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Mr. Harry Haskell

[0:00:00]

Mr. Haskell:

We're going to tape this so I have to stand over here. I won't even – they are part of a term, John, *[phonetic]* [0:00:03] not several terms. Not very likely you're going to get it. But I've been asked to speak for 10 minutes or so with a description of the city and what I do and then questions and answers which would be far more to my liking.

So let me just start up and say what our city is. First of all, if you went up in an airplane and looked down on the city, what is our city line which now has 80,000 people, which used to be 120,000 people out of roughly a metropolitan area now of 300,000 people. You wouldn't see that city line at all. It's just kind of a fake line that has no reality.

And the real city is what you'd see as you look down. We are 50 percent black. Thirty percent of the people in Wilmington are on welfare. One out of every 80 residents – of the residents is on heroine. My police force would double that estimate. That's an estimate made by a fellow who's treating maybe 35 percent of them.

We have a – we're an old city with an inventory of housing that's pretty much blue collar. It's fairly old and its condition is really not modern or strong. We are a – we are the center of the financial endeavor, the economic system. We have an international company that employs 15 percent of the people in the state. We have a group of banks, one of which has the fifth largest trust department of any bank in the United States.

We have a marine terminal that serves the region which the city runs. We had more ships in the Port of Wilmington one week last year than in the Port of Philadelphia.

We have – we take care of all the sewage of New Castle County. And we have to keep up with the new regulations which means another \$14 million worth of construction.

We have – we supply a lot of the water for the people in the county at a loss. And we drink half of the Brandywine at *[inaudible]* [0:02:52] and is – and we drink it whether it's clean or muddy. It does get treated.

We have – we have an educational system that's financed off the property tax. My budget, which is separate to the education school board budget, is 70 percent three years ago on the real estate tax. It's now down in the 30s because of the wage tax that's been imposed which just reduces the burden on the city tax payer and that 70 percent of the wage tax is paid by the county resident which has met a fairly strong shift in the last few years in the revenue base.

The revenue base is the basic – one of the basic problems of a city. If there are two, it's one of them. Basically, the cities in the country as well as our own have been financed off of the poor people in our population. Whether that's black, Spanish-speaking -- 5 percent of Wilmington are Spanish-speaking, whether it's black, white, Spanish-speaking where essentially the poor people will tend to remain in the city and therefore their ability to pay taxes is less. This is not unique to us. Thirty percent of our city is untaxable. It's the medical center, it's churches, community houses and everything, the things that are untaxable.

In Baltimore – incidentally, I travel with about 15 or 16 other mayors around who tell the woes of the cities. So we're pretty good at poor-mouthing *[phonetic]* **[0:04:52]** if we have to. Baltimore's Tommy D'Alesandro down there has 900,000 residents. Only 300,000 have incomes of 3,000 and more. And only 130,000 of them pay taxes.

[0:05:16]

In Boston, 54 percent of that city is untaxable. In North New Jersey which is the worst condition. Ken Gibson *[phonetic]* **[0:05:27]** travels with us. He has owned a home of \$20,000. You pay every year \$2,200 a year of taxes. And that's pretty fantastic. As a result, they're knocking these houses down every day because there's no economic viability to maintaining a home.

So I illustrate this to say the tax base of a city is a key factor in its decline. And certainly, our own cities in this country are in a form of decline. They ask to – the other day, we were in Atlanta and Moon Landrieu *[phonetic]* **[0:06:07]** who's also one of our guys from New Orleans, they asked him where – about the New York Times, where this whole city is going.

And he kind of looked down and he said, "Well, it reminds of two window washers, one on the 20th floor and one on the 10th floor. And the fellow on the 20th floor falls off. And as he goes by, the guy in the 10th floor leans out and says, 'how are things going?' and the guy says, 'so far so good.'" That's kind of the way our cities are going.

We are cleaning our case on a national basis in order to go after a thing called revenue sharing which is to return money directly to us from the federal revenue which is based on the income tax which goes up every year and goes up with inflation as opposed to us where our revenue base is flat and we have to go begging every year.

