

Gabe Logan (GL): It is October 7th, 2017. Dr. Gabe Logan with Representative Bart Stupak with an oral interview for the Center of Upper Peninsula Studies oral history collection. We could go ahead Mr. Stupak if you could please pronounce and spell your name and provide your date of birth for context.

Bart Stupak (BS): Sure. Bart Stupak, last name Stupak S T U P A K. My date of birth is 2/29/1952, so I am a leap year baby.

GL: Stupak, what ethnicity is that?

BS: Slovak.

GL: Your people are Slovakian okay, so that leads, I am an immigration historian, how did you get to, Milwaukee I believe? How did your people arrive in Milwaukee?

BS: Actually my father grew up in Ironwood, Michigan.

GL: Okay.

BS: And he went to the seminary in St. Paul, Minneapolis, Minnesota area there and his parents were immigrants from Slovakia and my grandfather who I never met, my paternal grandfather, I was a minor, and my grandmother also from Slovakia you know immigrated and brought over to Ironwood and both were single at the time, met and married, kept in their own little cultures and anyways they both died fairly young, like 40's 50's. So anyways my father was in seminary and actually other relatives took care of the rest of the family, my father had a fairly good sized family maybe six kids __, and about the last six months of seminary my father realized it wasn't for him, the last six months maybe, and I got all of this from father, Father Arnie Thomson [SPELLED PHONETICALLY], my father never really talked about his days in the seminary. But anyways my father was home on leave with Father Thomson, met my mother in the Gladstone area, went back to seminary and on breaks they'd see each other and he decided not to go there so he left the seminary my mother and father got married, my father then went to Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin,

GL: Okay. So when you say seminary I was going to ask Lutheran or Catholic?

BS: Catholic.

GL: Catholic okay,

BS: Went to Marquette to finish his degrees, he had a degree in English and in Education, and then of course the war broke out, World War II, and he, anyways, finished up at Marquette. I was born in Milwaukee Wisconsin basically in February and he graduated in May and they moved right back to Gladstone, Michigan. So their intention was never to live in Wisconsin, my father was just there to get his education. My mother and my grandmother, my mother's side of the family was all Gladstone people.

GL: So that brought you back to Gladstone then.

BS: That brought us back to Gladstone, in fact we moved back to Gladstone when I was five years, no 4 or 5 months old, and I lived in Gladstone after that.

GL: Now what did your dad do in Gladstone or what did your family do in Gladstone?

BS: My father again went into education, he was a teacher at Nema high school, I actually lived in Nahma for about a year. He actually taught at Stevenson high school for a school year but all of my mother's family was in Gladstone so he lived in Gladstone he would drive. Eventually he went to Nahma as I said and taught there and then he actually became principle and they consolidated that district with Garden, Cooks, Isabel, Nahma, they consolidated it, and he became principle of the new school district and then became superintendent until he retired.

GL: Was that consolidation due to population or was that just, lack of population?

BS: I wouldn't say lack of population, it's hard to maintain those small class E at the time, class D schools. They just couldn't maintain them it was just too expensive, and it made sense I mean the bussing, four times bussing when you could do it once. It just made economic sense to consolidate. Most of the schools in the U.P. have consolidated.

GL: So then did you go to Gladstone High School or was it?

BS: Yes, actually I started out in the catholic schools because of my dad, a devout catholic, but I come from a large family, four brother and five sisters so there is ten children,

GL: Always someone to hang with.

BS: Yep. So there is almost three section of that family, the older kids, the middle ones, that's me, and then the younger ones. So it's hard to get to know the ends because it's such a wide spread out area. But at any one time he would have four or five of us at a catholic school which is probably a big tuition, and no parochial aid and after about the third grade my father just said no more and I went to Gladstone schools then, graduated from Gladstone high school.

GL: I read that you graduated in 1970?

BS: 1970 from Gladstone yes.

