Sam Crane Interview

December 22, 2014

Selected Excerpts from Sam Crane

- Jim Florio... was ahead of his time on the policy stuff. He is a pure policy wonk. This guy loves public policy, loves debating public policy, loves reading about it, educating himself on it. Not because some staffer wrote a memo - he read the books. So he was steeped in this and that’s what he was. The political presentation part of it-- he was surrounded by a lot of wonks. But I think he could have used some people the first time...could help leaven that political Trenton process and not in a Congressional style. But Jim is brilliant.

- Yes. Well, in some ways it’s liberating when the legislature is controlled by the other party you’re by yourself. Now, you’re a sole actor.[Referring to 1992-1994]

- The lesson, I think, is that those who study all of this want to study what’s happening in Washington. Perhaps the best thing to study is state legislatures and governors because that is where the real work of the nation probably continues on, while everybody is yelling and screaming at each other.

Complete Interview with Sam Crane

Rick Sinding: Hello. I'm Rick Sinding. It's Monday, December 22nd, 2014 at the Eagleton Institute of Politics here at Rutgers University. For the Center on the American Governor, today I'll be interviewing Sam Crane who served as treasurer during the tumultuous final two years of the administration of Governor Jim Florio. Sam, welcome to Eagleton.

Sam Crane: Well thank you for having me.

Rick Sinding: Before we get into your experiences in the administration of Governor Florio which I think we're going to get into in some depth, let's talk a little bit about how you got there. Where did you grow up, where did you go to school, what got you to the point where you ended up in the Florio Administration?

Sam Crane: Well I was born and raised in Southern New Jersey and spent most of my youth in Williamstown in Gloucester County. I like to tell my North Jersey friends that Cherry Hill was North Jersey, where I grew up. I graduated from Montclair State College at the time - now Montclair State University - and during that time at the university, I was President of the Student Body, the first student representative on the Board of Trustees and got involved in fighting a tuition increase of 25 and 50 dollars a year at that time.

Rick Sinding: Which was real money in that time.
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Sam Crane: It was real money in that time. And when I graduated, I went to work for the university and then I went to become Executive Director of the New Jersey Student Association and lobbied the legislature for more money and to reduce tuition increases. And that's how I met some friends in the General Assembly and eventually started at the beginning of the second Byrne term to work for the Assembly Democratic Office.

Rick Sinding: So this would have been 1977, '79?

Sam Crane: Yes, '79. I worked there for a while, took a leave of absence to do some issues in speech writing for then candidate Jim Florio for Governor, we came up a little short, 1,767 votes short if I remember correctly.

Rick Sinding: Let's go back a little bit. Was he your Congressman at this point in Williamstown...?

Sam Crane: Yes. How it happened was Dan Dalton, then Senator Dan Dalton, was doing debate prep and decided that a colleague of mine, Bob Smart, and I would go down and participate in preparing the Governor for the first debate.

Rick Sinding: At that time the Congressman.

Sam Crane: Yes, Congressman. Once a governor, always a governor. And we sat through this session and realized that the prep books weren't very good and then the decision was that I would go with the campaign full time to focus on the state part of the issues and that's what I did. After it was unsuccessful, I went back to the Assembly, spent a few years there then went to work for then Congressman Florio. Primarily what I did for him was to look at the '85 race to see whether he should go against Governor Kean's reelection. It was career shortening because I'm the one who wrote the memo on why he wouldn't win. Then I went and worked for the State Senate.

Rick Sinding: Well he did listen to you and didn't run.

Sam Crane: Yes, he didn't run... which was a good decision. Our polling showed that only among welfare mothers in the Central Ward would we carry the day in November as I think young Peter Shapiro...

Rick Sinding: Peter Shapiro learned.

Sam Crane: ...learned to his detriment. I went back and worked for the State Senate and was working for the State Senate when Governor Florio became Governor Florio. I was in transition briefly, not sure I had the same view as others in transition about how to handle the fiscal crisis. Went back to the Senate, spent the first year of the Florio Administration working for John Lynch as Senate President and the Senate Democrats. After a year, I went into the Governor's Office as Deputy Chief of Staff and then Acting Treasurer and then the last two
years I was Treasurer. I was retired from State service at 12 noon on January 20th, 1994 when then-Governor Whitman raised her hand.

Rick Sinding: All right, let's go back to your earliest days as an advocate for student tuition rates. Did you see this as an entry to politics, did you see it as an exercise in political science? Were you a partisan Democrat at the time? What was it that caused you to become involved in-- what was your major in college?

Sam Crane: History when I went to class. And I spent a lot of time doing politics, but not elective politics, mostly student higher education politics.

Rick Sinding: All right, but that was clearly in your blood.

Sam Crane: Yes, I loved it.

Rick Sinding: Okay.

Sam Crane: It's the air I breathe.

Rick Sinding: So the transition from that to the Student Association in Trenton was sort of a natural jump but how did that then manifest itself in your getting involved in working for the Assembly?

Sam Crane: Well, I was fortunate that I was working for the then State College, now State University when they were doing the hearings on the income tax. And we were doing one at Montclair State University and I was working in the student center. And a couple of the staff members needed some food and something to drink. One of them was Bob Smart and the other one was Kathy Crotty. I met them and stayed in touch with them and then when the student thing was kind of running dry for me, Bob, then Dick Coffee was the Executive Director were starting to build up the partisan staff and I was invited on board. My first job was in a converted closet running the first district office program for the legislators, that was my high and exalted position - where you start is important.

Rick Sinding: Now Jim Florio ran against Brendan Byrne in 1977, I forget my decades.

Sam Crane: Yes, '77.

Rick Sinding: At our age we get our decades mixed up. And I think finished third and sort of established himself, got his name recognized statewide but didn't win but didn't pay any real price for having taken on an incumbent Democratic governor. Were you at all involved in that?

Sam Crane: No.

Rick Sinding: Okay.

Sam Crane: No, I was neutral in that race; I wasn't involved in any way.
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**Rick Sinding:** Did you know Jim Florio at this point, had you met him?

**Sam Crane:** I had met him but I didn't know him well, I knew some people who worked for him. But I wasn't heavily involved in what I'll call Democratic politics at that point. I was left, still am, left of center, but I was mostly on the cause side of the politics as opposed to the campaign party side at that point.

**Rick Sinding:** Okay. For the latter part of the Byrne Administration when you were working for the Assembly, were there specific-- aside from the District Office stuff that you started out doing, what did you do for the intervening two or three years before the '81 election came along?

