## [Dukakis]

We've always had that kind of attitude to some extent in this country — "Why are they doing what they're doing; their ethics are shaky," and that kind of stuff. And in point of fact, it was far worse a hundred years ago. In the late nineteenth century, the Congress was in the hip pocket of the railroads. Lock, stock, and barrel. And corruption was one of the reasons we had a Progressive movement in this country. So the level of integrity and the standards we set for our public officials these days are much tougher and much harder than they ever have been historically. Having said that, one of the reasons that I teach these days, is because I want to encourage young people to go into public service. There is nothing more personally fulfilling or satisfying than being in a position where you can make a difference in the lives of your fellow citizens. And that's really what politics and public service are all about.

And I've had the great good fortune to spend virtually all my adult life doing this. And I'm sorry I didn't get elected President. That would've been great. In fact, we could've avoided a lot of the mess that we're in if I had defeated the old man; which meant that the kid wouldn't have been elected. But it's hard to describe what kind of fulfillment you get from this. I was out ringing doorbells for Elizabeth Warren on Saturday in Framingham and knocked on the door of a family, obviously of Hispanic background. And the young man who came to the door before his father came to the door, was an eighth grader in the Framingham schools who wants to be a veterinarian. This is a Latino kid, eighth grader, and he's already decided that he wants to be a Doctor of Veterinary medicine. And he wants to go to the Tufts Veterinary School. So I said to him, "You know who's responsible for the Tufts Veterinary School, don't you?" I said, "Well. The guy you're looking at," at least for a substantial extent. Because I was governor at the time when we worked with Tufts to put that together, gave them public land out in Grafton to create a large animal hospital and an initial \$100,000 grant to do planning and so on and so forth. And I'm very proud of that. You know I walked away from that meeting with that kid saying first, "What a wonderful thing that this first generation American wants to be a doctor of veterinary medicine," and second, "What a great thing that he's got now one of the tops schools of veterinary medicine in the country, and I had something to do with it." There's nothing quite like that feeling. I didn't tell me to invite him to his graduation, but if I'm still around, I'd love to be there.

## [Samford]

It's important because the democratic process requires people to be involved in order for it to work. And if you don't participate, then your needs and your wants are not accounted for. So it's very important to pay attention to what's going on. Just because they can't vote now doesn't mean they can't effect change. It doesn't mean they can't be involved.

#### [Gearan]

Well the great lesson is, it's fun. You meet some of the greatest people ever. Our closest friends, to this day, have been through campaigns; some successful, many not. But the bonds of friendship, the sense of it being a mission, you're all in this together, is just a phenomenal – it's intellectually interesting, it has an interesting range of ideas, it broadens your horizons. And it's great fun; it's a lot of fun.

But secondly, then, and importantly, it's really important. It's consequential, who's elected and who's not elected. Lives forever are changed by it. And for young people especially, the weird thing is, is that most elected officials are middle aged or older. So most of their lives have been lived. But they're making decisions that will impact young people. So I would argue even more so, and President Clinton used to make this point, that the responsibility of young people to get involved – because those decisions, made by older people, will affect young people more than themselves - the young people more than the elected officials. So whatever issue, the environment, taxes, education, foreign policy – whatever draws one to it, it's a big deal. And people should think about it.

# [Corley]

Well, I really, truly believe in our democratic ideals that we have here in our United States, and I believe that it's everyone's responsibility to give back to your government. I mean we get so much out of the way that our country is run and what it does for people, and for everyone who's here, and I think you owe it to your country to serve it. And one of the best ways to do that is to get involved in the election system and in politics, and at the convention if you wanted to come and be at the convention. There's a real sense that you are making things the way they should be when you participate in it, and it's like voting. Everyone says, well, it's a privilege; well I actually think of it as a right, I mean it's something that you should do because it's not optional, you actually can have such a huge impact on what happens in this country by who you vote for.

# [Counts]

I think young people my age spend a lot of time looking at the entertainment industry, and the stars there, and the sports industry and those stars. But at the same time, I think, there's a lot to be gained from spending time looking at the leaders of this country. I mean these are the people who make the policy that is not only going to have a huge impact on our life in the short term, but in the long term. And as young people, the people who have the most years left to live on this earth, I think it's really important that we step up our involvement in the political process. Right now, they're making decisions on how money is spent for years to come. And that money's not just coming from a magic fairy; that's taxpayer dollars. And so as we – as our generation continues to work and continues to grow, and continues to bring in a paycheck, we're continually see a portion of our paycheck go to the government. And we're going to see them spend it on certain things. And I think it's extremely important to anyone that's serious about raising a family and looking after their children and ensuring that they're living in a country that's prosperous. It's extremely important to make sure you're involved in having a say in how those funds get spent, and having a say in what powers and control the government has over that money, and over you in your personal lives.