GL: And it's the historian in me, again the Vietnam wars reemerging on the PBS screen, just curious how was that playing out in Gladstone I mean you are right there graduating in the midst of it?

BS: I still remember clearly, clearly, Dwight Stockholm [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] being killed, he is from Gladstone, his mother was the librarian at Gladstone schools, I was in Gladstone school in the library when the military came and told her, her son was killed in Vietnam. Mrs. Angla [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] an elementary school teacher, also lost her husband he was almost one of the first killed in Vietnam. And you know it was really really difficult on all of us graduating, in fact I write a little bit about it in the book, and then one of my best friends was killed, George McGovern made a big deal about it because Nixon had promised the war would be over by November of '72 and the weekend October 30th October 31st, when Charlie Stewart [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] was killed in a helicopter shot down, he took about 14 other with him, marine army guys, and McGovern kind of evoked Charlie's name throughout the campaign that weekend, we were all certainly against the war, I was at that time 1970, '72 I was at Northwestern Michigan College my major was law enforcement so I went there and got a two year degree. During high school they had this American Legends student trooper program and I was selected to go to that program down at East Lansing at the state Police headquarters, which I always wanted to be one of two things wanted to be a conservation officer or I wanted to be a police officer, I wanted to be outside I did not want to be in a factory I did not want to be confined in a room. I

love the outdoors and you know, eagle scout, I lived right across from the lakes, I always was on the water or out in the woods hunting, hiking, camping, whatever. So I never wanted to be in a 9 to 5 job in an office. And so I love the outdoors and that's why I went to Northwestern that was the closest one that had law enforcement, after going through the Michigan police state trooper student program I knew that's what I wanted to do. So I actually went to northwestern Michigan and graduated early, I went through one summer, finished up my degree, got out and graduated with a degree in April I was supposed to go until June, went home to Gladstone to look for work because I was going to Michigan state in the fall and a job at the Escanaba police department opened up and back then everything was civil service exams so my dad said you should take that exam just to get a feel for it you're going to have to eventually, so I did, I scored very high, did the interview and they hired me, and I never did go back to Michigan state, instead I went to the Escanaba police department and then from there, you couldn't join the Michigan state police until you were 21, I just turned 20, so I was like the youngest police officer in Escanaba history, anyways once I turned 21 I applied for the Michigan state police and in 1973 I went into the Michigan state police.

GL: So a year in Escanaba and then to the Michigan state police?

BS: Right.

GL: What was your Eagle Scout project?

BS: We didn't have projects back then.

GL: Just kind of stuck it out,

BS: Yeah there were numeric badges, you had to do some community service but they didn't call it a project like you do now. So I didn't have to do that, but you did have to do extra things like I did a writing program with the gold quill and a number of other projects over and above the number required for eagle scouts because you had to show, not only obtain the merit badges but what else did you do, you know over and above. And I was in all of the leadership positions, I enjoyed scouting.

GL: So summarize your law enforcement career you left Escanaba after a year, entered the state police I imagine you were probably one of the youngest ones of those as well? And then how long were you with the state police?

BS: You are probably right I was one of the youngest in that class, I went in in '73, I was retired, medically retired on February 25, 1984. So I was there 11 years. While in the state police I went back to college I was at Carroll which is outside of Saginaw, State Police never opened a post before, they put me there as the cub because I had past police experience I was easy to train, everyone was new to that area so they didn't have a lot of time to devote, so that's why I went there I had experience,

GL: Did you say the word cub?

BS: Yeah they called you the cub.

GL: Okay.

