.9
Some of the time	45.0	64.8
Never	.01	7.0
Would you say the government is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all the people?		
A few big interests	46.0	74.6
For benefit of all	33.0	25.3

Trusting the Government. Although the respondents to the district survey generally agreed with the NES replies regarding how much trust to put in government, they revealed a much greater degree of cynicism when responding to the question relating to crooks in government. Almost half the sample (49.7 per cent) felt like there were "quite a few" crooks in government, three times as many as those responding to the 1984 NES survey.

In order to get a composite result of the two surveys, a scale was once again employed. Table 5-5 shows the results of combining the three questions in Table 5-4 and creating a scale with levels of trust from 0 to 4. Those with all negative responses to the questions reflect the 0 while those with all positive responses are described by 4.

Table 5-5
Composite Measurement of Trust in Government

	1984 NES	District
How much does the respondent trust the government to be honest and to do what is right?		
Never	54.4	72.6
Hardly Ever	35.8	22.0
Sometime	8.6	5.1
Always	1.2	0.3

Considering the major distinction between the samples, that the district respondents were all recipients of casework attention, the reasons why district responses should be so negative are obscure. One might have expected that a good relationship with a congressman's office would tend to ameliorate an attitude of distrust. In any event, several reasons should be considered.

It is entirely possible that a person's attitude on trust in government has been conditioned by local events. If the

district had recently experienced an unusually large degree of malfeasance in public office it might have been reflected in the responses. That may have been a factor in this case. Although not recently front page news, continuing commentary relative to a statewide scandal involving an astonishingly large number of public officials was still being carried in the media during the time of the district survey. In spite of the possible impact of this event, the sample doesn't deviate much from national surveys of other times. The 49.7 per cent who believe there are quite a few crooks in government are in the same range as the more than half who agreed that "Most politicians are looking out for themselves above all else," and the 65 per cent in an earlier survey who said "Many politicians are bought off by private interests" (Holloway and George, 1979).

In addition, the NES Study should contain all of the same general factors that influence every other similar survey. Inasmuch as this is a representative form of government it is presumed that our elected officials are no more larcenous as the best or worst of their constituents, and since no jurisdiction has a monopoly on their criminal activities this factor should have a tendency to balance out across the sample and not, therefore, account for the difference.

A second reason for the disparity between the two samples might relate to casework. Perhaps individuals who have

problems with government agencies have a tendency to feel abused by the bureaucrats who represent those agencies, and so expand that negative feeling to such a degree that referring to them as "crooks" is an easy transition. For instance, the caseload in the representative's office dealing with the Internal Revenue Service is higher than that for most other agencies, logging 45 per cent of the cases. IRS is a traditional whipping boy for citizens who complain about the government, largely because of its tax collecting function. Nobody really likes to pay taxes, and when government isn't doing what the individual thinks it ought to be doing with his tax money it is a common thing to vilify those who take the money and spent it unwisely. IRS is an easy target. Perhaps it is in this context that the respondents identify crooks in government. On the other hand, there is a distinct difference between a "crook" and an unfeeling or unresponsive public servant. When agreeing that there are crooks in government it seems more realistic to believe that the respondent is actually talking about venality rather than incompetence. Therefore, this is probably not a valid reason for the difference in the way the two sets of respondents feel about the issue.

In addition to their obscurity, reasons for the disparity in responses between the two surveys are unanticipated. The data present a picture that is not compatible with the general hypothesis of this study. It was expected that a

casework recipient would perhaps express a sense of increased trust in a government that was sufficiently compassionate to establish and maintain a system of recourse for those people who are inadvertently damaged by government action. Being willing to address problems, correct them, and always apologize for the inconvenience that was caused is the mark of a government that cares. Casework is invariably conducted at a high level of politeness and concern for the constituent. It is probably as often a pleasant experience than otherwise, if one can overlook the initial inconvenience that a problem usually causes. It is a small mystery, then, why more casework constituents do not trust government than those who have never had the treatment.

Conditions for Performance Evaluation

Having shown that individuals believe they are unable to make much of an impact on the actions of government, it is of some interest to note how respondents to the surveys react to questions designed to measure its job performance. Before this can be done, however, there needs to be a short discussion about the elements of job performance in order to more clearly understand the dynamics involved in making subjective evaluations of how certain responsibilities are executed.

It is a mildly curious fact that the top level positions of

power and leadership in the government are unencumbered by substantial qualifying requirements. To be sure, the Constitution demands that the president, senators and representatives be of a minimum age and adhere to certain residence requirements, but nowhere is it written that these individuals be qualified by training or experience to engage in the most important, technical political work of the nation. The freedom to choose anyone we wish for inclusion in the ranks of leadership is so precious that there are not even any rules requiring the Speaker of the House to be a member of that institution. By the same token, it is nowhere written that a justice of the Supreme Court must be an attorney. The critical factor in the achievement of political office is one's ability to get elected or appointed, and then to stay that way. Having achieved the office, the oath-taking procedure legitimizes one's claim to it, and from that point on, he is engaged in the performance of his official duties.

In our representative system of government, rating the political performance of our leaders is a vital function. Media commentary on how our leaders deal with the issues of the day is as old a practice as governing itself, but in recent years judging leaders has grown into a new industry, as shown by the advent of the opinion survey. Poll takers have become very scientific in their ability to discover and transmit public attitudes at any given point in time, and

through their labors, the public is kept apprised of how it collectively feels about its leadership. The ultimate performance rating is the constitutionally provided system of elections that allows each constituent the privilege of officially approving or disapproving the actions of his representatives.

Upon observing the great amount of time and attention devoted to political performance rating by the general public, one might assume that there are specific rules for its conduct, guiding the generally uneducated practitioner to make wise choices. They do not exist, as we have seen, but at least three conditions would need to be satisfied in order to evaluate the job performance of public officials.

1. The duties of the position in question must be clearly stated so that the office-holder can be held accountable for specific responsibilities.

2. The responsibilities of the job must have been executed so that the office-holder's performance can be observed and judged.

3. There must be established criteria for judging the performance of the office-holder in the execution of his responsibilities.

Rating the performance of any office-holder is not so perfect as this, however, and as much as one might wish for formality in the structure of the process, it is not to be. These three conditions undoubtedly perform a greater service by focussing on what does not exist rather than what does exist.

What is the performance that shall be judged? In the context of this study, the job performance of the government, the Congress, and the individual member is at issue. A beginning place would have to be with the question that asks, "what is the job they do that can be evaluated?" In almost any job one might describe there are specific, written instructions called the job description. A job description lets the job-holder know what he is supposed to do in the course of his workday. It also provides him a modicum of protection in that if he performs according to his job description he will, presumably, be able to keep his job. In addition, there are usually job related activities that would fall into a category identified as "custom" or "precedent." These are the things that an employee is responsible for just because that's the way it's always been done. Often, these precedents will deal with social relations within an office. Making coffee, contributing to a flower fund, or filling in for an absentee employee are examples of these customary rules governing the relationships in an office staff. The third kind of responsibility an employee must contend with is that which is commonly expected of him. This broadly defines such common sense things like doing a good job, getting to work on time, or being willing to do more than is required.

As one begins to consider job performance in the political arena it becomes abundantly clear, very soon, that rules

governing the activities of the office-holder are not as easily defined. For instance, there are no rules to say what it is exactly that government, or the Congress, or a representative is supposed to do. The Constitution is vague, even in its specifics, about what Congress may do, and one hunts in vain to find any reference to what an individual member is expected to do. When a candidate campaigns for office he normally finds a variety of ways to tell the voters just exactly what it is he will do when he gets to Washington, but in no case does he ever say that he will faithfully execute specific duties of his office, because there are none. Every person who is or has been elected to Congress regards the responsibilities of his office from a different perspective. It is often the case that the previous incumbent's record amd performance is the established standard for a member's actions. If a member's predecessor was a popular representative he will most likely try to emulate his performance as long as it is consistent with current trends and his own conscience. If the former incumbent had been voted out of office for some transgression the present occupant will likely try to emphasize the contrast between them by doing things in a different way.

Congress, the institution, on the other hand, has a rather large set of formal rules and regulations that govern the actions for the individual member within the boundaries of

the institution. There are rules of behavior that are designed to control the decorum of Congress and there are others that control the flow of the legislative process. Finally, there is in Congress, a variety of unwritten rules that tend to maintain the institution. They force the individual member into a manner of behavior that insures the strength and vitality of the Congress. It is expected, for instance, that a member will accept the responsibilities of committee membership, work hard in his job, and always do his homework (Polsby, 1971). By allowing himself to be governed by these institutional mores, the representative contributes to the survival of the Congress.

But what of the government? What are its responsibilities, as opposed to those of its separate branches and administrative agencies. Government is composed of a legislative, executive and judicial branch, each of which has a different function. How is it possible to observe government in the abstract, assign it certain responsibilities, then legitimately rate its performance in the execution of those responsibilities? In order to accomplish this, one must view government as a vast machine, composed of many parts which, when operating together, allow it to function in the accomplishment of its purpose. Its purpose is determined by those in leadership positions and they, in the execution of their individual responsibilities, set the course. The policies which they determine represent

the responsibilities of government. How one views and rates the performance of government depend upon how one feels about the leadership and the policies which it has imposed upon the nation. All of this is to say that the responsibilities of government are what each individual believes them to be, and how they are executed depends as well upon whether or not the individual is satisfied, and not by comparison with any established standard.