**Sam Crane:** It was a small office so we did a little bit of everything.

**Rick Sinding:** Sorry, the '89 election.

**Sam Crane:** And I did-- in the Assembly, we still had a Joint Appropriations Committee and I determined when I was doing lobbying for college students, that if you really wanted to have an impact, you had to get a hold of the budget because if you had them by the budget, their hearts will follow. And I obviously was not senior enough to get into that. And then somebody who we had working in the office got the chicken pox and was out for the budget cycle and they shoved me in there because I knew something about it. And that was the beginning of my involvement with the State budget on a committee legislative level and it evolved over time to where I was the principle staff person for what was then the Joint Appropriations Committee, Larry Weiss - Senator Larry Weiss - a great man was the Chair of it and I served Larry throughout his career, and the Democrats.

**Rick Sinding:** So you had developed some expertise at this point in budgetary and fiscal issues.

**Sam Crane:** Right.

**Rick Sinding:** All right, then along comes the '81 election when is Florio is the Democratic nominee; Tom Kean is the Republican nominee. You went to work for Florio in the campaign.

**Sam Crane:** Correct.

**Rick Sinding:** And what did you do in the campaign?

**Sam Crane:** Mostly issues management, that is filling out questionnaires, providing issues information for speeches. I wrote some speeches, I wrote the acceptance speech and I wrote the concession speech, neither of which was ever delivered. And so...

**Rick Sinding:** Now why is that?
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Sam Crane: Because on election night there was no concession, there was no victory.

Rick Sinding: Right, of course.

Sam Crane: It wasn't until Thanksgiving that we had it resolved.

Rick Sinding: I see.

Sam Crane: One of my favorite stories about-- the worst thing that can happen is to be involved in a political campaign and not have an outcome on Election Day because you're exhausted. I'm sure this was true for the Kean folks as it was for the Florio folks. You know, you want it over, you want to win but at the end of the day, you want it over because you want the pain to stop and this one went on until Thanksgiving.

And my favorite story is we went down I think the Tuesday before Thanksgiving to have a meeting with Jim in Washington to discuss what we were going to do. And it was pretty clear we were not going to win, that the recount actually showed that New Jersey has accurate vote counts and we were not going to win. And the decision was that we were going to pull. Jim made the decision but he wanted the Thanksgiving weekend. And my job was to call then-Assemblyman Cary Edwards and I remember the call where I got Cary on the line and I said, "Cary, it's Sam. The Congressman would like to speak to the Governor."

Rick Sinding: Aha. <laughs>

Sam Crane: And that was the signal to Cary that we were pulling and we just asked them to stay quiet through the weekend which they honored and did. And Jim pulled on Monday and then Tom Kean had his first press conference as Governor-Elect that afternoon and I went back to the Assembly.

Rick Sinding: Who were some of the other folks who were involved in that '81 campaign that you worked with, whom I guess you were probably reunited with eight years later?

Sam Crane: Yes, I mean his Chief of Staff and Chief Political Advisor was Joe Salema. He was really running the campaign. Joe was a very skilled political operative. Not real great on the issues a lot of time except to feel for them, the substance of the issues.

Rick Sinding: That was my own personal dealings with him, that was not what really interested him so much...

Sam Crane: No.

Rick Sinding: ...as the nuts and bolts politics.
Sam Crane: But he had a feel for them in a political sense which is frankly a good roll for any candidate's guy or woman. They should have a feel for how the issues play politically because very frankly you can hire a whole bunch of people that know something about the issues, it's the judgment part of it that's hard to develop and he had very good political instincts and judgment. And I knew Dan Dalton from the legislature; those were really the people that I knew during that timeframe. And we stayed in touch off and on; Dan was in the legislature so we stayed in touch.

Rick Sinding: Okay, so you went back to the Assembly and worked on the Assembly staff during Kean's administration.

Sam Crane: Correct.

Rick Sinding: First four years in Assembly then moved onto the Senate...

Sam Crane: Yes, I moved to the Senate just about the time of the gubernatorial race, Governor Kean was running for reelection and Peter made the mistake of not figuring out how to get out of it.

Rick Sinding: <laughs> Well whoever would have been the candidate I think.

Sam Crane: I love Peter Shapiro, I had a lot or respect for Peter Shapiro and I had hoped that he would find a way not to do that.

Rick Sinding: I suppose a lot of people felt the same way and didn't wish any ill to whoever it was who was going to face that juggernaut. Again, were you actively involved now primarily in fiscal issues and budgetary issues?

Sam Crane: Yes, almost exclusively I was Principal Staff to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, I was...

Rick Sinding: So at that time there was no longer a Joint Appropriations Committee.

Sam Crane: Well during the regular legislative session there was an Appropriations Committee in each house, they came together to do the budget and form the Joint Committee.

Rick Sinding: I see.

Sam Crane: But I had a very good relationship with Senator Weiss and one of the things we did was, there was some tension as there always between the Assembly and the Senate no matter who controls them, it's not a Republican, Democratic thing. And there was always nervousness I think on the part of the Senate that there would be an attempt by the Assembly to say, "We ought to rotate the chair."

Rick Sinding: Who was the chair of the Assembly Appropriations Committee at the time?
Sam Crane: Well when I started it was Dick Van Wagner and then there was a guy you probably know named Bob Janiszewski from Hudson County. And Bob determined that he would not challenge Senator Weiss and Bob did, much like the call with Cary - Bob called Senator Weiss and said, "Larry, Mr. Chairman, let me know what I can do to help you." And they sealed a relationship that worked very well for a number of years where they really cooperated. And I was working for the Assembly staff but kind of doing in large part Joint Appropriations Committee for Larry as well.

Rick Sinding: And Alan Karcher was Speaker of the Assembly at this time.

Sam Crane: Yes, we had a very colorful and active speaker at the time. I've been fortunate in my time in government to really be able to watch a number of actors of different styles and different political persuasions practice their art form and I must admit, I took something from every one of them including Governor Kean, there was a lot of lessons to be learned there. So I watched, besides doing the fiscal and doing the budget and doing all the things that a staff person would do, it was a master's or doctorate level education on how people act in a political and leadership situation, pretty interesting.

Rick Sinding: Yes, I would say so. All right, so from '85 to-- '86 to '89, you're over on the Senate side.

Sam Crane: Correct.

Rick Sinding: Now working directly for Senator Weiss and the Appropriations Committee?

Sam Crane: I'm working for Senator Weiss; I'm working for the Democrats as a whole. You know, I did mostly budget and fiscal but I did some other things for the Democratic majority on economic development and tax issues and tax breaks, a variety of legislative things. I was senior enough and had been around long enough that I had enough knowledge that I could handle a number of different subjects.