We want to get in on the growth factor which the wage tax does and 25 percent of my revenue is now on that basis. So it's an improvement. But we still have to go and beg from the legislature. And the legislature, not only in this state but in the other states in the nation, all 50 of them, basically are alien legislatures to the cities.

They are suburban controlled or rural controlled. And their sensitivity and knowledge of a city's problem and its need for subsidization whether you're talking about mass transit or whatever you're talking about is not really sympathetically understood. And having to go back year after year only seems to make it worse.

So there is approaching in this country a basic decision and inevitable and even a lack of decision will be a decision. There's no way to avoid it as to which way our cities are going.

So much for the sad side of the picture. I think on the other side, there is a growing band of men who think that if you take the direction, the allocation of funds, the setting of priorities in a city, take that effort being done now by the Federal Government and by the Congress and put it in the hands of the local management, you will get a better determination of what that priority is.

And we are trying very hard and that's what revenue sharing means to us. They are – that means money back to us to use in the way we think whatever – if we think a park ought to be built, we build a park versus building a monument or if you think that you need a bus as opposed to a highway, those are over simplifications but that's the idea.

Let me just – I have a request to run the police department, police community relations is a whole world in itself. We have taken – we have one of the best police forces in Wilmington. Every single member of our force has been through 20 weeks of human relations training. We have some college credit with almost every man. We have – three years ago, I couldn't get enough men to apply and now, we have 150 applications to – that would be 30 jobs on each class.

We have a growing professionalism. It's a tough job in a city. You're dealing with crime 80 percent of the time as opposed to maybe in the state and county efforts where you deal with crime to a much lower percent. You're dealing with traffic problems and that sort of thing.

[0:10:00]

The whole operational police department, a professional fire department, we have to build the streets and the signs and there's a whole city under a city, all of those pipes in the sewers and everything else. I'm trying – it's a – it's a – it's a nightmare.

In Wilmington, three years ago when I took office, there was one guy in the Water Department that knew where all the bowels were. And if something happened to that guy, it would have been a hell of a mess within an hour or two, I think.

We are – there's a whole engineering component and a middle management necessity in a city. A city can – partisan politics is a factor in Wilmington. It isn't a factor in a lot of cities. In big cities, in many big cities, there are non-partisan tickets. In the City of Wilmington, however, we have our – I'm a republican mayor. We have a democratic council which is 10 to 3 against me and they approve all of our money.

There is a partisan problem which really makes it very difficult. I've been in this business for 25 years and I can speak honestly, I could fight a partisan battle as well as – better than anybody else in this state if I have to. And I know of nothing that I dislike more to do. And frankly, the longer you stay in government, the less you'll like to have to deal in a partisan way because particularly today when the problems are so pressing, really it's idiocy to have some political difference when you've got enough problems trying to figure out what's right and wrong even if you don't have any political shadows wandering across the stage.

This is one of the problems between the cities and the counties. A question comes up whether to join the two governments together. An intellectual discussion, an emotional decision, a political decision as well, all three will be involved. It's a question that would face every city and county in a similar situation to ours. Maybe not a big city like New York and the suburbs but Indianapolis has been joined.

It would be a very tough thing for me to think of dealing with an opposite party in the county or in a *[inaudible]* **[0:12:45]** switch party. But if you have to deal with an opposite party, there're just that desire to get the

better of the other fellow that gets in the way of coming to a rational decision.

At the same time, I realized that a two-party system, I have to think is best, much better in the French system with a whole lot of parties. And two parties capable of national government moving over is the best kind of a democracy. We have a capitalistic system with a democracy in this country. And I think the two-party system is a very definite part of our tradition and it works.

I think maybe questions, John *[phonetic]* **[0:13:27]** probably more interest to the people in the audience. Yeah, the lady way back in the – yeah.

Unknown speaker: How badly have you been hit by the economic crisis in Delaware?

Mr. Haskell: We are probably better than – we're certainly better than most. We're sort of in a backlist here. Wes Olman *[phonetic]* **[0:13:53]** in Seattle who is also one of our guys. He had 15 percent unemployment, we are now around 7 in the city. We will have double the unemployment maybe at the county. The black community, Spanish-speaking community would tend to have a higher unemployment figure.