# [Modisett]

Well there's the defensive answer and the offensive answer. The first answer is that if you don't do it, than someone you probably don't agree with is going to do it, so you have no right to complain when you end up with policies that you don't think are good for your state or your country. You have to be involved. But the other thing is, I'd say, the really positive aspect of it, is that you really can make a difference. One person really can influence a ballot initiative, can influence a debate, can influence a school board, and can really change the direction that a state or community is going. And no one is too young to do that. If you're old enough to be involved.

## [Dredd]

It's so important for young people to stay involved, because at some point in time, the decisions that are made now are going to impact you. And as a young person, if you get involved now, and have a better understanding or how those decisions are made, you can not only participate now, but also then be some of those decision-makers later on and be very effective at

making them work for you, your community and the country overall. It's really important for young people to stay involved now because President Obama has really put a lot of energy, a lot of time and a lot of effort into making sure our country is a better place, and that's what we're all here for, is making sure he has a chance to continue doing that. And that's one of the reasons I've taken the job that I have now is to support that effort. And I started back when I was young, stayed involved and will continue to stay involved for years to come.

## [Berman]

I think it's still a big deal, I think I understand the cynicism. I've gotten pretty cynical, I think there's a lot of things about the Congress, about the government that are probably dysfunctional at this stage. But we're not going to change them unless people stay involved, and how that's going to manifest itself remains to be seen. But I still think it's an important piece of business, I think it's a thing that probably makes us different than most other countries. But it needs some work, because people have, the thing that has changed the most in politics is the disappearance of the middle. So in all political activity there always was a substantial group of moderates. They're basically gone from the Congress, there's a couple left. But they aren't particularly relevant just because there aren't enough of them to make any difference. And so you're working on the right and the left. The other thing that has happened in the communications side of the world is that there are no secrets anymore. So, if a person on the left or a person on the right, my favorite example is the change in the filibuster rule that was authored by Mondale when he was in the United States Senate and a fellow by the name of Pearson from Kansas. And they changed, they got the body to change the rule from 66 votes to end the filibuster to 60 votes.

Off Camera: two-thirds to three-fifths.

Right, right. And, they worked on that for months quietly, small meetings, meeting with, it was the Democrats from the South that were the biggest problem actually, that really liked the filibuster. And, but they quietly worked at it, both of them, and Mondale in particular, I knew more about his work obviously because I worked with him. And then they brought it to several votes, and there's a whole history about it. Today I think that would be impossible because by the time you left your office and walked into Pearson's office some blogger would be writing a note saying "what's

Mondale doing in Jim Pearson's office?" And so I think the change in communication in many ways, for those who are interested is terrific, but I think it is, it is, one of the things that's happened with communication is that the providers of communication are working, are moving information with less and less accuracy because it's all about who's going to get out first.

#### [Tisei]

I can see why people would be cynical because so much of what you watch and so much of what the media tends to focus on is negative, and it makes you cynical. But I've met a lot of great public officials, both Democrat and Republican, who were there for all the right reasons, and they're exactly, in a lot of cases exactly the type of people that you want to be making decisions for everybody else. And most people who do get cynical, they think that the government doesn't impact them at all, but it really does. No matter what you do, what profession you're in, you're impacted by rules that are made by people who are elected. I always tell kids, you know, when I'll go into a school, I'll always say, you know, the reason you're in school today is because there's a law that passed that specifically says the number of days that you need to attend to be able to go from grade to grade. You know your teacher's here today because your teacher had to be certified, you know there's a state law to do that. You know you jump in your car you put your seatbelt on, that's a state law requiring you to do that. I mean anything you do in any profession you go into, you have to usually be licensed, or you know, that's all people making rules for you. So rather than sitting back and letting other people control your life, pretty much you know, having some skin in the game yourself by paying attention to what goes on around you and participating in the electoral process is something that I think is really good for everybody to participate in. That's why we're such a great country.