Rick Sinding: The Democrats were in the majority at this time and Kean, the Republican was the governor.

Sam Crane: And the Assembly was in Republican hands.

Rick Sinding: In the second.

Sam Crane: Second term.

Rick Sinding: Second term, yes.

Sam Crane: Chuck Hardwick was the speaker.

Rick Sinding: Right. In the first term, you had a very volatile, no I wouldn't call him volatile, as you said, colorful Assembly Speaker in Alan Karcher who was a
thorn in Tom Kean's side, prodded every opportunity he had. Yet, it appears as if there were some really, really good either back channel or direct relationships that developed between the Kean front office and the Democratic offices and the Democratic staff in the legislature. There were a lot of things that ended up getting passed with bipartisan support. What was it about either the Kean front office or the Assembly staff, Assembly and Senate staff that enabled that to happen, that doesn't happen today?

Sam Crane: I think there were a couple of things. First of all, the Governor, meaning Governor Kean, started out in the legislature and he understood it and he was a very good legislative technician.

Rick Sinding: Had been a speaker in fact.

Sam Crane: And had been a speaker and he understood the role of the legislature and how the legislature acts and whatever. He also had around him, people that had been in the legislature or worked for the legislature.

Rick Sinding: And Cary Edwards was one...

Sam Crane: Cary Edwards. We had some conversations. And what would happen, we also didn't take ourselves to seriously, this wasn't about some big political war. Yes, we had problems, there was differing points of view but they also, there was space to accommodate governing where we would do things together because that's what we were supposed to do and oh yes, we're fighting over here but we're not going to let this bleed into every part of the relationship and I think that is what is different. And I discovered as I went on in my career in state government that there was in New Jersey a space for that.

Rick Sinding: Is there still?

Sam Crane: I'm not sure; I'm not a practitioner every day there so I can't say. But I think there is some space for that. Because unlike what we see on the national level with what I'll call the two polls taking control of the national debate, in New Jersey, politics is always in the middle, there are people right of center there's some people left of center, yes, you have some very conservative and very liberal. But most of the legislators at that time were in the middle. Chuck Hardwick was the new hard charging conservative but that wasn't true of all his members. So I think there was space. One story illustrates it. The first year people may recall, Tom Kean ran as a Reagan Republican, he was going to cut taxes, cut spending supply side. And he immediately proposed taxes after becoming governor because he had a budget problem. And I think the...

Rick Sinding: That seems to be a rather common characteristic among New Jersey governors.

Sam Crane: Yes, because they usually get left with a big problem from their predecessors. But what was interesting about it was-- I mean that's where Alan
Sam Crane was making his point, he also had some other political points he wanted to make. But we got close to June 30th and we still didn't have a budget and the worry was that we were going to go into overtime. And New Jersey had never been in overtime and never been this close. Historically, the budget was reported out of Committee in April and adopted before June 1st. And we're in the third week of June and nowhere close. So we're working on the budget, everybody's going back and forth, you know, there's really nothing there. We had gotten close on a budget. So I went upstairs to the men's room and when I'm in the men's room, in comes Cary Edwards. And I said, "Hell of a problem, Cary." And he said, "Yes." I said, "Do you know how far apart we are?" And he said, "Well, not really." I said, "Thirty million." Thirty million then was a lot of money but...

Rick Sinding: Manageable.

Sam Crane: ...manageable. He said, "Oh man." I said, "You know, Cary, if your guy's willing to do this, my guy's maybe willing to do that." And he said to me, "Sam, I'm going to have to go to the bathroom in a half hour, I'll see you." And I'll never forget it, I go into the men's room, in comes Cary, he has stationed a state trooper at the door holding the door closed.

Rick Sinding: He was Counsel to the Governor at this time.

Sam Crane: Yes.

Rick Sinding: He wasn't Attorney General yet.

Sam Crane: No, he was Counsel to the Governor. And he said, "Tom will do it if you can promise me your guys will do it and we do it quietly." So I went back with that. And then I was dispatched down to the OMB staff to work out the 30 million dollar difference. And Dick Stanford and Rich Keevey were in the room and they didn't know what was going on because the new administration hadn't had full faith in them because they were still there when Byrne was there. So what was funny about it is, is we walked in and we said, "Where are we?" and I show them the numbers and they said, "Thirty million." We did it in about five minutes. And then we had pizza and soda for another half hour because we didn't want anybody to know how easy it was to close the final 30. And that's the way we did it and we went home the night of June 30th with a balanced budget which was later revised by January 1st. But there was space to do those kind of conversations because at the end of the day I think everybody was looking after the good will of the state, they may not agree 100 percent but they were willing to compromise and they didn't see it as a sin.

Rick Sinding: It would have been difficult to do later in the Kean Administration, men's rooms deals because the State Treasurer was a woman. I'll just point that out. <laughs>

Sam Crane: Actually Feather was wonderful, a great State Treasurer.
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Rick Sinding: Okay, let's go with that. I mean you had this relationship with Cary Edwards, now you're talking about Feather O'Connor who was the State Treasurer in the second Kean Administration and you say she was a great State Treasurer, obviously easy for you to work with as a member of the Democratic staff?

Sam Crane: Yes, I mean I'm not suggesting that this was sweetness and light and we agreed on all issues and when I met with her or her staff or the Governor's staff on fiscal issues that there wasn't some head butting going on, I mean there were some fundamental disagreements. But as I said, it never bled over to the point where we hated each other and we would often figure out a way to compromise those issues in such a way that both felt as if they were heard and had a piece of it. The second thing is, is that in some ways, and this was a different political time, you had the Democrats in control of the Senate, the Republicans had the Governor's Office and the Assembly and nobody had ever been there before. And I think John Russo as Senate President did a very wise thing, he announced that Tom Kean couldn't run again, no kidding, the Constitution precludes it, so he can't hurt us anymore. So therefore we may side with the Governor on a whole series of issues and we, meaning the Senate Democrats were closer in world viewpoint I think to Governor Kean's world view than the Assembly Republicans were at that time. That's the growth of the beginning of the conservative wing of the Republican, Chuck Hardwick, et cetera. And so what happened was is that we decided we'd side whoever was closest to what we wanted to have done so that no we didn't have two of them on us. And I think out of that tension came some very productive legislation.

Rick Sinding: There are a number of people who have suggested that that kind of tension is what leads to effective legislation when the two sides are still willing to talk to each other, back channel or in the men's room or cutting deals however those deals need to be cut.