This particular recession or whatever you call it tend to hit the white collar person harder in the first instance. And it's only in the last – this is my judgment anyway. Only in the last six to eight months has it really hit down on the lower – on the laboring side – the unemployment which tends to hit my – the city people the most.

A department laid off – I don't know, it's like 3,500 people and it's had a tremendous impact on the state. The 3,500 breadwinners in the last few years and that's the biggest employer. I hope they're leveling off.

[0:15:00]

The automobile companies are up pretty strong right now and that helps us with price in General Motors. Basically, it's a major problem obviously in the welfare rolls. The welfare rolls have almost doubled in the last – within the year. And I think that's – to some degree at least to a fair degree due to the unemployment.

That puts a tremendous burden on the state and indirectly costs more money and then it's harder for me to get funds in other categories and so the pressure comes on the city again. Also, you know, we'd like as many

people off of welfare as possible for obvious reasons, social and human reasons as well as the tax payer – cost to the tax payer.

Unknown speaker: I think she's referring to the government years of budget crisis, not necessarily *[inaudible]* [0:15:52].

Mr. Haskell: Is that what you're referring to, budget crisis? Oh, that has had a – my feeling about the budget crisis – there was a misestimate of the income. And when that became clear, they did two things. One, they cut the budget, x millions of dollars, and they increased taxes, y millions of dollars, to make up for the difference.

When they cut the budget, they cut it in education, they cut it across the boards. I won't argue with whether they were – how they did it. But they cut them. As a result when you go down for instance we had a, you know, crisis, the buses working around on November the 15th and so we had to get additional money and so everybody has to squeeze and squeeze and the pressure comes. It's not just on the state but back down the line.

Traditionally, you don't raise taxes, for obvious reasons, in election year. This is an election year. Now, usually the taxes are raised in the year after elections. Everybody usually promises not to raise taxes and they probably don't. And you will find that in every government in the United States. But the effect on us – we're always in a money squeeze and so the effect on us is there and is kind of tough. My friend just got a call today just working down here about the amount of money we're going to get for sewers, matching money.

Actually, it's just a little bit more. And I figured I was going to get it after – a new cut was there but it's a lot less than I hoped to get in the first place. And so we'll string out. But let me just say this, a lot has been done in the last three years, a lot more than ever before. I'm afraid expectations have also been raised very highly and we – and they thought they had this additional amount of money to work with. And so they don't have it to work with. It's still a lot more than they had before so you have to keep your perspective on it. Yeah.

Unknown speaker: *[inaudible]* [0:18:09]

Mr. Haskell: I had a half a million dollar deficit at the end – when the audit finally came in. They were predicting everything up to 3.2 million and so forth. When we finally got down, it's about a half a million which is about an average deficit. It's not, you know, we'd rather have – not have a deficit but that's not bad, you know, it's like a 1 percent or 2 percent off. You

know, the way – we are required by law to balance the budget. And when you – and you make your estimate in March and then you finally find out whether you made or not a year and a quarter later plus another two months of *[inaudible]* **[0:18:55]** taken.

And, you know, it's that kind of a time lag. Each year, we by law, have to balance our budget and we've set it we cannot raise taxes. And so, sometimes we have a certain – if the economy is going up, you'll have a surplus as a rule. I was rather presently surprised that we had no more deficit than we did.

You – way back.

Unknown speaker: How did you come to make up the estimate *[inaudible]* **[0:19:30]**

Mr. Haskell: Well, you simply end the year in deficit of half a million dollars and then you have to, in your next year budget you'd come out to a balance and you cut your budget – I cut a million or two out of my budget in anticipation of a reduction of income. In other words, if I thought the economy was going to be as strong, if I thought the wage tax and so forth were going to bring in what my original estimates were, I would have, you know, not had to maybe cut some of the places that I've cut.

[0:20:10]

So really, by reducing the budget – that's the only way to cut it, is just stop spending. And we did that to a certain degree. Each year, we – in the city, every year you have to raise taxes in one way or another whether it's for education or what. It's practically impossible not to and we certainly will have to raise taxes to some degree next year as we do every year and we're not likely to state whether they don't. Yeah, yeah?

Unknown speaker: I was wondering if the same *[inaudible]* **[0:20:46]** to the shopping mall here, in the center city?