Contrary to the first condition of job performance rating, then, the government, Congress and congressmen do not have jobs with clearly stated responsibilities to those they must govern. Certainly, they each have responsibilities that the governed have come to expect them to accept and faithfully execute, but the ultimate measure of acceptable performance is in the mind of the individual.

The paradox of non-performance. The second condition required for job performance rating suggests that a job must have been performed before it can be evaluated. On the surface, that seems to be a rather reasonable expectation. Indeed, it would be a requirement in most disciplines. How, for instance, would it be possible to judge the artistic ability of a concert pianist without first having heard that artist play the instrument? Academy Awards are presented to actors on the basis of performance, and professional sports figures earn their large salaries as a result of how well

they play their game.

In the realm of politics, as well, achievement has most often been measured in terms of action and positive performance. Our great presidents were men such as Washington, Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt, all of whom were involved in big events in history, requiring positive action to successfully cope with the problems that attended those events. Activists like Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson are consistently given high marks because they were activists at a time that called for action.

But, paradoxically, political office-holders are often given high marks for the accomplishments that accrue as a result of non-performance. In this era of deregulation, government retreat and inaction in the field of transportation has been hailed as a positive step. President Reagan's frequently expressed opposition to increasing taxes is an example of a very popular form of inaction or non-performance. Finally, President Eisenhower, perennially rated by presidential scholars as a somewhat mediocre Chief Executive, is being accorded a new place in history by others on the basis of his retiring approach to his responsibilities (Greenstein, 1979). Restraint and inaction have their place in the execution of political responsibility. Under certain circumstances restraint, appropriately applied, might prevent an undesirable military confrontation. This

suggests that the result of non-performance can be as important as that of performance and must be considered as an intentional leadership style. It has been said that the United States was ready for a quiet style of leadership in 1952, experiencing as it had the Great Depression, World War II and the Korean Conflict during the previous twenty years. With Eisenhower came a period of relative calm, more apparent than real, perhaps, in that the President was faced with a fair share of crises. It was his style, however, to manage these events "without overreacting, without going to war, without increasing defense spending, without frightening people half out of their wits. He downplayed each one. He ruled in a time that required him, at least in his own view, to adopt a moderate course, to avoid calling on his fellow citizens for some great national effort" (Ambrose, 1984).

Non-performance, admittedly, is performance. By not undertaking a given task a certain result ensues. In that sense inactivity becomes action and responsibility for the results must be ascribed. The paradox remains, however, that political actors are fairly lonely in the field of those who are rated on the basis of performances never given.

Criteria for making a judgement. Contrary to the third job performance rating condition, there is no universally agreed

upon criteria for evaluating the performance of government, the Congress, or even the individual congressman. What may be perfectly acceptable to one observer may be anathema to another, stimulating in him protest of the strongest kind. It has generally been agreed that the United States correctly adopted the role as world leader following the Second World War, but many of the activities this role has demanded of the country have not always been as readily accepted. Over the years, many conservatives have faulted the government and Congress for engaging heavily in foreign aid. Liberals, on the other hand, have often been critical of contemporary definitions of the national interest and have objected to such things as our participation in the war in Viet Nam. Indeed, no matter the stage, dissension and disagreement will always be an important ingredient of the governing process, and seldom will an issue arise that will be capable of claiming the approval of everyone. Performance evaluation will always depend on the acceptability of the activity being performed, and if there is no consensus on the appropriateness of the activity there can be no set standard for judging the performance.

One might suggest that if an activity is conducted according to an established set of rules, the performance could be judged against that standard, and there is some validity to that idea. That is, it might be agreed by all that the performance is legal, or correct. However, even though

formal rules exist, they are not necessarily approved by all. There are always those factions that wish to change the rules, and often manage to do so. In the process of rating performance, then, it becomes clear that the one common denominator among those who are doing the rating is that they all make their evaluation on the basis of how the activity in question affects them personally. Recognition of the selfish motive reveals a paradox of utmost irony. In making an effort to evaluate the performance of government, Congress or the member, one would naturally be assumed to be thinking in terms of whether the performance is in the best interests of the country. However, when reduced to the common denominator of self-interest it must be accepted that since self-interest and national interest are not necessarily compatible, job performance may be rated on bases that are inimical to the national interest. Upholding one's oath of office to the best of his ability is no assurance that he is performing well ir office. The office-holder may be legal, ethical, diligent, hardworking and effective, but if he has not been able to strike the prcper cord in the evaluator, he may be adjudged to have failed miserably.

It would appear, then, that evaluating the performance of a political entity in a job which has no clear definition, that may or may not have been performed in the first place, and to which there is attached no accepted criteria for

evaluation, is at the very least, a highly personable, arbitrary exercise.

Performance of Government

The federal government is not popular with the people. On whatever bases it is evaluated by respondents to the two surveys, it is clear that the public is not satisfied with the service it gets from the government. Only 15.7 per cent of the general public believes it is doing a good job, while 38.6 percent say the government does a poor job. Significantly, 74.8 per cent of the respondents from the District, all of whom have had case work experience, believe the government is doing a poor job in dealing with what they think is the most important problem in the nation. It is clear from these figures that casework is not a positive influence on the public's attitude about government.

The problem of measuring this kind of an attitude can be better understood when one considers that many different problems would presumably be identified as the number one problem, each having attained a different degree of resolution by government officials. Both questions are difficult to evaluate in that they are so general and non-specific. However, they are able to provide an understanding of a widespread public feeling about government.

Table 5-6
The Public Perception of the Performance of Government

	1984 NES	DIST
In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way the government serves the nation's interests?		
Approve	----	38.0
Disapprove	----	62.0
How good of a job is government doing in dealing with the most important problem the country faces today?		
A good job	15.7	1.6
A fair job	45.7	23.6
A poor job	38.6	74.8

It is apparent from the responses to the District Survey that the member's constituents are alienated from their government to a much greater degree than is the general public. The critical question at this juncture is why do casework recipients have a higher degree of alienation than the public? Why wouldn't it be at least comparable, if not less? For the answer to this mystery one might suspect there are certain elements of the casework activity that affects the way they feel or that there are external factors which are not apparent in this study. One might also develop the argument that those individuals who request casework assistance from the member are predisposed to alienation.

Whatever the reasons for the difference in attitudes, a comparison of the surveys seems to suggest that the casework experience does not help to make the constituent feel better about his ability to affect the government process or his belief in the government's concern for his welfare. The yawning gap between the real and perceived products of government has obviously not been reduced by exposure to the beneficent political activity of constituent service. Although inconvenienced, perhaps, by a problem of government's making, the constituent, nevertheless, was treated fairly and successfully 69.4 per cent of the time. One might have expected people with an average of almost two and one-half years of college education to have a more positive view of the government. To the contrary, casework appears to exacerbate the individual's already shaky perception of his own efficacy, weaken his trust in government, and negatively affect his judgement as to the way it performs its duties.

The effect of casework on public attitudes about government is unexpectedly found to have a negative value. The reasons for this are not clear, but it is surmised that the general nature of the term "government" makes it difficult to relate to in a very specific or personal way. Congress, on the other hand, is of a different nature. It can be defined very specifically. Furthermore, it plays a different role in the constituent service function . . . it is the place to

go to find relief for problems, while the government is more often the source of those problems. It is anticipated then, that casework will have a positive effect on the public's attitude about Congress, the institution.

Does Congress Care?

The attitude of District Survey respondents about their level of effectiveness with the Congress is depressing. Over 59 per cent of the sample believes Congress does not care what they think. It is as though the Congress is some foreign entity in a faraway place, acting on its own agenda with no interest whatsoever in constituent attitudes. This alienation is all the more puzzling in the light of contemporary communications networks. However, the relevant factor here may be the constituent's inability, or reluctance, to personify the Congress, resulting in the development of a perception of the institution as an institution. Institutions are cold and immobile.

The second question stimulates a similar interpretation. Responses reveal the hopelessness the constituent seems to feel after observing years of congressional activity of which he apparently disapproved. A staggering 83.3 per cent of the sample believes the Congress pays little or no attention to the constituent when it acts. It is clear that casework has not given District respondents an overwhelming feeling of efficacy as it would relate to the Congress of

the United States.

To determine if respondents to the District Survey felt like they had more effect on the Congress than they had on the government, responses to these two questions were matched against their counterparts in Table 5-7. To the statement "I don't think Congress cares much what people like me think," their reaction indicated that they perceived small difference between the two. While 61.1 per cent agreed that government doesn't care, 59.2 per cent felt that Congress doesn't care, a negligible difference.

The response to the question "Over the years, how much attention do you feel the Congress pays to what people think when it decides what to do?" was somewhat mixed. Although there was an increase in the respondents who thought Congress paid a "good deal" of attention (from 10.8 to 16.7 percent), those who answered "some" fell from 57.3 to 36.3 per cent while the negative "not much" choice increased from 31.9 per cent for the government to 47 per cent for Congress.