Sam Crane: And cutting deals and compromise has become, you know, the new four letter word, it gets bleeped in the discourse today on a lot of levels and that's unfortunate because I think everybody got some really important things done in that timeframe without necessarily killing each other and not feeling as if, "I have to win at all cost." And I think there's some tribute to Tom Kean because he was-- as I said before, he came from the legislature; he understood and had a feel for the legislative process so he knew that it was a compromise process.

Rick Sinding: Did it help that the economy was booming?

Sam Crane: Oh, it always helps when the economy is booming and boy, it was going, it was roaring. So you had the resources you needed that if you had to do a compromise that involved spending, you had the money to do it. It was a golden time.

Rick Sinding: You would find out just a couple of years later how much more difficult it would when the money wasn't there.
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Sam Crane: Yes, in firsthand experience.

Rick Sinding: So let's go to the 1989 campaign. Did you leave the legislature to work on Jim Florio's 1989 campaign?

Sam Crane: I did not, I stuck with the legislature. So I worked-- there was a different campaign team, a different set of personalities and they ran a very successful campaign. So I was-- I probably was consulted on some issues but I wasn't a principal in the campaign, no.

Rick Sinding: Were you consulted on fiscal issues, perhaps?

Sam Crane: Not until after the election. I ran into the Congressman and just told him, "Be careful what you wish for," because I knew it was falling apart early in the year and it was in nobody's interest to have a big fight that year.

Rick Sinding: Do you think that Congressman Florio, Candidate Florio made a mistake in suggesting at the time that he had a very large lead in the polls, that he didn't see any need to tinker with the income tax during the course of the campaign?

Sam Crane: I never judge campaigns because I've found that many times, the rhetoric in the campaign gets amended and changed a bit. You know, it's Brendan Byrne's famous line... was, "You misunderstood me, I said I would never raid Texas."

<laughter>

Sam Crane: And I think that is a notion of revising your campaign statement at a later date. And I think candidate Governor, Tom Kean was the supply side Reagan Republican, by January he was a moderate Rockefeller Republican of the New Jersey color. Jim Florio, a Democrat scared to death that he's going to get strapped as a democrat with taxes, realizes he's got a huge fiscal problem as Governor Elect and Governor, reality settles in and that's usually what happens to these guys.

Rick Sinding: Were you aware of any back channel conversations or any conversations of any sort that were taking place between the incoming Florio team and the outgoing Kean team about trying to resolve some of the fiscal issues that were facing the state before Governor Kean left?

Sam Crane: Yes.

Rick Sinding: Can you tell us anything about the texts of those conversations?

Sam Crane: I will just say that I was brought into transition because I was the head budget guy for the Democrats in the legislature and I knew Jim. I was in the transition, in the distinct minority of the approach to fiscal issues and I believed that whatever Governor Kean was willing to do, we should let him do and whatever actions he was going to take, which I would later learn from as Treasurer and then
in transition when the Whitman Administration came in is that with the right relationship with the outgoing Governor, enormous things can happen during gubernatorial transitions.

Transitions are treated except by a few of us who appreciate—transitions are the most important time of the first four years of a gubernatorial term. And they tend to be treated as a chance to fill Cabinet spots and get people jobs and it is the last freedom time you have. And you have a lot of maneuver room. And I am a great believer and was then and to this day that they pay far too little attention to transitions... Usually they bring in a bunch of campaign people who are exhausted and whatever. And what you need is a group of people who are going to then work with the incoming Governor to do what they have to do. You only need two Cabinet Officers the day you get sworn in, Attorney General and Treasurer, one to say, "No, you can't do that because it's against the law," and the other one to withhold the money and then you control the entire state government. So this rush to appoint people while not thinking about how you want to be Governor and be, do Governor and I think a lot-- this isn't a criticism of Jim Florio, I've watched this time and time again. You've got to get your feet under and boy it's the last time you get your feet under before the white hot light turns on you have to act as the elected official.

**Rick Sinding:** Because they're dealing with the crisis of the day rather than the bigger picture issues.

**Sam Crane:** Right. And he had a real crisis coming in, I mean, it was not trumped up, it was not made up, it was real and it was huge.

**Rick Sinding:** All right, now Doug Berman who had been the campaign manager and became the State Treasurer...

**Sam Crane:** Correct.

**Rick Sinding:** Berman is credited or blamed depending upon how you look at it with having made the essential determination, the political determination that Jim Florio should spend his political capital at the very outset of his administration. That if he was going to have to raise taxes and if he was going to have to respond to the school funding issue, that he should do it, and do it forcefully, get it out of the way, take all of the negative and then build up that capital again over the course of the next three and a half years in order to get reelected. And so a major tax package came out of the administration. You were in the legislature and had to shepherd that through the legislature. That must have been interesting. Did you agree with that strategy and how did legislators react to it?

**Sam Crane:** Well, I think I got to separate myself from my staff position, working for the Democrats and what my personal view was.

**Rick Sinding:** Let's talk about both.
Sam Crane: So let me start with the personal view. I didn’t disagree with Doug Berman on having to face up and fix it early; I think that was wise approach. I think the problem that some of us had was the rush to get it done. And I cut my teeth on the first year as an active player in state government, as I mentioned before, the Kean first year where he had a budget crisis. We passed a budget on June 30th that frankly wasn’t worth the paper it was written on. We knew it was going to fall apart by October or November; we needed a mechanism to keep the debate going. And my personal belief was that in order to raise taxes, cut spending, do whatever you needed to get through this, change the school aid formula, whatever the solution was, you had to give both the politicians and the public space and time.

I'm afraid I come from the Rahm Emmanuel school of politics that no crisis should go unused. And in this particular case, you had to take the crisis in my view and deepen it, that is, you had to do real difficult things. And I often thought that Governor Florio coming in was in a unique position to do that because he hadn't sat in the chair as a legislature, he wasn't a creature of the state government. So therefore, he could come in and go, "Oh my God, look what I found."

Rick Sinding: Well that's basically what he did.

Sam Crane: Right, but he also proposed a solution. And sometimes-- I'm a great believer in there's nothing like an occasional fiscal crisis with what I call budget blood running down the street on West State Street in front of the Capitol, with all the constituencies and all the politicians and everybody starting to say, "Oh my God, the sky is falling, we're going to need a solution." And I think that's what happened in the Kean. People forget that the real Kean budget in my view was adopted on New Year's Eve day at the end of his first year. That's when we passed the income tax and remember he held his nose and signed it but he also held his nose and signed it on New Year's Eve. Politically worked for Tom Kean wonderfully but that's when we settled it. But there was now almost 12 months of political and public debate about what to do about the state spending and taxes. And I think it helped educate everybody that we don't like it but we understand you got to do it. In the case of I think with Florio, he had a lot of the right solutions, he had a lot of the right plans and reforms, some reforms I think that today's legislators wish they had adopted with him because he was way ahead of his time on some of them. But the thing was, it was how it was done as opposed to what was done. I think it hurt him that way.