Mr. Haskell: Yeah.

Unknown speaker: *[inaudible]* **[0:20:50]**.

Mr. Haskell: Well, we're ...

Unknown speaker: Would you be kind enough to repeat the question so people in the back can hear?

Mr. Haskell:

Yeah, what is the condition – okay, what is the condition of the shopping mall? How are we progressing down town? We're about – there was a recent study that I had made by – oh, one of the two top firms in the country as to whether a mall is – had markets – or was it feasible to build in Wilmington. And they came back just in the last couple of weeks or the last week with the published report. This has all been done since August updating maybe a-three year ago study.

And they said that providing four things happen, we think it makes a lot of sense. And we see no reason why the four things can't happen. A key thing is the I-95 connector which is about a \$25 million investment to take cars off of I-95 and get them in the middle of town. It should've have been done and built in the first place. We never did have an adequate entrance and exit from I-95.

If you've ever come off of I-95, you could tell their look when they're driving. And ordinarily, you know, you're just sweeping into somewhere and get to the – it just wasn't engineered properly years ago. And so, that's going to be corrected. I am without – with, you know, I think there's about one chance in 20 that we won't get that within the next 20 days.

That's one of the – that's one of the get-the-federal-funding for. We have to match that with some state funds that are on about a one for three basis or one for three – between three and four – one for three. And we feel that we can do that over a period of three, four years, you know, a couple of million dollars a year in the legislature. Now, an *[inaudible]* **[0:22:42]** were built. That's one of them.

Number two – I'm trying to remember what. Number two was the – our ability to attract two department stores which kind of goes without saying you can't really have a shopping mall unless you can attract two department stores. The suggestion is that they – the difficulty of – people have to be – we have to compete with the shopping malls, conquer them all, other places where there's plenty of parking and free parking.

We have to provide parking for the economic development of the mall. That's the third item. And we have to see that that's done and then have to be done with government money backing up the bonds. Now, there'll be revenue bonds and if the people would pay for the parking. But that cost of parking has to be kept low enough so that it can reasonably compete with the other outside malls.

We also – it's of my opinion, in this particular mall that we have to really attract to make it successful. A Lord & Taylor, Garfinckel's, that kind of a department store, so it doesn't exist in the area. With that, I think people will go in town from a roughly 900,000 marketing area across the bridge and up in Pennsylvania to shop in that particular place. We would draw the customers in there.

And it's – this thing either works on a profit and loss basis or you won't get the 40, \$50 million of private money invested that will come to pass here and also give us a tax base for it.

The third and fourth area – and I can see all three of those things happening without any – to me, you just make those happen and I think you can. I've talked to the Lord & Taylor guy and I think there's a possibility there. I happen to be in the retail business myself. In fact, I hired away the Executive Vice President of Lord & Taylor who works for **[inaudible] [0:24:54]**. And he thinks that it's a viable – he thinks that it's a viable enterprise.

[0:25:02]

And so I, you know, I think there might be a chance. Wanamaker's is obviously in a lousy place out there. And I think they got a decision facing themselves, whether they're going to stay or move or what. And I think that's a story – we'll have a good chance to possibly pick up in the center of town.

The last item is community support. And this is community in the very broad sense. That's the industrial community, the black community, the – any part of the community, all aspects of the community. There has to be support, the political community particularly, the city council, the mayor, the county council, the governor, the legislative leaders have got to make a decision that this is going to be made to happen as you would make a Texas decision.

That this is something we go after and we make it happen because you can hang up this thing with a lack of commitment. And it takes a real cooperative enterprise and an understanding that this is going to be what makes the city go.

We think that it can be done and that we can do a lot of good things for the community. We can provide 3,000 permanent jobs. We could – we'd build in minority agreements. In all the construction, we will follow a minority agreement which we hammered out last year which I think is

well ahead of the pack and actually probably will be challenged by the Federal Government at some point in time.

The way it works, unfortunately, it will work because somebody gets a hammer out. The Federal Government has stated, Secretary Fletcher, Assistant Secretary who's a very abled man. He's black in the labor department. And he helped us work this thing out. If they don't meet certain requirements of minority employment in the building trades, you know, this is where the problem is. Now, half the building trades are fine. But you're dealing with 11, 12 unions where the minority of people are not in the unions. I won't argue why, how or where for, but they're not there. And they certainly can be carpenters and they certainly can be brick layers so that it's some manmade reason.