BS: The youngest guy. Back then, laws were all different. Back then you had to do what they called VOT, voluntary overtime. The cub is expected to be there every Sunday morning, clean all the cars out, get them all fixed up, check everything, and if there was some dirty job at the post you did it, and you didn't

do it on your 8 hour shift you did it before or after. Pretty crappy jobs, you'd have to do it, and it was called voluntary overtime, there's been a lot of lawsuits since then on members trying to get their voluntary overtime. But anyways I was the cup so I was the rookie so I had to do all the crappy jobs. While there I got married to my wife Laurie, and she talked me into going back to school. Saginaw Valley was like 40 miles away so id switch shifts and I would go to night school, I started using that 5 o'clock, 6 o'clock go till 10 o'clock, I drive back and forth. Did that for two years based on my 4 year degree. And I had a number of friends, seriously injured, killed, in the state police and I thought man I don't want this for me, I'm going to see if I can't get into law school. I was able to get into law school, I had good grades, and I applied to Cooley law school, that's in Lansing, could not get it transfers and I didn't want to quit my job, I had a wife and everything, she was working, we had no children then, eventually a year later I did get transferred to Lansing, so I went to Cooley law school three years, finished up my degree.

GL: When you were a state police officer where were you patrolling where was your boundary?

BS: Carroll would be Tuscola County, was our main focus, in Lansing I was assigned to the Michigan State Police Capital post on paper but I did all kinds of different investigations and responsibilities. We had a team called the selective enforcement team, we would run the highways, but if you had a strike labor unrest, you would send a team, there were six of us, and you would send a team over. We did murder investigations, when the Ku Klux Klan was burning crosses in the Brighton Howell area, we sat on those houses and we did undercover work. If a presidential detail was coming through Michigan we were usually assigned, we were a mobile unit. We were doing all kinds of things, if we weren't running an investigation or doing surveillance, we were on the expressway trying to slow people down. And it was a good job, there were six in our team, I lasted the longest, I lead the team at the end and I was the only one who didn't get hurt while on selective enforcement, I actually got hurt running a stupid chase of a bike when I was at my team post. And then towards the end of my career, because I was one of the only attorney in the Michigan state police, I finished my law school, got into the state bar, then I did special investigations. When I got done with law school and the bar I had 8 years in, but back then you had to stay 10 years to get a vested retirement. And I had 8 years and I was going to stick it out, first of all I loved the job, secondly, they then, I was the only attorney so I taught criminal law, constitutional law, criminal investigations at the training academies, other rookies come in. Then I was assigned to doing investigations at the Michigan state capital post, because the capital posts were there, and the Daisy Elliot [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] case I convicted her of stolen property. I took down a labor union kid for selling state property back door for capital. I took a guy out, the speaker's chief of staff for trying to carry a gun on a plane. I did all kinds of investigations, very interesting, very interesting investigations. I had to bring home some legislators who got too drunk at a party, if it was late at night some female legislators would call us and ask us to walk them to their car or if they didn't live too far away give them a ride home or something like that, 1, 2, o'clock in the morning walking the streets of Lansing is not a good idea at that time downtown. It's all changed now, they've bulldozed all that area off between Logan and Ottawa Street.

GL: You mentioned this with labor unrest and this just kind of came to my head here, with the nurses strike that is going on in Marquette, the NMU police is creating a boundary, two questions, one, the Michigan state police is unionized correct? And then so is that a bit of juxtaposition then?

BS: That's a whole other story that we could spend a whole day on. I was very active on the Michigan state police trooper's union, I was one of the leaders, I was one of the ones that did the petition drive to

amend the constitution to get the troopers the right to collectively bargain. I was on the first negotiations for the Michigan state police troopers, again I was the only attorney, and we paid hell, being in the union. Even though I scored high on the sergeant's test I was never promoted, I was blacklisted, I did a major investigation in which everyone received a warrant except for me because I was blacklisted. I was told point blank by the lieutenant coronel, to go see him at the office and he said we got one thing in common, I said yeah what's that, and he said neither one of us are going to get any higher in this department, right then and there I knew I was blacklisted, and I was. So even though I was blacklisted we got our collective bargain agreement, we got our first contracts, I knew I was leaving anyways, all I had to do was stick out the last two years. And then, actually it was about 3 years, and then unfortunately I got hurt, even the doctors, because you have to go through a medical review board, and by now I had already had about 6 operations on my knee, and even the doctors said why would you retire him out he is the only attorney in the Michigan state police, there's nothing wrong with his brain it's his leg, he can't do the physical rigors of the job anymore, and they said no he has to do it 100 percent or nothing, can you do it 100 percent? And my doctor said no he can't, I have a collapsing leg, and they said no he can't he doesn't know when it is going to collapse, now I know I can feel it, but they said no, you didn't have an adaptive aid or brace or anything like that back then, so they kicked me out even though I was the only attorney.