Rick Sinding: Yet the legislature went along and did those things fairly quickly.

Sam Crane: It wasn't that easy on the inside.

Rick Sinding: No, I'm sure it wasn't. John Lynch was the Senate President at the time.

Sam Crane: Correct.
Rick Sinding: You were working for him.

Sam Crane: Yep.

Rick Sinding: And we've interviewed him as part of this series.

Sam Crane: Brilliant guy.

Rick Sinding: And he's talked about the need to stand for something and the need to do it. And he felt, although there were cases where he really had to, he didn't use the expression strong arm, but I'll use it, really work hard to convince some of the members of his delegation, his body that they needed to go along with this for a variety of reasons but eventually it had to be done.

Sam Crane: Yes.

Rick Sinding: And did you feel the same way as a staffer?

Sam Crane: As a staffer I worked for the Senate President, when I first went to work for the Speaker, the guy who hired me, Bob Smart, took me into the Speaker's office and said, "There's the Speaker's chair, no matter who sits in it, that's who we're loyal to," and that happened to be Christopher Jackman at the time. So when John and the leadership made a decision that we were going to go we did. But they made it after really, I think, almost stopping it in the Senate. It came very close to being stopped in the Senate. And John Lynch was a brilliant legislative leader. He was a brilliant policy guy. He really understood state policy and how to work it and the combination of politics and policy. And we came close to putting a budget in that had not tax increases in it. I did a draft budget through the night one night where I cut the budget into balance with no taxes. It was an interesting enterprise.

Rick Sinding: I'll bet it was. Do you remember the highlights of it?

Sam Crane: All I can remember is about four or five o'clock in the morning some friends of mine in the Office of Legislative Services, stayed through the night to draft the bill. A great organization. And they were friends. I remain friends with a lot of them. At one point we got so close and all they would chant is go, go, go and I had to come up with some other way to cut this or make this line up. We never did it and we ended up passing the tax package. The rest is history.

Rick Sinding: There were, of course, these other initiatives, the automobile insurance, the assault weapons that had come up at roughly the same time or certainly in short order all of which sort of contributed to this very chaotic first six month period. Where you at all involved in those issues as well? Or were you primarily focused on the financial side of things?

Sam Crane: I had my hands full with the fiscal-- I mean we were trouble, fiscally in trouble meaning the state and that was a pretty big plate at that time. I knew the others were going on. I was watching the reaction but I wasn’t...
Rick Sinding: In the case of the assault weapons it was hard not to...

Sam Crane Transitions are treated except by a few of us who appreciate--transitions are the most important time of the first four years of a gubernatorial term. And they tend to be treated as a chance to fill Cabinet spots and get people jobs and it is the last freedom time you have. And you have a lot of maneuver room. And I am a great believer and was then and to this day that they pay far too little attention to transitions... Usually they bring in a bunch of campaign people who are exhausted and whatever. And what you need is a group of people who are going to then work with the incoming Governor to do what they have to do. You only need two Cabinet Officers the day you get sworn in, Attorney General and Treasurer, one to say, "No, you can't do that because it's against the law," and the other one to withhold the money and then you control the entire state government. So this rush to appoint people while not thinking about how you want to be Governor and be, do Governor and I think a lot--this isn't a criticism of Jim Florio, I've watched this time and time again. You've got to get your feet under and boy it's the last time you get your feet under before the white hot light turns on you have to act as the elected official.

Rick Sinding: What prompted you to move from the legislative to the executive branch in this would have been 1991, early '91.

Sam Crane: Yes, obviously, the tax increase was over. Guns, all of the policy agenda you have listed.

Rick Sinding: And the backlash had begun.

Sam Crane: And the backlash had begun. And it was clear, as with most administrations, the first group in the governor's office are the first to go back out. Every administration, the first chief of staff lasts a year. Kean's was the case, Whitman's was the case. You just watch it because they figure out what they need. In this case, Jim was in trouble and he went back to his friend Joe Salema to come in and kind of right the ship. He first had to start to repair relationships with Democrats in the legislature that were now facing election year and we're in deep and serious trouble because of what was done and whatever. So I was asked to come over and be deputy chief of staff. The other thing is that the recession started to deepen now. The great early nineties recession really started to hit home and this is the recession that led to Bill Clinton being elected president of the United States. So what happened was is that you had this huge tax package. You weren't collecting all of the money because the recession had hit. The economy was down. Your tax collections were down. So he had the increased tax around his neck. And what's worse is he didn't even collect all of the money. So what you had was a crisis in confidence in his leadership and whatever and so I was brought over to kind of do some kind of economic development and do some other work to kind of shore up and get some other policy stuff going that was kind of over here as opposed to all taxes and guns.
Rick Sinding: Now, I would be remiss if I didn’t mention the fact that you and Joe Salema were related.

Sam Crane: At that time we were.

Rick Sinding: At that time.

Sam Crane: Yes, he-- I forget when he married my sister, but yes, he was my brother-in-law but I first him back in the ‘81 campaign. We had separate relationship...

Rick Sinding: And this was before you were related by marriage.

Sam Crane: Correct. We had a relationship and he recruited me in ’85 to go look at the race. So I had known him for a number of years.

Rick Sinding: Now, he’s the new chief of staff.

Sam Crane: Yes.

Rick Sinding: You’re the deputy chief.

Sam Crane: Yes.

Rick Sinding: What are your primary responsibilities in the second year of the Florio administration in this capacity?

Sam Crane: I was mostly doing-- trying to get economic development plans off the ground to create jobs and whatever and fight the recession because the taxes had wounded him politically but the recession was having an impact on the state and they wanted to move it. And so I spent most of the year working on that. I did do some budget work because not all of the relationships after the first year internally were as nice as they once were.

Rick Sinding: That’s an interesting way of putting it. One of the people whom we have interviewed earlier was Rick Wright who was an associate state treasurer and working also on those economic development issues.

Sam Crane: Yes.

Rick Sinding: So you obviously were working...

Sam Crane: I knew him and I worked with him but there was a lot of competition between the new governor’s office team and the team that was in Treasury. And that happens after you have a traumatic year.