And the – so we – they will stop construction of all federally funded items if they don't meet these requirements. And that includes just about –we have a lot of stuff, hundreds of million dollars' worth. And it's going to come to that, in my opinion, unless we can have the intelligence to go ahead and do what we should do which is to roughly take the employment up to the percentages in the population statewide.

I think that the community support is there because I think the industrial people understand that the city has to be made viable and has to go and they can't let the community in the ghetto areas if they are – people live there unhappily. It's, you know, ultimately, you end up with a riot and we had the National Guard in Wilmington longer than any other cities. It's a revolution. And we – I took them out the day I took office, but they know and it cost us today \$10 million to do about that.

And the day we took them out, the crime rate went down. And we doubled the crime rate though in that year while the National Guard was there. They just show us the military kind of thing that doesn't work. It certainly doesn't work in this country.

And I think they realized that they have to provide the resources and you're going to write it down or put up some money to do some things to make the city go, provide leadership, et cetera. I think labor leadership has come a long way and has kind of made a decision that we've got to make this city go.

And I, you know, there's always some dissenters and doubters and self-worth, but in my opinion, it can be made to go. There may be another way to make it go, but right now, I don't know what it is. Yeah?

Unknown speaker: **[inaudible] [0:29:30]** I work in one of the hospitals and there's – the number of the residents had resident stickers on their car windshields like the university stickers that are up here. I'm wondering, is that part of a revenue raising project?

Mr. Haskell: No, that's an experiment in a part of town. I wish I could take credit for it but I can't. It was – one of my councilmen dreamed it up and if you – you know, all the people who come in to work in the city every day, park way out and walk in and the guys that live there have no place to park and they come home and they get mad as hell.

[0:30:05]

And so, we have given a sticker in a certain area to the residents that live there. And they are taking those stickers and we're – and they have the right to park there. And it's the first time we've ever done anything where I haven't had one complaint. Everybody seems to be happy with the way it's working. I have a feeling it may degenerate, somebody's going to start printing fake stickers or something. But it's a – it is – it's an experiment, apparently is working. Yeah? Yeah?

Unknown speaker: In the beginning, you commented that you had a 50 percent Negro population in Wilmington and 5 percent Spanish-speaking. Could you comment on how these two groups are represented in your city government and is generally the problems that we **[inaudible] [0:30:59]** present and how do you handle it?

Mr. Haskell: The problem – when I took office, we had very little representation in the black community and essentially zero in the Spanish-speaking community. We have – there was the head of personnel on one department is a black person. I kept him on. I appointed a black person as head of licenses inspection. He couldn't do the job. He tried hard, he couldn't it. I had to replace him.

We have, in the model city's program, I have a Spanish-speaking person who is the head person and who's very good. It's **[inaudible] [0:31:51]**. And a second man is black in the Wilmington Housing Authority which is also part of the city. We put a black man in charge of the Wilmington Housing Authority. In the middle management, we have now about 20 guys and girls who are in positions of pretty fair responsibility, an awful lot of them, we've brought in from outside of the state when we couldn't find the educational level or talent within the state. We would prefer of course to have local people get the jobs. But if you can't find them, you can't.

We have black people – the head of Wilmington Housing Authority, Troy Chapman, has a very key responsibility. My only assistant, Rey Evans **[phonetic] [0:32:52]** is black. He is a troubleshooter, probably the most valuable man that I have. He is a very – whenever there's a problem, he has to deal with it no matter what it is. And Rey **[phonetic] [0:33:09]** and I work together constantly and then – day to day.

We try to – we have a – our percentages have gone up pretty dramatically in terms of total employment at the labor level but I think I'm basically more interested in trying to get the minority of people raised up into positions of responsibility. If, for no other reason, that we may have a black mayor. And if we're going to elect a black mayor, you should have some black people who have management ability and capability to run the city and do a proper job with some people in his own color. We are – I think we've come a good ways in that regard.