GL: That's where my next question was going, okay [chuckles].

BS: I was already blacklisted so I knew they were going to throw me out. They didn't like us causing too much trouble for management.

GL: So that's takes you through your,

BS: And I won't say trouble, the question, they really resented when we sat at the negotiation table the coronel Gerald Hobe [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] was Gerald, he didn't like that. He wanted us to call him Coronel, I was only a trooper and like you got to show more respect. Not at the bargain table, we are equal, and he did not like that. We were the first, well four of us, along with our attorney and our executive director, so,

GL: That's an interesting union career.

BS: And I did some legal work, after I left I did some legal work for trooper association and congress had passed a number of laws to help law enforcement,

GL: So that moves you into,

BS: 1984, I retired in February 25, 1984, I sold my house in DeWitt, just North of Lansing, and moved back to the Upper Peninsula. Laurie and I always said that we would raise our children in the Upper Peninsula if we had the chance, Laurie is an only child, her parents are in Escanaba, my family, some of my family was in Gladstone. We came up to the U.P. my brother was practicing law at a law firm, they had offered me a position. I had offers at positions down in Lansing as an attorney, and they said we have an office in Menomonee and we want you both to Menomonee to run that office full time. It was a part time office then, and Laurie was really objecting she did not want to go to Menomonee. And we were going to stay in Lansing but we said well we are an hour away so it's no big deal. Anyways that's how I got to Menomonee.

GL: What did you say, what was your wife's name, Laurie? What did she do?

BS: Nothing. We just had two children then the boys were born,

GL: Nothing, [chuckles]

BS: Actually I shouldn't say nothing, she has always been a work out person, just like I love the outdoors, she would teach aerobics and all of that, so she always was doing something plus she had the two boys. And I was practicing law and active in local politics.

GL: What led you into running for local political posts?

BS: Well my father was always an elected official, he was in city commission, mayor of Gladstone, he went on to county board, they switched after the '68, '64 constitution into the county boards and districts and then my father ran for country board, won that so then chairman of the board. My father probably always wanted to do two things I did. Number one, be a lawyer, number two run for political office. I remember state representatives, senators, trying to get my dad's endorsement for the primaries and things like this, I always hung around with him on political stuff, I remember being a human billboard when I was like five years old walking down the street, so that's why I am in politics, time with my dad I always thought politics was interesting, especially from the grass roots politics I learned a lot, I learned a lot. I was always the one who liked the politics, so I enjoyed it. And I always said one of these days I would run for office, I always thought I would do my career and then run for some office, came back up North, got immediately involved in the democratic party, helped out candidates in the 1984, the 1986 I did door to door basically all of Menomonee for Steve Randstrom, unfortunately he got beat by Jim Conners, Conners was an insurance guy I though he had a lot of conflicts of interest in his voting that affected his livelihood. So '88 I ran against him, I was the only challenger who even came to the state house.

GL: And that was for of course state representative.

BS: Yes.

GL: I hadn't moved here yet, so I wouldn't know those politics, this next question, what was the republican and democratic part, how did people perceive them, what were their political platforms back in the early-mid 80's?