Table 5-7
District Respondent's Perceived Effect on Congress

	DISTRICT
I don't think Congress cares much what people like me think.	
Agree	59.2
Disagree	40.8
Over the years, how much attention do you feel the Congress pays to what people think when it decides to do--a good deal, some, or not much?	
A good deal	16.7
Some	36.3
Not much	47.0

Responses to these specific questions were not solicited by the NES Survey in 1984, so there are no equivalent data from which comparisons with the district survey can be made. It would appear, however, that district respondents were not particularly persuaded that they were any more effective with the Congress as an institution then they were with the government in general. The slight difference that can be noted may be recognition of the fact that Congress is an elected body, and it can be readily observed at nearly any stage of its deliberative function acknowledging public attitudes. Its final product, however, is often perceived as wanting because of its apparent inability to resolve outstanding problems in a timely fashion, hence the negative attitude.

Trusting Congress. Trusting Congress is no easier for

respondents to the district survey than it is for them to trust the government. As a matter of fact, the numbers are so similar (Table 5-8) that one might assume that the respondents made little distinction between the government and the Congress. In each case, about a quarter of the sample believed they can be trusted to do what is right most of the time. Government is slightly more trustworthy at 27.9 per cent as against 25.4 per cent for the Congress. Government was adjudged to be trustworthy some of the time by 64.9 per cent of the respondents, while Congress prevailed at this level in the minds of 65.3 per cent of those polled.

Table 5-8
Comparing Trust in Government and the Congress

	DISTRICT
How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington, D.C. to do what is right?	
Always	.03
Most of the time	27.9
Some of the time	64.8
Never	6.9
How much of the time do you think you can trust Congress to do what is right?	
Always	.03
Most of the time	25.4
Some of the time	65.3
Never	9.0

Is it reasonable to assume that no distinction is made between government and Congress by respondents answering these questions? Probably so. When one considers the bases for distinguishing between the two it is clear to see that there are more similarities than differences. Therefore, it

would be reasonable to believe that one should merit no greater trust than the other.

To begin the process of comparison, fundamental considerations are disposed of immediately. That is, do they look different? What most of us see of congress and the government is presented to us in television images. Congress can be observed in daily operation on C-Span, the television channel reserved for that purpose. Now that both the Senate and House of Representatives are being telecast, the physical features of the Congress are available for everyone to view. Government, as well, has long been seen by television viewers, especially those who watch network newscasts. According to the Television Information Office contemporary television viewers watch the news on an average of four hours and thirty-five minutes each week, while a recent Roper Organization Poll reveals that Americans get 64 per cent of their news from television (Troy, 1986). In either case, the viewer sees nameless faces, framed in institutional settings, talking about political or economic issues that are surprisingly unchanging from period to period.

When one visits Washington, D.C., and surveys the institutions that make up government, one building above all others stands out as the symbol of the American federal system. In this context, The Capitol, home of Congress, is

recognized by all as the United States Government rather than being distinguished as Congress. Except to the discerning observer, everything one sees of Congress and government, whether on television or in situs, tends to blend the two making them virtually indistinguishable.

A comparison of Congress and government must also include a consideration of their functions. Clearly, their fundamental responsibilities in the process of governing are different, one creating the policy that must be administered by the other. However, the casual observer of the total process has few clues to show him with any clarity the lines of demarcation between the two. Administrators are heavily involved in the legislative process as they attend hearings, support or oppose proposals, lend advice and provide information. Legislators, by the same token, can frequently be observed in the center of administrative affairs as they engage in their legitimate oversight function. These cross-cutting functions tend to obscure the differences between Congress and government, and generally confirm the perception that Congress and government are one and the same.

A third point of comparison is the nature of the relationship between the constituent and the two entities. Congress, on the one hand, makes laws that affect the individual while government, on the other hand, is

responsible for their execution. It is Congress that raises taxes, while one pays those taxes to the Internal Revenue Service. In both cases, these functions, which are of such great importance to the individual, are performed by institutions, and often without his even being aware of their happening. The individual is no closer to one than the other; he perceives little difference between the two; he impacts no more on one than the other. In short, there is small distinction in the individuals' relationship with one over the other. His relationship can only be defined in terms of that abstract connection which exists between an anonymous subject and his government.

The respondent's expressed trust in Congress and trust in government are so similar, then, because he fails to make a significant distinction between the two. They look alike, act alike and relate to the individual in similar fashion. For all intents and purposes, they are as alike as two peas in a pod.

Congress at work: Rating its performance. It comes as no surprise at this point that respondents to the District Survey do not enthusiastically honor the Congress for a job well done. They have little belief in their own efficacy with Congress and nearly 75 per cent of the sample has little or no trust in the institution. Given this high level of cynicism it is small wonder that 65.8 per cent

disapprove of the way Congress does its job. These respondents have all had casework experience with the member's office and because of this it was anticipated that they would express a higher rate of approval for the member. When compared to those respondents of the NES study, individuals who have not had casework experience, the pattern that was earlier observed, wherein district constituents express less approval than the general public, prevails to about the same degree of intensity. The 1984 NES respondents have a 60.4 per cent approval rating of Congress in the way it does its job, but the district respondents approve at about half the rate, 34.2 per cent. By the same token, about twice as many casework recipients think government is doing a poor job at solving the important problems of the day (Table 5-9).

(Table 5-9)
Comparative Approval Ratings of Congress and the Government by all Respondents

	1984 NES	District
In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress handles its job?		
Approve	60.4	34.2
Disapprove	39.6	65.8
How good of a job is government doing in dealing with the most important problem the country faces today?		
A good job	15.7	1.6
A fair job	45.7	23.6
A poor job	38.6	74.8
How good of a job is the Congress doing in dealing with the most important problem the country faces today?		
A good job	----	1.9
A fair job	----	22.4
A poor job	----	75.7

Contrary to expectations, casework recipients have a lower opinion of the government and the congress, and the way that each handles its job. In general, district respondents have an attitude that can only be described as negative. The reasons for this are not clear, although the possibility exists that because of the higher level of sophistication of district respondents they are more particular, more discerning, and less willing to take government and congress on faith.

CHAPTER VI

THE EFFECT OF CASEWORK ON THE PUBLIC'S ATTITUDE ABOUT THEIR CONGRESSMAN

Introduction

The relationship that develops between the constituent and the member in the course of doing casework results from fairly direct interaction. Frequently, the member himself gets involved with the details of a case and personally intercedes on behalf of his constituent. More often, however, a staff person is assigned the task of representing the client before the agencies of government. In either event, the constituent is made to feel that the congressman has a personal interest in resolving the problem at hand. The intended result of cultivating a close and dependent relationship is securing the lasting approval of the constituent so that when election time rolls around he can be counted on to support the members's reelection effort. Members of congress believe this to be true, and it is part of the responsibility of this study to determine if it is so.

It was hypothesized earlier that casework would help develop

within the public a positive attitude about government, the Congress and the member. We have found no evidence that casework makes us feel better about the government or about Congress. Chapter VI will review the survey responses as they relate to the congressman and anticipate a different result.

Does Anybody Up There Care?

Does the member of Congress really care about the welfare of the people back home? Apparently, yes. Or at least district constituents perceive that their representative is attentive and cares what they think. The movement in attitudes from negative about government and Congress to positive about the individual member is impressive. It is not wholly unexpected, though, that this should be so. Earlier studies have revealed this anomaly (e.g. Parker and Davidson, 1979; Keefe, 1980).

Over 64 per cent of the district respondents believe the member cares what they think (Table 6-1). This is a significant increase over the 40.8 per cent who felt that Congress cared how they felt. Most impressive, however, is the fact that those who believed that their member paid attention to how they felt when he votes increased to 51.6 per cent from only 16.7 per cent of those who thought Congress paid attention to what they think. This information was confirmed by a third query that asked if

they thought the member would be helpful if they were to take a problem to him for help with its resolution. The responses showed only minor variation.

Table 6-1
Perception of Constituent Efficacy

	1984 NES	District
I don't think my congressman cares what people like me think.		
Agree	--	35.9
Disagree	--	64.1
How much attention do you feel that (the member) pays to what people think when he decides to vote--a good deal of attention, some, or not much?		
A good deal	--	51.6
Some	--	37.0
Not much	--	11.4

How trustworthy is the member? It is clear to see that district respondents view their member in a significantly different way than they do Congress or the government. It is rather remarkable that 14.3 per cent feel that their representative can always be trusted to do what is right. This is the equivalent of saying that he is never wrong, and given the best of intentions, that is a difficult role to maintain. Those who say that he can always be trusted, or that he can be trusted most of the time to do what is right, amount to 70.1 per cent of the sample. This is just .7 per cent more than the number of cases that were documented as

having been resolved successfully. In other words, nearly the same number of people trust the member as were successfully treated by him, according to his calculations (Table 6-2).