Our school board used to have I think one black person. I have appointed now a majority of black people run the school board. They are talking about choosing a black superintendent. There won't be a color line into that choice and it may well be. Eighty percent of my school system is black.

The responsibility rests with the school board so that we have a shared leadership responsibility now. And we would like to do better and we constantly try to find able people. If a very – if there's a confident black man with administrative ability that comes along, I'll put him to work tomorrow. We have a number of open jobs. And I'd say that not because we discriminate against the white in any way, but the fact is that historically and I'm sure it's true in other cities, there are just – our friends just went to a staff meeting, John Lindsay **[phonetic] [0:35:11]** who is a contemporary, he's one of the guys **[inaudible] [0:35:12]** about two years ago and I was really amazed. I looked around the room and there were hardly any black people in the staff meeting.

[0:35:19]

And John **[phonetic] [0:35:21]** I know would like to, you know, do the best job he can in that regard. I think 10 years from now, this won't seem like a problem but it is today. Yeah?

Unknown speaker: What's the **[inaudible] [0:35:37]** but what do you need cities for?

Mr. Haskell: What do you need cities for? They're there, for one thing. I think maybe that's – maybe that has – not being funny. The fact is, they are there and there's literally billions of dollars worth of investments in terms of homes and everything. And you may find 60 years from now that you're able to develop a Columbia – that you're able to develop another system of living that can transform a city. I'd like to think that you could, but at the present time, you've got 8 million people in New York City alone. And as far as I can see, they're not going to be able to move over the boarder very fast.

Unknown speaker: *[inaudible] [0:36:36]*.

Mr. Haskell: You say it is an inefficiently-run organism?

Unknown speaker: Yes.

Mr. Haskell: Yeah, I would say a city might be fairly inefficiently organized. I'm not sure it's as badly organized as a county or some of the state governments I've seen but the, you know, I could show you some cities that are pretty badly organized. I could show you some pretty very, extremely well organized. See, I'm not sure how well it's organized to run it in any one point of time is – answers the question as to whether there should be a city or not be a city. But it certainly does answer the question as to whether it's going to do a good job for the people at any one point in time or be a burden on the tax payer. Maybe I don't understand your question.

Unknown speaker: Well, this revenue sharing increases the burden on all suburban tax payers.

Mr. Haskell: Yeah, expect I'd suggest that everybody in the city might also be paying into the federal treasury too. The revenue sharing or money from the Federal Government comes from all of us. And in New York alone, they send 18 billion bucks down there and get back 6.

Unknown speaker: Yes. And relatively much less *[inaudible] [0:37:48]* in the city.

Mr. Haskell: Well, not necessarily. It all depends on which ...

Unknown speaker: You would need revenue for that.

Mr. Haskell: You take New York or San Francisco, you wouldn't find that chip. The key though to revenue sharing – I have no objection. I do think that as a matter of fact, you should place more burden on the county and the

suburban residents, absolutely. There's no question that for years, the city has been absolutely unjustly treated in terms of the revenue that it puts out versus what it gets in. When a resident comes into the city of Wilmington, 20 percent and then leaves at night and doesn't have any concern for where he works. Twenty percent of our money goes against taking care of him during the day time, whether it's paving the street during the traffic, putting up the police force or what all, providing him with water or heat, lights, sewer or whatever we are dealing with. We have over years, particularly *[inaudible]* **[0:38:51]** and I don't know down here, Urban Affairs has been given me a sales talk on how over the years they've really been milking the cities.

And, you know, I just – revenue sharing – however, the point of revenue sharing isn't that in total. The real thing is that it gives the executive or the legislative body or the combination of both that are trying to set the priorities within the city the opportunity to do it at a local level without going through seven layers of government.

You know, first it's in housing. There are 50 federal programs. You have to go through – you have to go through seven layers of government. You get it approved, and literally, 150 pages per application. You hire a lot of people to make those applications. You go up there and two years later, you find there's no money in that pot. You've been thinking you're going to get something and there's – they go on and change it to another pot. And then you – and then the restrictions on that says "Well, you can repair a house providing you only put \$2,250," but you may really need 3,000.