BS: Well parochial aid went through in '72 that was ___ in the 80's. Well in the 80's you had Ronald Reagan coming in so you just got done with Nixon and the silent majority, the Republican Party was still more conservative party, back then believe it or not both parties were pro-life, there wasn't that much difference. I guess the unions were more active so the democrats were more union working men and women, the republicans were more business and chamber of commerce, and that really hasn't changed. But their views were really that far apart like they are today, they were all pretty close and then when you come to the UP back then you had four representatives like you do today they were all pretty close, they were all pretty close. It wasn't that much different, but the U.P. did believe in seniority, I mean we talk about Jacobetti being chairmen up here but procreations before that was Hiner Burlingston [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] from Escanaba. And Hiner [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] actually got beat by Chuck from Manistique in an upset election in '66, and then Jacobetti became chairman of procreations and that's how that got there. So U.P. knew seniority and their members stayed and go the seniority ___

and the in on the committees to help with the finances and the projects up here in the U.P. So we all work pretty closely here there is only four of us so we all work together, and then Jacobetti was able to put together the Detroit coalition, the U.P. Detroit coalition which served us well.

GL: So today our political climate is divisive, how do you interpret how we got from this idea of the 1980's where everyone is kind of getting along pretty well to this point where it's one way or another?

BS: Well you know Ronald Reagan was governor of California, a B role actor as they say but a great communicator, and he started to really bring the republican party to a more conservative position on issues and remember he challenged and lost on a primary to Bush, and it was pretty interesting that he was the then governor of California, so after he lost that he went on sort of like a Saturday Night talk was Borax 55 it was a western thing. And then Reagan also started these radio shows in which he talked, but very very conservative values. He really pulled the republican party way to the right, and again this is after Vietnam, the democrats were the peace loving and free party if you will, and Reagan was pulled in the other direction republicans in the other direction. Reagan thought knew how to get things done in the democratic congress, house, senate flipped to republican, but he got along well with Tip O'Neil. There was still the respect for each other, even though we disagreed on the issues. Members still socialized with each other, stayed in Washington until their breaks and worked together. That all changed about the time that Newt Gingrich came in, that had to be in the what, late '80's? And you know they would do things very disrespectful, I forget who was speaking on the floor, Newt and his little gang of young ____, peered on the floor with paper bags on their heads, eyes cut out, you know you do that with a horrendous sports team, so that respect for the institution, and the lack of respect when you have a disagreement, is really magnified by Newt Gingrich and Rick Santorum, I don't know if Scarborough was part of that, Morning Joe, I think he was part of that too. No he would have been just after that, but he did some stunt like that too. So the institution, maybe it was Watergate and all that stuff, it was no longer respected, but not to the point where the disrespect became personal, we can disagree on the Vietnam war or whatever it may be, but they still all tried to do what was best for the country. With Reagan it became more about party, and after Reagan it became more about me. And the ideologues got greater, and once they put CSPAN into house chamber, it's a show in theatrics, and led to disrespect like president Obama speaking to the nation, you lie and people shouting out, and things like that. ____ just total disrespect, and you see that in our politics today.

GL: My representative time was Denny Hastert did you work with, would you have been with Hastert at that time?

BS: Sure Hastert left probably in, I'm going to say '06? '04 or '06, I got along well with Hastert, he's on committee with me, energy and commerce committee. And from, well I went on from there in, no, in '95 so for 12 years he was on committee with me. But he was like the most quiet person you ever knew he would show up when it was time to vote or something but when it was time he was considered speaker I had to go back and look to make sure he was on committee, that's how quiet he was. I was on committee 10 years with him but I don't remember him ever engaging in issues or debates.

GL: That's interesting, he is quite the famous wrestling coach,

BS: Well he was the last person standing when they were trying to impeach President Clinton. All their candidates for speaking had to drop because they all had their own infidelities, and Hastert probably had the greatest but no one knew about it.

GL: So our current representative and Dr. Benishek who replaced you and Representative Bergman and those two, how do you say they are representing the Upper Peninsula and the Lower Peninsula as it differed from you in terms of how you were able to communicate to the constituents?