Table 6-2
Comparing Trust in Government, Congress, and the Member

	DISTRICT
How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington, D.C. to do what is right?	
Always	.03
Most of the time	27.9
Some of the time	64.8
Never	6.9
How much of the time do you think you can trust Congress to do what is right?	
Always	.03
Most of the time	25.4
Some of the time	65.3
Never	9.0
How much of the time do you think you can trust Representative (the member) to do what is right?	
Always	14.3
Most of the time	55.8
Some of the time	23.7
Never	6.2

There are different dynamics at work in the development of trust for a congressman. Contributing to the growth of this attitude is the fact that the member is an individual, and can be observed in the performance of his duties. The representative, in this context, is not an anonymous member

of a group of 535 people, but someone who has a name, dimension, and office. He is easily identifiable and accessible. Inasmuch as he can be dealt with as an individual, he is judged more by what he does for the constituent than on the many issues on which he must take a stand. Congress and the government are criticized for policy positions, but the individual member is more often credited for the personal assistance rendered to constituents than faulted for the occasional errant vote cast in the performance of his legislative duties. Finally, providing constituent service has a tendency to establish a personal relationship with the person who receives the help, and that, of course, is an important ingredient of trust.

A second reason the member comes in for a higher level of trust than the Congress or the government is because district constituents have been conditioned by the representative to think of them as major reasons for what is wrong with the system. Running against Congress is a typical campaign technique employed by virtually every candidate who ever challenged an incumbent. It is also a well-documented phenomenon (Mayhew, 1974; Fenno, 1975; Cover, 1977; Jacobsen, 1983). This steady drumfire of criticism by participants in the political process tends to lend a good deal of credence to the proposition, and over the years repetition has done its work. While the individual member is denigrating the institution of which he

is a working member, the inference is often not so subtly made that he is doing everything within his power to fight it, correct it, or improve it in some way or other. This establishes him on a higher plane in the eyes of his constituents and demonstrates his determination to do what is right, thus making it easier for them to place their trust in him.

Trust, then, is a characteristic that seems to depend as much upon factors of illusion as it does substance. Congress and government, by dint of repetition, have been sold in campaign rhetoric as being untrustworthy. The member is commonly adjudged to be trustworthy because of the nature of his service to his district and not necessarily by how he votes. Further, Congress is criticized for policy outcomes while the member will be criticized for failing to solve the constituent's problem even though he is a contributor to the policy process. Congress and the member are being measured on two separate scales and in either case the determinants are not wholly rational.

Performance: Rating of the member. Even when responding to questions about the performance of the member, and recording very high ratings of approval, the respondents to the district survey could not match the high levels of approbation revealed in the responses to the NES studies (Table 6-3). District respondents favored their member with

an 80.2 per cent approval rating relative to the way he does his job. Given the fact that only 56.7 per cent of his constituents believed their case was resolved successfully, an 80.2 per cent approval rating is high, indeed. Surprisingly, however, it is a full 8.0 per cent below the 1984 NES responses. That is to say, that after having been given special treatment by their member in the resolution of some problem, the district respondents still could not muster as much approval of their representative as the general public could after having had no contact with the member.

Table 6-3
All Respondents' Approval Rating of the Member

	1984 NES	District
In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way (the member) does his job?		
Approve	88.2	80.2
Disapprove	11.8	19.8
Do you know anyone else who has contacted the member's office?		
Yes	17.8	41.8
No	82.2	58.2
Was this person satisfied with the response?		
Very	79.9	54.9
Somewhat	11.2	28.7
Not at all	8.9	16.4
If you had a problem (or another problem) that the Congressman could do something about, do you think he would be very helpful, somewhat helpful, or not very helpful to you?		
Very helpful	31.9	51.2
Somewhat	55.8	32.3
Not very	11.8	16.5

Table 6-3 illustrates the fact that more than twice as many district respondents than NES respondents know someone who had previously contacted the member for help with a problem. This might indicate that many people who had contacted the member had been referred by someone else. Whatever the reason, this figure seems quite appropriate, inasmuch as all district respondents had experienced casework.

For the first time, in the responses to whether or not the member would be helpful, the district sample is more optimistic than that of the general public. A little over 30 per cent of the public felt their representative would be helpful while over 50 per cent of the district constituents thought he would be. This difference in attitude may be explained by the casework variable. Clearly, if one had his personal problem solved by his representative, he would likely believe that the member would be helpful again, and if one had not had that experience, his lack of reference would probably lead him to a more benign response.

Another remarkable feature of these figures is that only 54.9 per cent of the district respondents said that the person to whom they referred had been very satisfied with the response from the member, whereas, about 80 per cent of those recorded in the 1984 NES study were judged to have been very satisfied. From this information, it would appear that not only are the inhabitants of the district more negative than the general public, but the representative of the district was less successful in satisfying her constituents than were other members of Congress.

To further probe this phenomenon, scales were once again developed to draw a composite picture of respondent attitudes about their representative. Responses to the following questions from the two surveys were analyzed and

plotted on equivalent scales and then compared to each other.

1984 NES Survey

How satisfied was respondent with response from incumbent?

How helpful would House incumbent be with another problem?

Does respondent approve or disapprove of incumbent's handling of job?

District Survey

How good of a job is (your congressman) doing in dealing with the important problems of the nation today?

How much attention do you feel that _____ pays to what people think when he decides how to vote?

How satisfied were you with _____'s response?

If you contacted _____'s office for help with a problem, was your problem solved?

Was your case resolved positively or negatively?

These questions served as the basis for the scales in the following comparison.

Figure 6-4
A Comparison of
Scales Representing Attitudes About Member Performance

My representative's performance in office can be rated as:	1984 NES	Dist
0 (Extremely satisfactory)	43.6	20.8
1 (Satisfactory)	33.1	31.2
2 (Unsatisfactory)	17.0	22.0
3 (Extremely unsatisfactory)	6.2	26.0

Once again the tendency for District respondents to demonstrate a higher degree of displeasure and a lower degree of approval for their member than the general public is clearly illustrated. Less than half of the district replies indicate approval while five times as many are dissatisfied.

Perhaps the reason for the negative attitude of the district inhabitants is because they are actually being unsatisfactorily served by the member. However, this doesn't seem likely for two reasons. In the first place, over 80 per cent of his constituents approve of the way he is doing his job. Secondly, it was stated earlier that scholars have thought that between 10 per cent and 40 per cent of all cases are resolved successfully (Gellhorn, 1966; Johannes, 1979). It was stated in the present instance that by the member's accounting, 69.4 per cent of all cases were satisfactorily resolved. When the constituents were asked their opinion, they said that the successful case resolution figure was 56.7 per cent. In both cases, the figure was significantly higher than a supposed national average. Given this, one would have expected to find that others who had contacted the member would have been satisfied with his response to a greater degree than the 54.9 per cent indicated in Table 6-3.

Maintaining their garrulous nature, then, respondents to the

district survey continue to demonstrate their negative attitude about government and the Congress. They do not believe that either does a good job in dealing with problems of the day, nor do they approve of the way either does its job. They relent, somewhat, when rating the performance of the member. Although not as generous with their praise as constituents from other districts, they nevertheless give their member an 80.2 per cent approval mark. When ranked on a scale from 0 to 3, only 52 per cent can be measured as satisfied to any degree with his performance. The continuation of this negative pattern is difficult to understand, and requires further discussion.

Performance: A Comparison. A review of the District Survey responses to questions relating to how the individual feels about how government, Congress and the member do their jobs reveals a wide chasm between how the people feel about the government and Congress and how they feel about the member. It is as though there were no relationship whatsoever between the member and the government of which he is a moving part. Nor is the difference insignificant. The disparity is phenomenal.

When asked how good of a job they do in dealing with the major problems of the day 1.6 per cent say the government does a good job, 1.9 per cent say the Congress does a good job, but 47.1 per cent say the member does a good job (Table 6-5).

Table 6-5

Comparative Performance Ratings by District Respondents

	Gov	Congress	Member
How good of a job are they doing in dealing with the most important problem the country faces today?			
A good job	1.6	1.9	47.1
A fair job	23.6	22.4	39.7
A poor job	74.8	75.8	13.2
In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way they do their job?			
Approve	38.0	34.2	80.2
Disapprove	62.0	65.8	19.8

Representatives to the Congress of the United States have skillfully and successfully separated themselves from that body, retaining all the benefits that derive from membership while avoiding the stigma of belonging. It is no small feat to convince an otherwise generally astute constituency that even though one is part and parcel of the institution he, nevertheless, can claim no share of the responsibility for its actions. He has encouraged this ambivalence, and by so doing, has insulated himself from the wrath of those he represents.

Summary

Professors Parker and Davidson, in 1979, and Keefe, in 1980 discovered in their research that the member is consistently held in much higher esteem than are either the government or

the Congress. The findings of this study do not refute that point. There appears to be no evidence here, however, that casework is responsible for that higher rate of approval. Members of the general population, those who have not experienced casework attention, look on their representative somewhat more approvingly. For this reason, one could almost make the argument that casework is the cause of the general disapprobation heaped on government and Congress by the respondents to the District Survey, but that idea seems more spurious than serious. Whatever the reason, it is clear that the respondents to the two surveys register significantly different attitudes about most things. In the following chapter a closer examination of the District respondents will be undertaken.

CHAPTER VII

DOES CASEWORK REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Introduction

In Chapter V the effect of casework on the public's attitude about government was considered. It was shown that a great discrepancy exists between the attitudes of the respondents to the NES Survey of 1984 and those of the district inhabitants, all of whom had casework experience in their representatives's office. When compared to the 1984 NES Survey, 18.5 per cent more of the district responses indicated that they didn't feel as though they had any say about what government does, while about 20 per cent more felt that government does not care what they think or pay attention to the way they feel. Nearly 28 percent fewer District respondents than respondents to the 1984 NES Survey felt like elections make the government pay attention to what people think (Table 5-1).