Rick Sinding: Doug Berman was a very, very controversial character. In his first year as treasurer he took it upon himself to be the only person who appeared before the appropriations committee and none of the cabinet officers came to
defend their department’s budgets. And to a certain extent Doug Berman became the target of the legislature’s resentment towards the front office. How did you--what were your dealings with Doug Berman’s treasure department beyond the-- I mean there are always going to be these kinds of conflicts within the administration. Were there serious conflicts between the front office and treasury at this point, would you say?

**Sam Crane:** There were some. I think they were largely personality and style and there was a new team in the governor’s office. They had organized the administration in such a way that the treasurer was more than just a treasurer as many have probably told you about Doug’s style. When the change came I think there was some competition and whatever for both the governor’s time and ideas. But in the end we managed to get the budget through the second year with as little pain as possible. The only thing was is I believe and my memory is probably a little faulty, that’s the year we sold the highway to balance the budget.

**Rick Sinding:** A piece of Interstate 95.

**Sam Crane:** Yes, leading up to the George Washington Bridge which almost brings us full circle sometimes and that was controversial and politically charged in the sense of pointing to whether the administration knew what it was doing or was fixing things on the fly. And look I don’t go over to Doug Berman’s house on Saturday night to have dinner. You can be assured of that, but the thing is is that Doug was doing what any treasurer has done in a variety of administrations. The estimates of the tax coming in, you know, dropped as the recession deepened and sometimes you have to do that sort of thing. I thought it was rather clever fiscally, probably not presented the best way. And if I have any criticism of Doug was-- he had brilliant ideas but sometimes his presentation and sometimes you got to allow them to germinate. You’ve got to let it kind of work for a while through this process and it requires tremendous patience and Doug, I think, sometimes didn’t have as much patience as you had for the process.

**Rick Sinding:** How about the governor? Do you think that Jim Florio gave Doug Berman too much leeway? Do you think he could have reigned him in? Or do you think this was actually an extension of Jim Florio’s own management style?

**Sam Crane:** I think some of it was Jim’s management style. I think particularly during the first year you have a congressman who becomes a governor. And that’s why I think transitions are important because I think it helps particularly if you have a congressman whether it’s Jim Florio or anybody else that takes over the executive I think it’s really important. And that’s why the transition is important to that person because they’re going from a legislative to a government executive position. And, you know, you’re running what today is a $30 billion corporation. You know, what you need to know and how you need to handle that is enormously different than being in the legislature or in the Congress of the United States. I think Barack Obama has learned a lot about the difference between being a United States Senator and president of the United States. I’m not suggesting the governorship of New Jersey even has, you know, an eighth of the complexity of the presidency but
it requires you to change your style. And Jim Florio is, like I said, he was ahead of his time on the policy stuff. He is a pure policy wonk. This guy loves public policy, loves debating public policy, loves reading about it, educating himself on it. Not because some staffer wrote a memo, he read the books. So he was steeped in this and that’s what he was. The political presentation part of it-- he was surrounded by a lot of wonks. But I think he could have used some people the first time-- not me, there are a lot of people who could do it who could help leaven that political Trenton process and not in a congressional style. But Jim is brilliant.

Rick Sinding: The 1991 midterm election results in the unprecedented election of a Veto-proof Republican legislature.

Sam Crane: Right.

Rick Sinding: And you become state treasurer.

Sam Crane: Yes.

Rick Sinding: So let’s talk about these two years.

Sam Crane: Okay.

Rick Sinding: You have to come up with a budget, a Florio administration budget that you know is going to be rejected out of hand the minute that you present it to this particular legislature. Walk us through the first couple of months of trying to piece together what would have been the fiscal year in ‘93, I guess, budget the one that would have to be passed by June 30 of ‘92 by what is now a Republican dominated legislature.

Sam Crane: Well, it was an interesting process because as a member of the executive branch and not the legislative branch we get to propose, they dispose. But one of the things I had going for me is the new chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee was Senator Littell who had been on the Joint Appropriations Committee the entire time I worked for the legislature. And even though I didn’t serve him, I worked for the Democratic staff, the members of that committee got to know each other. And they might have disagreements but they also work things out on a minor level. A bunch of ministerial stuff kind of was agreed to.

Rick Sinding: I should point out that Senator Littell was a little further right than most of the members of the Republican party of New Jersey, most of the senators of the Republican party of New Jersey.

Sam Crane: Verbally, yes, but at the end of the day he knew that the government had to be run. So the chairman of the assembly committee is now-Congressman Frelinghuysen, also a member of the joint appropriation committee of long standing and who I got to know through that process. So the one benefit that the only thing I had going for me as treasurer was that I knew-- I had a relationship with these
two men and their staffs because remember their staff's followed them to the joint appropriations. So we all knew each other. And that’s the time when the Star-Ledger used to write a story every day that we’d go to dinner after hearing days and they would complain about the money being spent on us eating. But what happened is everybody got to know each other. And so on a lot of levels you didn’t start with hi my name is Sam Crane and who the hell are you, you started with hi Senator, how are you? Or hi, Assemblyman or Mr. Chairman. And their staff and I knew each other. They represented their point of view, as they should. But we started off with some kind of a personal relationship which, I think, made it easier. They were going to repeal the sales tax because Chuck Haytaian was determined to do it.

**Rick Sinding:** Chuck Haytaian was the new Assembly speaker.

**Sam Crane:** Assembly speaker and somebody who I grew to respect because as much as I thought he was wrong and as much as we may have had some colorful conversations about state fiscal matters, when Chuck gave his word he would do something, he’d do it. And it was a great experience because I could-- and if I gave my word to him I never broke it because I realized that that was the bond that allowed a lot of other things to happen while we were fighting over the sales tax because you had the rest of the government. And so that year we had the sales tax fight and it was what it was. We ended up cushioning the cuts. We didn’t do as badly. The budget passed pretty much on time. There was a lot of back and forth. The next one was much more difficult than that one.

**Rick Sinding:** This was to-- the sales tax had been increased from six to seven percent in the Florio first two years. And had also been applied to a number of items that it hadn’t previously been applied to. So now the movement in the legislature is to repeal that to bring it back to six percent and to remove it from the items that it had been placed on.

**Sam Crane:** On some of them.

**Rick Sinding:** On some of them, toilet paper being the obvious one.

**Sam Crane:** What is interesting is that the story can be written today that of the famous $2.8 billion taxes they repealed less than 800 of them.