BS: Neither one of them worked the district very hard. They have all the money in the world to put on campaigns, but you never see them. I mean I've been up here in Marquette and in the two days and I can't tell you how many people say I've never seen the guys, we have no idea who they are even. And they talked about they would go to an event and they don't even know the key people at the event, they are clueless, and that's where their downfall is, and I am going to say this and I don't mean this derogatory in any way, they are both older when they came into office like I don't know I think Benishek is a couple years older than me, he was only there 6 years, and first of all he never really wanted the job, and then Bergman was actually like 70 years old, it is hard to do this job,

GL: I can imagine.

BS: You are gone all the time and it is nonstop, and, maybe that is why they aren't showing up, I'm not saying it is because of their age, its much more difficult, I could do the job and I was like 40, 42 when I went in and it was easy for me to go 16 or 18 hours a day. And they always say you drive during the dark and campaign and see people during the day. And it was not usual for me to drive from Ontonagon down to Traverse City after I got done with my events at Ontonagon at 9, 10 at night. I would grab a couple hours of sleep and then get up and go again.

GL: Is that the extent of you district?

BS: No it got worse, after the reapportionment in 2000, 2002 they took Traverse City away and it irked them that a democrat represented Traverse City which was the crown jewel of the lower peninsula and where all that republican money in Otsego and Traverse city area, and they took that area away from me and ran me all the way to Bay City to the Saginaw County Line, my district at the end my last 8 years, was the Saginaw county line to the Keweenaw which was 600 miles. It was ungodly. To detect the true boundaries of the districts which go out into the Great Lakes, it's the largest congressional district area wise except for those states that only have one area for congress like Montana and Alaska. We have more shoreline in this district than any other district except for Alaska because they only have one person. You know the people in California and Florida we have even more coastline then them. It's a very difficult district to serve, and maybe they are smarter than me maybe that's why you never see then they aren't killing themselves, I mean at the end I just got worn out I couldn't do it anymore. Most, the longest serving members before me was maybe 12 years, I lasted 18. But at the end I could no longer drive my car I just got crazed at the idea that I had to get in my car and drive for hours.

GL: It was always driving,

BS: Mostly driving yeah. When you were working hard or in campaign season you might rent a plane then but those are little charters and a lot of times they can't fly in the winter time or over the bay and the lakes. I had some close call on small airplanes let me tell you.

GL: Pretty much every day in the winter.

BS: Yeah, yeah. Well in the winter you get some good dry air which is perfect for flying.

GL: Close call on an airplane while campaigning, can you give me an example?

BS: I don't even think I was campaigning, yeah late August, leaving Traverse City to fly home. Traverse City from Menomonee is straight across, 92 miles by air, 322 miles if I drive my car. And I had been on the road for a couple days and I always try to break down and come back home on Sundays if I could. And it was a Saturday night and we were getting ready to take off. We were actually going to take off on a twin engine, over the lake, and I always wanted a twin engine if we were going over the lake, and it's a little bit more expensive it either comes out of your campaign or congressional, if you are doing congressional business, soon we took off and we were banking to go over the lake and we heard a loud pop and the pilot turned white,

GL: That's not a good sign.

BS: He said we got a major problem and we are going to try to land. We radioed and they cleared the landing and the trucks came out, and we landed, and I, the plane engine like totally blew up so we had one engine and basically glided in, he had trouble stabilizing the plane because we hadn't been up very far so you weren't even stabilized yet he hadn't even leveled off. And that plane was down for a couple weeks that's how bad it was, we got out there and that poor guy was just drenched, he was just soaked, he thought for sure we were goners. At another time we were flying out Traverse City we were flying up North, I had to speak at Mackinaw Island, it was late again, October, the pilot hands me a, I always like to fly up front if I could, if there was only one pilot and there was usually one pilot, he handed me a flashlight and he said shine that on the wings, we were icing up, so what we did is we dropped down lower along the shore because the water keeps it warmer than it was up there, so we were icing up and we ran through there,

GL: Did it thaw out, yeah yeah it did.