The development of attitudes about the Congress was also considered in Chapter V. It was anticipated that a successful casework experience would impact on the

individual in such a way that he would develop a positive attitude about the Congress. Responses to the District Survey showed that the institution is held in relatively low regard by more than 75 per cent of the people, and that nearly 66 per cent disapprove of the way it does its job. As for the development of any feeling of efficacy, 83.3 per cent of the respondents felt that they had little or no influence on Congress. Those who responded to the NES Survey, however, were considerably more optimistic about their relationship with the Congress.

In Chapter VI it was pointed out that respondents in the district, those who had experienced casework attention from the member, gave their representative a lower performance rating by 8 per cent than did those responding to the NES surveys. When all three of the questions dealing with performance were scaled the rating dropped further to reveal a differential of nearly 30 per cent (Table 6-5). It is understood that performance must be judged from a broader perspective than mere casework activity. Positions taken by the member on issues of the day are also influenced by factors such as party allegiance, ideology, and integrity. However, it is easily within the realm of reality to suppose that the quality of constituent service a member provides is also an important factor impacting on the way constituents feel about their representatives. Indeed, most members of Congress believe passionately that this is true, and because

they do, have provided the foundation for this study.

The information derived from a comparison of these two surveys relative to the government, the Congress and the member, and measured in terms of efficacy, trust and performance suggests that the hypothesis of this study is not supported. It was expected that casework experience would provide the basis for a more efficacious attitude in the constituent, but relatively high negative responses indicate otherwise. In the matter of trust, it is clear that the member is held in higher esteem than Congress or the government, and when asked to register approval or disapproval of the performance of each, the member is obviously in a different category than the other two.

At this point it is appropriate to extract the sub-group of case-experienced respondents within the NES Survey and compare their attitudes with those who have not had the same experience. This comparison should generally agree with the pattern noted above, which was observed by comparing District Survey responses to 1984 NES responses in Chapters V and VI. If this should happen it would tend to strengthen the validity of the information we derived from the earlier comparison. In other words, we should now expect to see that NES case-experienced respondents are less confident of their effect on government, less trusting in government and more approving of their representative. If, in these

comparisons, other anomalous patterns are observed, additional questions will be raised which must be addressed.

In addition, the District Survey respondents will be divided into sub-groups for further analysis. A division will be made by matching responses from those who said their case was positively resolved and those who said theirs was not. The point of this comparison is to examine the effect of negative and positive case resolution on the attitudes of the constituent as they relate to the government, the Congress and the member. The balance of Chapter VII will be devoted to a discussion of these comparisons.

Political activity. The 1984 survey produced information that is difficult to account for. Upon inquiring about their political habits, respondents who had no casework experience were shown to be more, not less, politically active and aware than those who had made the acquaintance of the member's office through the constituent service function. On the surface, it is not reasonable to believe that constituents inexperienced with constituent service should know the names of candidates for office more often than do those who have had some relationship with the member's office, but the NES Survey shows that to be the result in 1984. Furthermore, the inexperienced respondents had attended rallies about twice as often and worked for candidates half again as much as those with case experience.

Table 7-1
NES Survey Questions: Political Activity

		CASE EXP	NO CASE EXP
Do you remember the names of the candidates for Congress?			
1984	Yes	68.4	76.6
	No	31.6	23.4
Dist	Yes	63.0	----
	No	37.0	----
Did you work for one of the parties or candidates during the campaign?			
1984	Yes	8.5	12.9
	No	91.5	87.1
Dist	Yes	43.6	----
	No	56.4	----
Have you gone to any political meetings, rallies, dinners or things like that?			
1984	Yes	10.3	21.0
	No	89.7	79.0
Dist	Yes	67.4	----
	No	32.6	----

Political efficacy. In 1984, the results of the survey show that those without case experience felt that their impact on government was greater than those who had dealings with the government through their congressman. With the exception of the last question in Table 7-2, non-experienced respondents felt more certain that the individual makes a difference. They believed to a greater degree that government pays attention to what they think, and that they can exercise their opinions effectively through the electoral process. Unexpectedly, perceptions of political efficacy do not seem

to strengthen as a result of closer relationships with the congressman's office.

Table 7-2
NES Survey Questions: Political Efficacy

		CASE EXP	NO CASE EXP
How much attention do you think the government pays to what people think?			
1984	A good deal	21.4	24.1
	Some	51.4	58.6
	Not much	24.3	17.2
Dist	A good deal	10.8	----
	Some	57.3	----
	Not much	31.9	----
How much do elections make government pay attention?			
1984	A good deal	44.3	55.2
	Some	38.6	32.8
	Not much	14.3	12.1
Dist	A good deal	24.1	----
	Some	56.2	----
	Not much	19.7	----
People like me don't have any say about government.			
1984	Agree	21.4	22.4
	Disagree	74.3	77.6
Dist	Agree	51.7	----
	Disagree	48.3	----
I don't think public officials care much what I think.			
1984	Agree	32.9	24.1
	Disagree	64.3	75.9

Trust in Government. Considering the matter of trust in government, it is apparent that respondents in 1984 are loathe to admit to having much. The survey shows that the negatives outweigh the positives, with significant

differences emerging in attitudes about crooks in government and the control of big interests. In 1984, twice as many non-case as case experienced respondents believed there were hardly any crooks running the government, but a full 10 per cent more believed that the government was run for the benefit of big interests. These findings are somewhat contradictory and provide little direction for the study. It is important to note, however, the continuing and significant differential in the attitudes of the NES Survey respondents and those in the district. District respondents are consistently more cynical than the rest of the country. In general, however, one might be persuaded that about half the people in the country have difficulty in finding anything trustworthy about the government regardless of where they live or whether or not they have had occasion to deal with it on a first-hand basis.

Table 7-3
NES Survey Questions: Measuring Trust

		CASE EXP	NO CASE EXP
How much of the time can you trust the government to do what is right?			
1984	Always	2.6	2.4
	Most of the time	41.0	45.5
	Some of the time	53.0	52.0
	Never	3.4	0.1
Dist	Always	.3	----
	Most of the time	27.9	----
	Some of the time	64.9	----
	Never	6.9	----
Are there many crooks running the government?			
1984	Hardly any	9.4	18.9
	Not many	54.7	58.2
	Quite a few	35.9	22.1
Dist	Hardly any	7.6	----
	Not many	42.7	----
	Quite a few	49.7	----
Is government run by and for a few big interests, or for the benefit of all?			
1984	For big interests	38.0	48.0
	Benefit of all	62.0	52.0
Dist	Few big interests	74.7	----
	Benefit of all	25.3	----

Performance rating. The results of the 1984 NES Survey generally support other measurements of attitudes that have been executed periodically which show that constituents have a much higher regard for the way their individual representative does his job as opposed to the way Congress does its job (Table 7-4). Although there was very little difference between the way case experienced and non-case

experienced respondents reacted to the questions, the numbers show that those with no case experience gave a higher approval rating to their congressman than did the other group. This suggests that casework does not necessarily work to the advantage of the member.

Table 7-4
NES Survey Questions: Constituent Approval

		CASE EXP	NO CASE EXP
Do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job?			
1984	Approve	57.1	55.5
	Disapprove	42.0	43.7
Dist	Approve	34.2	----
	Disapprove	65.8	----
Do you approve of the way your representative has been handling his job?			
1984	Approve	80.9	86.4
	Disapprove	18.3	13.6
Dist	Approve	80.2	----
	Disapprove	19.8	----

Considering The Quality of Casework

Little has been said to this point about the quality of casework. So far, consideration has been limited to the mere fact of casework. That is, how does casework impact on attitudes? However, all casework is not alike. One might surmise that there are good casework experiences and bad casework experiences. How does the quality of the experience relate to attitude development?

In Table 7-5, District responses are compared with those in the district who claim positive resolution of their cases and those who claim negative resolution. In the first instance, it can be observed that there is no significant difference between the way each group feels about its impact of government. Apparently, the result of the casework effort is not thought to be relevant to the concept of "government." The responses are quite negative, but rather consistent with each other.

Table 7-5
Quality of Case Resolution: Impact on Perception of Constituent Efficacy Relative To The Government

		Dist	Pos Res	Neg Res
People like me don't have any say about what the government does.				
	Agree	51.7	54.1	47.6
	Disagree	48.3	45.9	52.4
I don't think the government cares much what people like me think.				
	Agree	61.1	63.5	61.9
	Disagree	38.9	36.5	38.1
Over the years, how much attention do you feel the government pays to what people think when it decides what to do?				
	A good deal	10.8	8.1	9.5
	Some	57.3	59.5	52.4
	Not much	31.9	32.4	38.1
How much do you feel that having elections makes the government pay attention to what the people think?				
	A good deal	24.1	33.8	23.8
	Some	56.2	51.4	38.1
	Not much	19.7	14.9	38.1

The constituent makes a correlation, however, between his case and his feelings of efficacy as they relate to Congress. In Table 7-6, he seems to realize that he is dealing with the Congress when he places his case in the hands of the member's office. It's not a strong recognition, but about 10 per cent more of those constituents whose cases were negatively resolved have lesser feelings of efficacy than do the other respondents.