**Rick Sinding:** Eight hundred million.

**Sam Crane:** Eight hundred million. The rest of it stayed in place because they couldn’t do it because of the recession they needed the money. In order to do the sales tax cut they couldn’t do undo the rest of it. And so that-- it gets turned on its head in the rewriting of history that they repealed the Florio tax plan. They did not. They repealed one part of it.

**Rick Sinding:** Actually, the income tax part of it didn’t get repealed until Whitman was elected.
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Sam Crane: That’s correct. And only a portion of it.

Rick Sinding: But my recollection is that Governor Florio vetoed the budget. Was that the following year, or...

Sam Crane: No, the first year. We vetoed the budget. They overrode us. And part of that was the governor couldn’t say I unnecessarily raise this tax. This was a political decision. I think it was probably the right one at the time and we said we needed it. We said we needed it and frankly we still did because we then started to bleed the government. I got a call a year-and-a-half after I was out of office by the head of the transition team for treasury who called to thank me for thinning down the department of treasury. He never thought that the treasury department or any department in state government would be smaller when we left. We had reduced, fundamentally reduced the size of state government which made the public employee unions mad at Jim too. I mean so he had it coming from all sides at that point. But he was managing in a fiscally responsible way. And we ended up with a fairly fiscally responsible budget. The next year was harder because it was an election year and that all of the politics was out because it was a gubernatorial year and that’s when it was really rugged.

Rick Sinding: Really? I didn’t recall that the following fiscal year was more difficult. Maybe that was because there wasn’t the cut back on the sales tax anymore. This was now...

Sam Crane: We reduced the size of-- we were laying people off. And it was tough. It’s tough to lay people off and it’s tough to lay off people in the state government with bumping and civil service and union rules is the most difficult part of it.

Rick Sinding: Now, Governor Florio himself has said that there actually was quite a bit of accomplished in that second two year-- in the last two years of his administration, in part perhaps because of the fact that there was this veto-proof Republican majority and you had to work together. So particularly, in terms of economic development initiatives and in terms of welfare reformwere two areas that he’s pointed to as significant accomplishments that occurred. I wonder if you would amplify on that.

Sam Crane: Yes. Well, in some ways it’s liberating when the legislature is controlled by the other party you’re by yourself. Now, you’re a sole actor.

Rick Sinding: As Barack Obama is...

Sam Crane: As Barack Obama, I think, has come to fully appreciate in the last month. And then you’re playing off against them but they also need you. And I think that’s true of all administrations has even followed it right through the Christie administration is there is a level in which there are certain things you have to get done to run the government and quietly those things get done. I can’t remember the year. It was during the Kean administration, we got a bad sales tax ruling from the Supreme Court. And we would pass every year something called a validating act.
and that was to correct laws. And it is sponsored by the chair of the appropriations committee and the ranking Republican or ranking democrat depending on who controls it. And it passes on consent with no debate. We fixed the sales tax core case in the validating act. Tom Kean signed it. There was no pens hanging out. It was passed on consent with the chair rising and moving it, the Republican rising, in this case Moose Foran, Senator Moose Foran rising and seconding Senator Weiss’ motion to move the bill. All in favor, I, all opposed no and we fixed-- I can’t remember the amount but it was a substantial potential loss in revenue in that. That took cooperation. The same thing was true in the second two years. When I talked about Chuck Haytaian there was a whole series of things that we did cooperatively with the legislature that were done maybe not with ta-da lots of noise, lots of thunder, but were done because we made agreements. And, I think, also and I’m using Chuck Haytaian because Jim was kind of an ethnic Italian politician and so was Chuck. And there was kind of a-- we both climbed our way up the politics.

Rick Sinding: Thought he was not Italian - Armenian.

Sam Crane: Armenian but they both came up the hard way. They viewed their rise in politics as coming up the hard way. And I think there was even though when they disagreed they had a certain feeling for each other from their separate but actually joint experiences. And so I think that helped. So you still had the ability to have those relationships. And so my relationships with the members of the committee, Jim’s kind of relationship with Chuck Haytaian, you know, on some level we got a lot done. Fiscally, we paddled water until the election the second year. We just did enough to get through because it was clear that we’re not going to make any major fiscal changes in the middle of a gubernatorial election year. Not much positive can get done in that timeframe.

Rick Sinding: November 19, ’93, a very close election.

Sam Crane: Yes, surprisingly.

Rick Sinding: Doug Berman was almost right that you get that out of the way and you build it back up again but didn’t quite make it.

Sam Crane: Didn’t quite make it.

Rick Sinding: Twenty-five thousand votes. How did you work with the Whitman transition team? You spoke earlier and rather eloquently about really the importance of getting the transition right. How did you work with the incoming Whitman team in developing a transition between Florio and Whitman? Candidates who had faced each other and the incumbent had lost.

Sam Crane: My view of transition was that I am loyal to the sitting governor. But I also felt an obligation to the treasury department and to the state government. After being around for so many years that I gave at least my little portion of it the best transition I could. And because I had been around so long when I had the first
meeting with the Whitman transition team it was like old friends week. One of the
principle players was John Sheridan who I knew from the Kean administration and
had had a relationship with not professionally but had known John and had talked to
John and had a lot of respect for John. And Lillian Borrone from the Port Authority
who I knew. And so it was kind of like you had the new Whitman-lite team that
were looking at me like I was the devil incarnate. And then there was this other
group of people...

Rick Sinding: I mean Hazel Gluck and Judy Shaw.

Sam Crane: But they weren’t treasury. But most of the treasury team I kind of
knew and my belief was that I will serve the governor but I will also cooperate fully
with the transition team coming in because they won and they’re going to take over
the government. The election is over. It’s time to do what’s best, you hope, for the
state government and for the treasury department on the way out the door. The
only unfortunate part is that they selected a treasurer very late. I only had one
dinner with him right before she was sworn in. I didn’t develop a lot of relationship
with him at that time. But I think I gave them a pretty good transition.

Rick Sinding: Did you give any thought to going back to the legislature at that
point?

Sam Crane: No, I decided-- I went out and sought advice. And I could have gone
across the street to the lobbying industry. I had spent my time in legislature kind of
been there, done that. I had been treasurer. I wanted to be treasurer, been there,
done that. And I got advice from someone who will remain unnamed who said,
“Sam, get out of Trenton. Smudge the D in the middle of your forehead and
reinvent yourself.” And that’s what I proceeded to do. I felt as if I had been there
long enough and it was time to move on. And if you stuck in Trenton as a player all
you’re going to do is get asked about what they’re doing and I was done. I was
exhausted. I had done my service and I was ready to move on.

Rick Sinding: Tell us what you’ve been doing since then.