BS: And you worked the aerator so you would just pop it off but the front there is no aerator so we couldn't pop it off. In '92 just before the election we tried to land at Sawyer, a real small plane, and we made 4 passes and the last time the guy said one more time if we can't get you down we can't do it, we made it down on the fourth one but it was real rough. There's been some rough ones, the wind small airplanes, little Cessna's, not conducive to your health.

GL: And then when you are driving all over the place, as you just said even with Ontonagon and having to cross the bridge that's deer highway the whole time running on no sleep.

BS: Oh I've hit a couple deers, roll off the car and keep going you know [laughter].

GL: So this idea today that we are so hooked up with the interweb, and you're in the, you're in the work the crows press the flash, what would a typical day be like when you are in the middle of a campaign?

BS: There's a great story in 1994 I was the number one target in the county for the republicans, no democrat ever won successive trends in the Upper Peninsula actually there was only two, Clemenger after the Kennedy assassination, so he was elected in '64, and Phil Ruppe who I beat in '92. But anyways they did an article, why would anyone want this job, and they followed me around on what would be my typical campaign day and it was something like he drank 23 cups of coffee, four chocolate chip cookies, went to the senior center but never ate, did a thing with the veterans, did a ground breaking, they had the whole thing laid out. And it was like 16 hours later he is back at his little Super 8 cheap motel room and I don't know about him but I'm exhausted. [Laughter]. And by this time it was a whole big article and they interviewed Laurie and the boys and so that really summarized it. I said, you campaign from

sun up to sun down, and then there is usually dinner or something like that you do, and then if there is anything after if I am in Traverse city and I am in Alpena, jump in the car and you go 2 or 2 and a half hours. I did not have designated drivers I drove myself, being a former law enforcement officer I preferred to drive myself. In the campaigns during the last month or so we would try to get a driver because I would just be pretty much exhausted, wiped out, try to relax a little bit but some of those young kids you would ride in the car and you wouldn't relax so we would change drivers. You can't be going down the highway at 70 miles per hour when its 55 and its dark and you don't know where you are going.

GL: And deer, or moose.

BS: Yeah, and we had a couple volunteers of older gentlemen that were retired and would drive me around a lot within a two or three hour radius of my home.

GL: Did you ever prefer, I'm kind of a car guy, and engine guy, did you ever prefer a vehicle?

BS: Well because of my leg injury I always wanted to get a large vehicle where I could stretch out because this leg will lock up on me all the time. So that was the number one priority, I could get into a car, and the best ones were Oldsmobile's, and then they stopped making Oldsmobile's. I had Oldsmobile's all the time and always had '88 or '98 something like that, always with a big engine because when I pull up to pass I want to be able to have the power to step on it.

GL: Good choice. How were you able to balance the voice of the Upper Peninsula with the Democratic Party? It was probably more towards the twilightier career.

BS: It was difficult. Democratic Party just kept going farther and farther left. I'm a prolife democrat, even president Clinton on his reelection recognized the need for the platform actually had entered, prolife democrats are a valuable part of our party and we welcome them and look forward to working with them. Towards the end, the Hillary campaign if you will, that was when repeal anything that had restrictions on abortion. So you went from '96 to 2016 just way, way left,