It is when the constituent with the negative case is asked about his Congressman that he vents his spleen. Twice as many (57.1 per cent vs. 28.4 per cent) believe their representative has let them down. This is the first indication that anything related to casework affects the constituent's attitude. The information in Table 7-6 clearly indicates that a negative case resolution makes the constituent feel less efficacious.

Table 7-6
Quality of Case Resolution: Impact on Perception of Constituent Efficacy Relative To The Congress

	Dist	Pos Res	Neg Res
I don't think Congress cares much what people like me think.			
Agree	59.2	56.8	66.7
Disagree	40.8	43.2	33.3
Over the years, how much attention do you feel the Congress pays to what people think when it decides what to do?			
A good deal	16.7	16.2	9.5
Not much	47.0	45.9	57.1
Some	36.3	37.8	33.3
I don't think my Congressman cares what people like me think.			
Agree	35.9	28.4	57.1
Disagree	64.1	71.6	42.9
How much attention do you feel that your Congressman pays to what people think when he decides how to vote?			
Not much	11.4	9.5	28.6
Some	37.0	29.7	28.6
A good deal	51.6	60.8	42.9

The same pattern can be observed in Table 7-7. The constituent with the negatively resolved case reacts less strongly to the question regarding trust in government. Government does not appear to share as much of the onus of a bad case experience. Congress, as well as the member, on the other hand, fall precipitously from grace. Those respondents with negative cases who feel that Congress can be trusted to do what is right always or most of the time

amount to only 9.6 per cent as opposed to about 30 per cent of those with positive case experiences. When asked to approve or disapprove of the way the member does her job a full 25.9 per cent more disapproved.

Table 7-7
Quality of Case Resolution: Impact on Constituent Attitudes

	Dist	Pos Res	Neg Res
How much of the time do you think you can trust the government to do what is right?			
Always	.03	----	----
Most of the time	27.9	37.8	23.8
Some of the time	64.8	58.1	76.2
Never	6.9	4.1	----
How much of the time do you think you can trust Congress to do right?			
Always	.03	----	4.8
Most of the time	25.4	29.7	4.8
Some of the time	65.3	63.5	81.0
Never	9.0	6.8	9.5
How much of the time do you think you can trust (your representative) to do what is right?			
Always	14.3	16.2	14.3
Most of the time	55.8	59.5	38.1
Some of the time	23.7	20.3	28.6
Never	6.2	4.1	19.0
Do you approve or disapprove of the way the government serves the nation's interest?			
Approve	38.0	43.2	28.6
Disapprove	62.0	56.8	71.4
In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress handles its job?			
Approve	34.2	39.2	28.6
Disapprove	65.8	60.8	71.4
In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way (your representative) does his job?			
Approve	80.2	87.8	61.9
Disapprove	19.8	12.2	38.1

Summary

The most noticeable thing about the comparison of responses from case experienced and non-case experienced constituents is that the trend in the 1984 results generally compare to that observed in the District responses. It was anticipated that the replies of respondents to the NES Survey would reveal that constituents with casework experience would feel more efficacious, have more trust in government, have a higher regard for their representative, and have more political experience than the general public. However, the 1984 responses do not support this hypothesis. In that survey those respondents with no case experience were more politically active and they recorded higher levels of confidence in their effect on government. They were slightly more trusting of government and were more approving of their congressman.

Another notable characteristic about these figures is that when compared to case experienced respondents from the NES Survey, the District respondents are shown to be considerably less enthralled with government. Those individuals in the District have a significantly less optimistic attitude about their effectiveness in the political process; they trust government less; they have a lower rate of approval of their representative. At the same time, they are considerably more active in politics. This is the same pattern that was revealed in Chapters V and VI.

When compared to any sub-group of the NES surveys, the District respondents are more cynical about the whole affair. This might indicate that the District respondents have been conditioned in a way that is uncommon to the general population.

A recent study of political corruption in the same state in which our district lies shows a similar pattern of cynicism in the general population that appears in the attitudes of District respondents (Myers, 1985). Both Myers and the District Survey show constituents within the district to be considerably less trusting of the government than the general population as measured by the 1984 NES Survey. In addition, it appears that respondents to the District Survey, all of whom have had casework experience at the hands of their representative, are more distrustful of government than are those members of the general population within the district as measured by Myers (Table 7-8).

Table 7-8
Trust in Government: A comparison

	NES 1984	MYERS	DIST
How much of the time can you trust the government to do what is right?			
Never	1.2	3.0	6.9
Some of the time	53.8	52.0	64.8
Most of the time	41.2	41.0	27.9
Always	3.7	3.0	.3
Is government run by and for a few big interests, or for the benefit of all?			
Few big interests	41.4	64.0	74.6
Benefit of all	58.6	20.0	25.3
Are there many crooks running the government?			
Hardly any	33.4	12.0	7.6
Not many	51.6	53.0	42.7
Quite a few	15.0	35.0	49.7

The trend exposed by these responses seems to suggest that the general population of the state in question is more cynical than the general population of the United States. Further, those respondents from the District, all of whom have had experience with constituent service, are more cynical than those in the state who have had no experience. By the same token, those case experienced respondents to the 1984 NES Survey are more cynical than 1984 NES respondents with no case experience.

From the evidence presented by the 1984 NES Survey and the survey of District constituents with casework experience it

would appear that casework, per se, does not make a positive difference in the way respondents feel about the government, the Congress or the member.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

In this final chapter, it is important to be reminded of the purpose of the study. The reasons for the initiation of research into constituent service will be enumerated and discussed and the hypotheses will be restated. In addition, the methodology will be reexamined and limitations of the research noted. Finally, a summary of the findings of the research will be presented with supporting tables and conclusions will be presented.

A Review

Purpose of the study. Constituent service, or casework, has long been an accepted responsibility of members of Congress. Although there was no official recognition of it at the outset of our government in 1789, it soon became an important part of the workday of senators and representatives alike. Constituents who had grievances to lodge before the government or demands to make upon the treasury naturally looked to their elected officials for guidance and help (Smith, 1962). Throughout the years it

has been a burdensome thing for Congress to contend with because of the lack of resources it has had at its disposal. However, various congressional reorganization acts have increased staff significantly, and additional supporting tools have been provided to accommodate the burgeoning volume of demands that are made upon the legislative branch.

The significant growth of casework in Congress has stimulated a controversy among scholars and practitioners relative to its impact and desirability, and although there is little likelihood that any important move will be made to change the status quo, there is little doubt that change is desirable. The cost of doing casework in Congress has been estimated at $40,000,000 a year and trending upwards (Breslin, 1977). One can observe with little effort that approximately half of the employees in a congressional office devote their time to casework, and considering that there are nearly 15,000 staff members on Capitol Hill the expense is apparent (Davidson and Oleszek, 1985).

Another argument for modification of constituent service is that it detracts from the fundamental responsibility of Congress, that is, legislating. Critics suggest that instead of paying attention to their legislative responsibilities, members are spending a great share of their productive time doing favors for their constituents. This is not what was intended by the Framers, nor is it in

the interest of the country in general. The special interests of individuals should not consume such an inordinate amount of the time and attention of a representative of a district or state (Davidson, 1969).

This argument relates to a third criticism. Only those constituents who are sufficiently aware of the member's office, or who are knowledgeable in the ways of the political system, can benefit by casework, which means that some are more represented than others, a distinctly undemocratic facet of our democracy. Casework, then, can be represented as a discriminatory activity which favors the elite, that is, the educated and the wealthy, and works to the disadvantage of the majority.

On the other side of the discussion, proponents of casework, primarily the congressmen who engage in the practice, maintain that it is fundamental to the concept of representation. Where else would one expect a constituent to go with a problem? The member was elected to help his constituents, and that means casework by his definition. Members of Congress also derive a great deal of personal satisfaction from helping resolve constituent problems. It is an opportunity for direct contact with individual constituents and a chance to see his input yield distinct results.

Finally, a majority of members believe that by doing casework they are in some way cementing the electoral connection between themselves and the individual voter. A favor done is a vote cast. This is a powerful motivating factor and most persuasive in the debate about doing away with casework. Above all else, members of Congress are concerned about reelection (Mayhew, 1979) and any effort to diminish their ability to achieve it by limiting the constituent service function will be met by stubborn opposition.

Given the debate about the desirability of having the casework function in the congressional office, it was determined to attempt to ascertain whether or not casework actually does improve a member's standing with those constituents whom he has helped, or whether the concept has been overstated. In addition, the purpose of this study is to determine if casework affects the constituent's attitude in a favorable way about Congress the institution and his feelings about the American political system.

The Hypotheses. If, in the real world of congressional politics, it was as members believe and we expected, that positive casework confirmed electoral support, then people who have had the casework experience would prove to have a higher feeling of approval for their representative than a constituent who had not had the casework experience.

It was further hypothesized that a constituent who had received successful casework attention from the member would likely have a more efficacious feeling about his representative. It might be expected that an individual who had taken a problem to his congressman and had it resolved would feel that he had made an impact on the bureaucracy, that the member cared about his feelings and paid attention to his needs. Then, it was hypothesized, a successful case resolution would engender trust of the member in the satisfied constituent.