## [Kerrigan]

Young people should be involved in politics and should be

engaged and should care, because it's their future that gets debated today. You know it's a very popular political line to talk about our children and our grandchildren and the burden we're giving them, but in large measure it's true. We need young folks to get involved because young folks have been at the core of all major advancements and movements in our country's history, back to the revolution. You know, I'm from New England, back from the revolution, where so many young men and women stood with their

parents and their grandparents and their brothers and sisters and said "enough." The abolition movement, suffrage movement, anti-war movements, the issue for job safety, civil rights, you name it, it's a huge part of what young people give to this country is their energy and their enthusiasm and their commitment to moving our country forward. So the decisions that affect their lives are being made today. You know you look at the decision on student loan rates, you know right now, there are discussions that are going on, in the last few months over student loan rates and whether or not to double them, that's not going to necessarily impact guys my age because our student loans are paid. It's gonna impact the folks who are yet to enter college or the kids who are in college. So it's up to them to stand up, it's their democracy, and get involved and get engaged. It's too easy for them to see that there's no connection between what happens in government and their lives, but there is more connection now than there ever has been before.

#### [Schlesinger]

Why politics matters. Because it does. It affects all our lives, it affects my life, it affects my children's life, it affects my grandchildren's life, and it effects the planet because if you can really have, take care of the problems that we have we need to have people who are really willing to look at the issues squarely, honestly, and make assessments and try and move in the right direction.

## [Corrigan]

Well everything about our lives is a function of politics. And you know, it's how we, how we divide up rights and responsibilities, it's how we divide up resources in our society. So, you can, you know whether you like it or not you are involved in politics. You might as well try to get involved and make a difference, because you can make a difference and you can make things better for the issues you care about if you work at it. You will never feel a greater sense of empowerment than getting involved in politics and winning an election. Of course you have to run the risk of losing some too.

# [Halley]

You have to take some of this analysis that you see with a grain of salt, and look for actual, you know, documentary, etc. When somebody says someone's position is derived from this, don't look at that. Go actually look at the position paper. Spend the time. Because it really does affect

yourself, your country, your family, your neighborhood. And if you're interested in an issue, spend the time, go look at the website, find out what their position is; ask the question. You'd be surprised how often you can get a response to something when you actually send in a question. Say, "I'd like to, I know your position is this, but what about

that?" And guite often, campaigns are responsive to that, and they might even try to engage you. So it's important that you invest time. Now, you know the best thing that we have in the country is democracy, but a democracy is dependent on an informed electorate. And that is the responsibility of the electorate, you know, clearly, it's up to the candidates to try to communicate effectively but you can only do that to the extent that people are interested and receptive to those messages. And today I found, you know, for the first time when I moved into Watertown, Massachusetts where I live now, I had to go vote in a race where I didn't know the candidates personally. So I started reading the local newspaper. Well the newspaper coverage has become a shadow of what it used to be. They don't have reporters, they just sort of regurgitate stuff. In some cases they actually hire people from offshore to watch cable TV of the, of the City Council proceedings and then do a story. I mean it's, it's ludicrous. I could not discern the difference between the candidates that way so I went to a candidates' night and saw them in the flesh. And the candidates don't even, haven't quite figured out how to make it clear what their differences are with the other person. I wanted to make sure I wasn't going to vote for somebody who was totally insane for one of these positions, which you can do if you just vote on the, well I like their name, or they come from my neighborhood. I mean I spent the time as a political professional to try to figure out what the difference was. And I said, you know it wasn't easy. And if somebody who spent his entire adult life being relatively or very significantly successful at this business can't make the decision about Candidate A or Candidate B in a City Council race, I can't imagine how a person who, you know, has got kids to drop off at the daycare center, pressures on the job at work, and you know, there are all sorts of time demands and pressures, and they've got to make that decision.

## [Keswick]

It's really important for people, for students, for anyone of voting age, to really get involved in politics. If you look back at the elections that I was heavily involved in, 2000 and 2004, every vote counted. You know, we hear every November about these small town elections for selectmen or Mayor

where it comes down to one vote, they found out the spouse of the candidate didn't vote. It's really a crime, when you look across the globe at people fighting for freedom and fighting for their independence. You know, we take it for granted here every day. It's really a shame we don't have more folks turning out to vote, more folks trying to change things, and make things better in this country.