[0:40:00]

They put all kinds of restriction to congressmen. As an ex-congressman, I can assure you. You know, they want to get their names on a new hunk of legislation so they go, we have a great big new program and then they'll put the money on. I can account to that. I'm sure it is – we used to do it that way.

Yeah. But then that's the system that's wrong. The Congress has to give up some of its power, power of setting those priorities. So the guys that are – have to deal with them – if you're – the fellows that have to walk through the crime when there's a problem, the guys that have to deal with the crime, the guys that have to build the house or do about the drug problem. Eighty percent of our crime is drug related. Obviously, it makes a hell of a difference what we do about drugs.

I had to pick up my entire attack force and put it over in the drug squad. And as a result, I cut the crime rate, not the drug rate. I cut the crime rate 20 percent, so that 20 percent less people get knocked over the head. I can make that decision. But the congressman hasn't the vaguest notion about that. And neither does the executive branch.

And frankly, the leadership in both those places have been sold this. The only thing holding up revenue sharing right now in my opinion, and we've talked. We spent three hours in the White House, we spent three hours with Harold Barnes *[phonetic]* **[0:41:27]** and Albert in the house side and they have – they recognize the need to do this. Whether you call it revenue sharing or block grants or what have you.

But the problem is one, the executive branch is republican and the Congress is democrat and the one wants to get credit over the other. And thereby hangs the problem. And what we're afraid of is that everything is going to go between the cracks. And because – and we'd love to change the name. You know, we don't care just as long as we get the money in the usable form or we can set the priorities.

And I frankly think there's a good chance that this will come to pass in March. And this is the beginning. But when you consider that they are taking the revenue off of the income tax, at the federal level, they get enough swing every year and we literally are going down a whole new flat.

My education budget for seven years up to four years ago didn't go up at all. That was a 20 percent reduction. I was an absolute disgrace. Like the leadership of this state and I have to – as one, I'm going to have to bear prior responsibility. A lot of that happened in the city of *[inaudible]* **[0:42:41]** they weren't textbooks.

In some schools, they had to go over and borrow textbooks from another school. How the devil do you expect kids to learn to read? And incidentally, we have increased our education budget 82 percent in three years. That's where a lot of that wage tax money has gone. We didn't just pay it off. We didn't have one disturbance in the school system last year. And the young kids there are beginning to get the idea and education is a way out. I want to call in – even six-year-olds, they're very excited to see it.

In 1967 onwards, some of those graduates, they're all sitting around like bumps on a log. Now they've got a way. They want to get something.

They want to learn. They know that's a way out. And is – Frank *[inaudible]* **[0:43:19]** is very excited.

We have cowed at early education which isn't going to do any abrupt – to the government tax payer for what. We think if you don't teach a kid how to learn to read by third grade, how is he going to go learn anything. A disadvantaged child, whatever the reason, if you can get him up to where he can learn to read, then he has a chance to get himself an education.

But if he can't get there, I – you know, when I was first elected, I saw – I asked a kid how to – just would she read this to me. Very attractive and in a class of, you know, she couldn't even understand me, couldn't even speak English. Didn't even know what I was asking him. Now, that's ridiculous.

And I say to the tax payer or any other human reason, you'll put your money in there and get that done. And we're doing about 60 percent of the problem and we'll have all the mayors in here in December and we'll focus on this problem. I'll have the Commissioner of Education.

We do that problem and you're going to help. We'll also work on the drop class. Incidentally, our dropouts have gone from 500 down to 356 in three years. And I'll bet you in other cities, they've gone up. And that's partly revenue. It goes right back to the wage tax and general revenue sharing. Or we wouldn't have had the chance. I assume we are – we weren't allowed to. Yeah?

Unknown speaker: Yeah. We have accounts *[inaudible]* **[0:44:39]** are they academically oriented and if they are ...

Mr. Haskell: That's an understatement. But go ahead.

Unknown speaker: In order to decide, what means do you have to [Bell Rings].

Mr. Haskell: Well, I don't always succeed. I do the best I can. But persuasion and, you know, if you get a – if you get a carpenter and you get the head of his union to call and then say you're in favor of construction *[inaudible]* **[0:45:05]**. Thank you very much.

Unknown speaker: Thank you, Harry.

[0:45:13] **End of Audio**