Admittedly, the member is an individual, and as such has a different kind of relationship with the constituent, but it also seems reasonable that a system which provides for redress of grievances would be held in high esteem by those who are governed by it, and especially so if those grievances were resolved in a matter wholly satisfactory to the aggrieved. It was hypothesized that a member of Congress has a unique opportunity to help his constituents feel more efficacious about the political system by satisfying their needs through the casework function. It follows that they would, therefore, develop greater trust in government and view it more favorably than those individuals who had never enjoyed the casework experience.

It was further hypothesized that the Congress of the United States, being the institution that is universally recognized

as the embodiment of representation in our system, should come in for its fair share of approbation from satisfied constituents. It was reasoned that if the member could expect certain rewards from the casework activity, then the Congress, of which he is a prominent member, would be more trusted by the case experienced constituent and would be granted a higher level of approval than might be expected from the non-experienced person. Finally, it was hypothesized that if the constituent could interface successfully with the institution of congress, through his member, he would more likely feel effective with Congress than would the non-case experienced constituent.

The methodology. To test the hypotheses, actual case files from a congressional district were secured and the subjects were mailed a questionnaire. Their responses were compared to those respondents to the 1984 National Election Studies representing non-case experienced individuals.

In order to strengthen the comparisons, case-experienced respondents within the National Election Studies were matched against non case-experienced respondents in the same study. These results were then compared to the responses to the District Questionnaire. It was anticipated that trends observed in both comparisons would be similar, lending added vitality to the examination.

Project limitations. It should be repeated here that an important element of this study was the unique opportunity that was afforded by having access to the files of a congressional office. Access to special information was thereby gained that provided insights which could hardly have been secured in any other way. However, the limitations of this study must be acknowledged once again. The need for a more in-depth study of the constituent groups is fairly obvious. One course of action might be to compare the responses to selected questions from every NES survey that has been conducted since the beginning of the project in 1950. Developing and continuing patterns of public opinion would be much more easily interpreted with a broader scope of information.

It is also recognized that basing a study of this nature on the information gleaned from only one congressional district is presumptuous. A second strategy, therefore, for gaining a better understanding of this problem would be to conduct this same kind of research using records from more congressional districts. Ideally, 435 congressional districts should be studied. However, the expense of such an undertaking, even if permission were to be granted from all members of the House, would be considerable, and certainly beyond the capability of this effort.

In any event, the 1984 NES Survey is only one year older

than the District Survey and provides the most recent set of figures relevant to the purposes of this study. They are considered to be the most valid data available and the summary and conclusions drawn from this research are based on that assumption.

Summary of findings. When responses to the District Survey were compared to responses to the National Election Studies it was revealed that the individual member of Congress is held in considerably higher regard than either the Congress or the American political system (Table 8-1). In all categories, efficacy, trust and approval, the member of Congress is more highly regarded than the institution of Congress or the American Political System in general.

In the matter of efficacy, respondents to the District Survey feel they have more access and impact on the member than on either Congress or the government by a large margin. Over 70 per cent trust the member as opposed to 25.7 per cent for the government. As for performance, 80.2 per cent of the respondents approve of the way the member does his job compared to 34.2 per cent for the Congress and 38 per cent for the government.

This result was not altogether unexpected. It is a phenomenon that has been observed many times over the years (McCloskey, 1964; Mayhew, 1979) and is fundamental to the

reason why congressmen are so enamored of doing casework. When a member engages in casework activity for the benefit of his constituents he gives the appearance of doing battle with the huge, overbearing, non-responsive, impenetrable bureaucracy. It is as though he were St. George pitting himself against the dragon of oppression. The constituent sees him as an individual and not an abstraction. He, or his staff, is flesh and blood; someone that can be talked to and reasoned with.

What of the impact of casework? Contrary to the hypothesis that casework should improve performance ratings, Table 8-1 indicates that it does not. All respondents in the District column have had casework experience. Respondents in NES 84 have not had casework experience. Note that in the latter the Member has an 88.2 per cent positive performance rating compared to 60.4 per cent for Congress. This is relatively the same differential as can be noted in the District column. In other words, the casework experience has made very little difference in the way constituents feel about the relative performance of the member and the Congress.

Table 8-1
Summary Table

	District pos	District neg	NES 84 pos	NES 84 neg
MEMBER				
Efficacy	64.1	35.9	--	--
Trust	70.1	29.9	--	--
Performance	80.2	19.8	88.2	11.8
CONGRESS				
Efficacy	40.8	59.2	--	--
Trust	25.7	74.3	--	--
Performance	34.2	65.8	60.4	39.6
GOVERNMENT				
Efficacy	38.9	61.1	59.2	40.8
Trust	27.3	70.7	44.9	55.1
Performance	38.0	62.0	--	--

Looking at the performance categories horizontally, one notes that readings for the member and Congress are ascendant. That is to say, constituents who had not had the casework experience gave the member and Congress higher performance ratings. Again, this information is contrary to the hypothesis that casework should have a positive effect.

The results of the comparison are much the same in the row registering the responses regarding trust in the government. District respondents, all experienced in casework, are

significantly less trusting then respondents in NES 84, none of whom had approached their representative for constituent service.

The information derived from a comparison of these surveys suggests that providing constituent service, known as casework, does not necessarily enhance the member's position with those he represents. Although there is generally a high level of trust and approval expressed for the member by those constituents who have had the casework experience, there is a slightly higher level of support by those who have not had the experience. The generally negative attitude people have about government and Congress is not seen to be ameliorated by the casework function. On the other hand, the quality of casework does seem to make a difference. It appears that if the member tries to help a constituent and succeeds he is rewarded, but if he fails he is punished. He is not rewarded for trying.

Conclusions

Whatever the reasons for his feelings, there is no evidence in these data to suggest that casework engenders in the constituent a higher level of approval, a greater feeling of trust or an attitude of greater efficacy relative to his representative, the Congress or the government. This finding is surprising for at least two reasons. First, as we have consistently pointed out, there is an abundance of

literature on the subject that seems to suggest that constituents approve of congressmen who help solve their personal problems. Much of this literature is case studies, reporting the feelings and attitudes of member of Congress about the casework function (Davidson and Oleszek, 1985). Others, using statistical analysis, conclude, as one scholar did, that, "Additionally, constituents' satisfaction with casework does influence them to vote for the incumbent. . ." (Yiannakis, 1981).

The second reason one might be inclined to be surprised at the findings of this study is that a natural response to receiving help is gratitude. Any person who offers to help, or does help, another person may logically expect to be thanked. It is a normal thing to do in the society in which we live. This study, however, suggests that the help a member of Congress provides his constituents in the form of casework, goes for naught when measured in terms of electoral support. A satisfactory explanation for this result is not readily apparent.

It may be that casework is considered by the constituent to be something that is his due, and when the member serves him by helping to resolve a problem he is simply performing an expected function. In other words, the member is not actually doing a favor for which repayment of some kind must be made. He is doing his job for which he is already being

paid. In this model, enhanced approval of how the member does his job might be anticipated when he does the extraordinary rather than the ordinary. Although the point was not questioned in this study, a common experience of caseworkers is the call or letter that commences with a litany of how bad this or that agency is doing its job, and how, as a result, the constituent has been wronged. Inasmuch as the problem now exists the member is asked to fix it. This is a matter of fact request to right a wrong. It is not couched in terms of "will you please do me a favor and solve my problem." The clear inference is that "your job is to solve my problem, so please be about it." An example of this attitude can be seen in the experience of a caseworker who was asked to provide tickets to the All-Star baseball game. When the constituent was advised that no tickets were available through the Senator's office he paid a visit to the Vice-President's Senate office and made the same request, which was granted. He then returned to the Senator's office and reprimanded the caseworker for not trying harder.

If a constituent does not develop more efficacious feelings about government and the Congress as a result of casework, it may be that he is discomforted by the inconvenience caused by the problem, and even though it gets resolved in his favor, he may feel that it shouldn't have happened in the first place. He can take little consolation in its

resolution if he believes that he was victimized. If he had been able to make an impact on the government, he would not have had to go to his representative with the problem. An example of this situation is the taxpayer who honestly, diligently and promptly pays his income tax, but through some inadvertency in the office of the Internal Revenue Service his returns are accidentally discredited. In spite of the fact that his representative is able to intercede successfully in his behalf, the time and effort he expends to bring the matter to a final conclusion is wasted time as far as he is concerned, and he may be very unhappy about the whole matter.

It may be, as it was suggested earlier, that the constituent is predisposed to alienation. The surveys used in this study have consistently supported studies of other scholars showing the lack of respect that is given to Congress and the government as opposed to that given the member. The campaigning members of Congress are quick to heap abuse on the institution of which they are a part, this kind of criticism, which the public hears with great regularity, takes its toll. The alienation that results may be profound, preventing the general public from developing higher levels of esteem for the political institutions. This attitude is, therefore, part of the baggage that a citizen brings to the casework experience. No matter whether or not the case is resolved successfully, a positive

result will not change his mind about the way he already feels about government and the Congress.