Sam Crane: Well, I left there and they were merging two business organizations in
Newark and I ran what became known as the regional business partnership in
Newark for about eight years and then I went to work for Maher Terminals out at
Port Elizabeth because as part of my stint as head of the regional business
partnership we were supporting the dredging of the part. I had gotten those issues
and I got to know some people at the part and then I got to know Brian more and
went to work with him. They sold the company. I consulted for a couple of years
and now I work for Brian and Basil Maher doing their social giving.

Rick Sinding: There is also a Crane Consulting company. Is that still...

Sam Crane: That’s no longer in existence. As of July 1, I have moved on. I’m now
working for them fulltime.
Rick Sinding: And your name has shown up in more recent clips with respect to a couple of reports that have come out regarding infrastructure, transportation. Tell us about your involvement in those activities.

Sam Crane: Well, shortly after the governor became elected a group of us former’s and there are a lot of former’s out there...

Rick Sinding: You’re talking about the current governor.

Sam Crane: Current governor. Formers and we’ve got former treasurers. We’ve got former chiefs of staff. We got former’s whatever and most of us have retired from what I call active political service in that we’re not driving the campaigns. We’ll probably never go back and be in the government again. We’ve all done our duty and had a privilege of serving. And a group of us started to talk and one of the things we said is this is really messed up and it’s going to be messed up for a while.

Rick Sinding: You’re talking now about the state...

Sam Crane: The state finances. And local finances as well. And so a group of us kind of created facing our future, a group of Republican and Democratic former officials. We knew each other. We respected each other. We had done business across administrations. And we wrote a series of reports about what we thought the long term fiscal climate was going to be. I regret to inform you we were right at our worst case. And then we also wrote a report on the need to invest in infrastructure that we needed to do something about our roads and our bridges. And we wrote that in the Post Sandy period. We started before Sandy. And what was unfortunate - Sandy was unfortunate for the state of New Jersey for a lot of reasons. A lot of people got hurt. But going back to my Rahm Emmanuel school it was a crisis that went unused. Here was a chance to talk about what happens when infrastructure fails. Sewers failed. Electricity failed. Telephone failed. Roads and bridges were down. And it made graphic for everybody why it is a public responsibility to make sure that you have good infrastructure and what the economic cost is if infrastructure is not maintained. Now, a lot of the infrastructure is owned by private companies but the state government has some say over it. And, in fact, for our long term economic view, for our long term prosperity New Jersey is dependent on those things. And we thought it was a time for Republican and Democratic politicians because that’s what we were. We’re all different stripes, we thought that was an opportunity to engage the public with why we’re going-- it’s going to cost you some money but why this is important because you saw the failure of infrastructure. We timed the report right. I won’t say it was greeted and accepted and move forward in any way shape or form because I think the politics were-- there was not that much interest in pursuing it. But we will get back to that debate and I hope it doesn’t take another terrible storm.

Rick Sinding: We hope it doesn’t either. What should I have asked you that I didn’t? What recollections do you have of the Florio administration that come to mind either anecdotally or sort of a general overview of your time in the state department?
Sam Crane: I think one of the—let me talk about Governor Florio first. I think there’s this assumption out there and a view of him that remains somewhat fixed in time of a guy who was cold in a three piece suit no matter what happened - kind of like Nixon walking on the beach in California with a suit and trying to look human but wasn’t. Jim really could be extraordinarily personable. And in settings where we were working through problems listened and understood and went to school on what we were talking about. And I think because of the politics that surrounded the tax increase and the guns, those are the two things, I think, that are stuck with him. There’s this notion of this guy who is just kind of snarling and pushing it through and everything else. And I don’t think people fully appreciate how far ahead of this time he was. And I think that was somewhat his style shortcomings. But when it came to understanding and putting a policy together and really working something through he is a very impressive man. What I took away from the legislature and to this day my time in the legislature and I’ll tell it in the form of a story, when I was state treasurer-- Governor Florio obviously from South Jersey, Wildwood was in real trouble and the Wildwood Convention Center needed to be redone. And there was a good assemblyman named Frank Lobiondo [now Congressman] who wanted to do the same thing and he and the governor somehow talked. I get a call from the governor. Assemblyman Lobiondo is on his way down there. We’re going to fix the Wildwood Convention Center. You figure it out, which is exactly what a governor should do. Now, he has final say on what I figure out and I’m supposed to work with him. So we worked together and I don’t even remember what the outcome is but there was money put into the Wildwood Convention Center and it fixed and it turned. Well, it began the process of turning it around. Long after I had left the government, we were working on some port issues and then Congressman Lobiondo was chairman of the coast guard subcommittee which received a lot of port legislation. I was working for a company. I was doing government affairs. And we joined his congressional club $2000 contribution you join it. So I drive down to Vineland because he’s having a congressional club breakfast. I’m sitting there. In comes Congressmen Lobiondo. I had not seen him in maybe six, seven years. He looks at me and he says, “Sam?” And I said, Congressman. He said, “What the hell are you doing here?” And I said you threw a breakfast and I was going to come. And he said, “Sam, that Wildwood Convention Center was the best thing I ever did in the legislature and I want to thank you and Jim for doing it.” And that is a lesson because Frank Lobiondo isn’t exactly a left wing Republican by any stretch of the imagination. But there is a place where you can meet. It might be in a bathroom on the second floor to figure out how you’re apart on a budget. Or it may be because an assemblyman wanted to make a wise investment to turnaround a city and a governor of another party didn’t say no I won’t do it because he’s a Republican and he voted to repeal the sales tax. Those were never connected. And so those are the lessons. So when I go to Washington. I get to see my former chairman Rod Frelinghuysen, my former friend who was a council in Kean’s office Leonard Lance and I see that former assemblyman Frank Lobiondo who did the Wildwood Convention Center. The lesson, I think, there is the public and those who study all of this want to study what’s happening in Washington. Perhaps the best thing to study is state legislatures and governors
because that is where the real work of the nation probably continues on while everybody is yelling and screaming at each other.

**Rick Sinding:** I can think of no better testimony to what is being done here at the Eagleton Institute of Politics than what you’ve just said about the study of governors and legislatures.

**Sam Crane:** And you’re to be commended for that because everybody wants to study the federal government or New York City or Chicago or L.A. and it is the state’s that will have, I think, in the next-- have already had and probably over the next term of the presidency of the United States will have a much bigger impact on public policy than any federal officer.

**Rick Sinding:** Well, on that hopefully hopeful note I want to thank you very much for your time and for your service to the state of New Jersey.

**Sam Crane:** Well, thank you. I’ve enjoyed it.