Another explanation might be that the particular member of Congress that represents the district from which the raw data were taken has established a relationship with her constituency that could account for the result. To determine the validity of this idea the research model would have had to include a method of qualifying and standardizing pertinent characteristics of representation and then applying them to the other members of Congress. However, given the infinite number of community and personal characteristics that might have had to be considered it is unlikely that a valid test could have been constructed. In any event, personal observation of the member in question reveals little if anything unusual about her tenure in office, personal characteristics or style of representation. She has been a very popular member and continues to poll over 75 per cent of the votes in every election.

The same thought might apply to the district. Is it unique? This question was raised at several points during the course of the study, but never adequately settled. Clearly, it differs somewhat from the general population as represented by the 1984 NES Survey (see Chapter IV), but not in any significant way. Perhaps a greater emphasis should be put on the discovery of this information in any subsequent

efforts to test these same hypotheses. Questions might be asked to determine the relative liberal-conservative cast of the district; whether unusual political events unique to the district had occurred that might have affected the sample; whether previous representatives had established a different model for the district.

Finally, the results that were realized might have been affected by insufficient data. It was recognized earlier that the validity of the study would have been enhanced by data drawn from more congressional districts. One district is probably not sufficient from which to make a national scale generalization. However, it should be enough to sustain a strong indication of what might be found in a broader study. In short, it would appear that any number of reasons might be advanced for the surprising result of this study, but none of those mentioned seem to be of sufficient moment to discredit completely the effort. Instead, the questions raised tend to suggest new directions for further study.

If casework, then, does not work to the member's advantage, or improve constituent attitudes about Congress and the government, it would seem that a reformation of the process would be in order. Constituent service provided by the member is very expensive. Typically, a senator from a small state with a population of three or four million will devote

the time and energies of six or eight full-time employees to handling casework. In 1977, it was estimated that the cost of this service in the United States alone amounted to $40,000,000 (Breslin, 1977). A system whereby the constituent could get the help he needs might be developed closer to the source of the problem. By taking it out of Congress and putting it in the executive branch the middleman, the member, could be eliminated and conceivably major economies might be realized.

This suggestion clearly ignores a major factor in the realm of constituent service. It does not account for the reaction the constituent might develop if he were denied the assistance of his representative in dealing with a problem. This study indicates that a positive result does not necessarily ensue from the casework function, but we might hypothesize that a negative reaction would be anticipated if the member failed to provide constituent service when it was requested. One can only imagine the wrath of a constituent, beleaguered by the Internal Revenue Service, or unable to collect his usual monthly Social Security check perhaps, when advised by the member that he does not offer help of this nature to the voters of his district. One could reasonably expect the constituent to repeat the story as often as he could with whatever energy he could muster. The net result could probably be measured in votes lost. This aspect of casework was beyond the scope of this particular

study, but it is clearly another direction in which further study might be undertaken.

The desire for reelection is deep-seated within members of Congress. It may even be the primary motivating factor in everything a congressman does, as Mayhew suggests, and to recommend that Congress reform itself to eliminate one of the best ways it has to interface directly with constituents is not realistic. Whether constituent service can be measured in good terms or bad is really beside the point. What is important is how it is perceived by the member. He thinks he is being rewarded with the confirmed support of casework recipients because they frequently speak of their approval. Whether or not it translates to votes is another matter. As long as the member believes casework is related to reelection it will remain in Congress.

Another factor needs to be considered. If it can be truly said that casework has no positive benefit for the member of Congress, what is the toll taken by his attention to this enterprise? How much of his legislative and oversight function is sacrificed in order for him to indulge his perception that casework is necessary for his political survival? If the Congress did not spend millions of dollars supporting caseworkers would the money, time and space devoted to constituent service be focused in some more meaningful way? Perhaps it is not possible to know with any

certainty, but one can speculate that several thousand individuals who now devote their total work time to casework attention would have to be redeployed in the national work force; $40,000,000 of the congressional appropriation would be available for assignment to some other necessary program; additional office space in federal office buildings in every state would be available for the use of other agencies.

Whether or not reform is an immediate result of study, it is important, nevertheless, to investigate the real nature of things so that we might better understand our environment. This study makes a contribution to the further understanding of the Congress, the nature of the relationship between the member and his constituent, and the factors that influence that relationship. It provides a different point of view, however tentatively, that demands further study, and suggests that a correlative investigation needs to be undertaken to determine whether or not negative results could be anticipated from not doing casework. Casework is a fundamental part of the representative process and although we now know more about it than we did before we need to continue to look beyond the surface in order to complete our understanding.

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A P P E N D I X

CONGRESSIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is being mailed to a large number of residents in your Congressional District. The purpose of the survey is to find out how people feel about their Representative, the Congress of the United States, and the American political system. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

NOTE: Do not put your name on this form. Your responses will be held in the strictest confidence and identification is not necessary.

Listed below are several statements. Please mark the blank that indicates whether you agree or disagree with them:

1. People like me don't have any say about what the government does.

Agree_____ Disagree_____

2. I don't think the government cares much what people like me think.

Agree_____ Disagree_____

3. I don't think Congress cares much what people like me think.

Agree_____ Disagree_____

4. I don't think my Congressman cares what people like me think.

Agree_____ Disagree_____

Please mark the appropriate box after each of the following questions:

5. Have you ever gone to a political meeting, rally, speech, dinner or things like that in support of a particular candidate or party?

Yes_____ No_____

6. Did you ever work for one of the parties or any candidate?

Yes_____ No_____

7. Do you happen to remember the names of the candidates for Congress--that is, for the House of Representatives in Washington, DC--that ran in your district in the last election? Please name them if you can.

a._____

b._____

8. Would you say the government is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all the people?

A few big interests_____For the benefit of all_____

9. How much do you feel that having elections makes the government pay attention to what the people think--a good deal, some, or not much?

A good deal_____Some_____Not much_____

10. Do you think that quite a few of the people running the government are crooked, or that not very many are, or do you think that hardly any of them are?

Quite a few are_____not very many are_____hardly any are____

11. How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington, DC to do what is right?

Always____Most of the time____Some of the time_____Never____

12. Over the years, how much attention do you feel the government pays to what people think when it decides what to do--a good deal, some, or not much?

A good deal of attention_____Some_____Not much_____

13. In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way government serves the nation's interests?

Approve_____ Disapprove_____

14. How much of the time do you think you can trust Congress to do what is right?

Always____Most of the time____Some of the time____Never____

15. Over the years, how much attention do you feel the Congress pays to what people think when it decides what to do--some attention, not much, a good deal?

A good deal_____ Not much_____ Some_____

16. In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress handles its job?

Approve_____ Disapprove_____

17. What would you say is the single most important problem the country faces today?_____

_____

18. How good of a job is the government doing in dealing with this problem?

A good job_____ A fair job_____ A poor job_____

19. How good of a job is the Congress doing in dealing with this problem?

A good job_____ A fair job_____ A poor job_____

Now we would like to ask some specific questions about Congressman Mickey Edwards who is the Representative of the Fifth Congressional District of Oklahoma.

20. How good of a job is congressman Edwards doing in dealing with the important problems facing the nation today?

A good job_____ A fair job_____ A poor job_____

21. How much of the time do you think you can trust Representative Edwards to do what is right?

Always____Most of the time____Some of the time____Never____

22. How much attention do you feel that Mr Edwards pays to what people think when he decides how to vote--a good deal of attention, some, or not much?

Not much_____ Some_____ A good deal_____

23. In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way Congressman Edwards does his job?

Approve_____ Disapprove_____

24. Have you ever contacted Congressman Edwards in his office, personally or by mail?

Yes_____ No_____

25. If your answer was "Yes" did you contact him to:

a. Express an opinion Yes_____ No_____

b. Seek information Yes_____ No_____

c. Seek help on a problem Yes_____ No_____

26. Did you get a response from Congressman Edwards or his staff?

Yes_____ No_____

27. How satisfied were you with the response--very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, or not at all satisfied?

Very_____ Somewhat_____ Not at all_____

28. If you contacted Congressman Edwards office for help with a problem, was your problem solved?

Yes_____ No_____

29. Do you know anyone else who has contacted Mr. Edwards' office?

Yes_____ No_____

30. Was this person satisfied with the response?

Very_____Somewhat_____Not at all_____

31. If you had a problem (or another problem) that Mr. Edwards could do something about, do you think he would be very helpful, somewhat helpful, or not very helpful to you?

Very helpful_____Somewhat helpful_____Not very helpful_____.

32. There are many ways in which a Congressman can have contact with the people from his District. Think of Congressman Edwards. Have you come in contact with him or learned anything about him through any of the ways

listed below?

Met him personally	Yes_____	No_____
Attended meeting where he spoke	Yes_____	No_____
Talked to one of his staff	Yes_____	No_____
Received mail from him	Yes_____	No_____
Read about him in the paper	Yes_____	No_____
Heard about him on the radio	Yes_____	No_____
Saw him on television	Yes_____	No_____

33. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?

Republican____Democrat____Independent____Other____

34. Are you a registered voter?

Yes_____ No_____

35. What is the highest grade of school or college you have attended?

K through 6th__ 7th___ 8th___ 9th___ 10th___ 11th___12th___

Years of College: 1___ 2___ 3___ 4___ 5___ 6___ More__

36. What is your current employment status?

Employed___Unemployed___Temporarily laid off___Retired___

Permanently disabled____Student____Other (Please specify)____

37. Are you (or were you) employed by:

The Government___Private business___Not-for-profit agency___