GL: So there is the other side of the divisiveness,

BS: Oh yeah, within the party. But still when I left in 2010 there were probably about 30 of us out of 240 who were considered right to life democrats. And the right to life caucus could control any piece of legislation it wanted to. They weren't that well organized, I mean within the Republican Party they all voted that way so that was pretty easy to do. But in the Democratic Party it was a lot more difficult to do, especially when you aren't the majority. But you always had to Hyde amendment so it didn't have to be a divisive issue, because Hyde had been around since, what, '76? So the Hyde amendment basically says look, no public funding for abortions, nor can the federal policy set a policy that encourages or promotes abortions. Now they couldn't ban abortion, but you can't have public policy that encourages it or pays for it. So I was surprised in 2010 with the healthcare and the right to life issue, people just thought that you just couldn't pay for abortions, they didn't know what the policy was, you couldn't encourage or promote it. So that's where it really got ugly at the end, you can't tell that, we aren't telling you, just setting a public policy, the public policy of the federal government, and they just kept, and to this day they continue to say Mr. Stupak would have taken away the right to abortion for all people in the United States, that's not true. You can't, just read the court cases. But anyways, that got more divisive, you had the LGBT community, and I don't believe we should discriminate against anyone

and they would always ask me to cosponsor legislation. I'm not going to cosponsor it, why make yourself a target if it's not going to go well in the conservative world of America. If it got to the floor, oh there's my wife now,

GL: Hi Laurie.

BS: Gabe Logan,

Laurie Stupak (LS): Hi.

GL: Pleasure to make your acquaintance, are we running shallow on time?

BS: No we are good. I've got another half an hour if you need it. So in that community if it came to the floor I voted on it, they are amendments and I believe that we shouldn't discriminate, but don't get out there and lead the charge.

LS: Do you want me to take that?

BS: Just go ahead and put it on the back of the chair. And so that's the easiest way of doing it, you know you just got to, gun control I voted for the gun show loop hole and got the NRA mad at me they ran a candidate against me, financed them, Chuck Yauge [SPELLED PHONETICALLY]. So when I voted for, what I did was I would go to the most conservative area on guns in Ontonagon and Ironwood area, and I got in that night, flew into Sawyer Air Force Base, and a film crew came with me they all wanted to see me get beat up by the constituents back home because I voted against for the gun show loop hole, and I went into Ontonagon town hall meetings, they immediately disagreed with me but they respected the fact of why I voted for that and they respected that, and not that they are going to expect that you do everything their way but just explain to them what's going on, first of all you have the inside information because you were there, you read the legislation and you explain, and while they may not agree with you they certainly respect the fact that you came and talked to them. And that's what I always did on any controversial vote, whether it was the ____ of '93, the gun control, the impeachment of president Clinton, I voted against the Warner Act which the paper accused me of being a communist,

LS: But they understood your rationale of why you voted the way you did.

BS: And that's, they understand it at the end.

GL: On that same vein, your environmental work, which we actually have a display of in the Beaumir right now, did you architect the coalition between lumber companies and preservation and re-planting, what was the background on that?

BS: It's in everyone's best interest to be good stewards of the land because the paper mills need the forests. And the forest is always like a big garden, if you don't weed it doesn't grow a good crop. So there is a place for logging, and there is a place where it shouldn't be. Like we did the big two heart river track of land myself and Dingle [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] and Carl Lebon [SPELLED PHONETICALLY], and they understood that and they tell me we still grow about 1 or 2/3rds trees more than what we can harvest up here

GL: In the U.P.

BS: Yeah, right. So what had happened was the federal government, which own a lot of the land that are forests, kept restricting, restricting, restricting, the number of permits they would have for logging, which then would put pressure on the private land owners to open up their land, and the reason why the federal government was doing it when you got a contract to cut on a 200 acre piece of national forest you had to do it within five years. But the loggers were always trying to gauge the market, when could I get the highest price for a specific species of wood.

GL: Sure that makes sense.

BS: So anyway, would wait for the 6th or 7th year the contracted expired but it hadn't been rebid so they would go in and try to get the government to let them go an extra two years on this contract. And so you are always working with both sides whether it was contractual or helping to protect the land, the lengths of the trucks were an issue, there were always constant issues, and you immerse yourself in the issue, you try to work with both sides and you can do it. A lot of it coming down to explaining to people, here's the issue, here's what I am trying to do, help me accomplish this goal. And people are willing to sit down and work with you, it doesn't have to be polarizing environmentalists and loggers, but a lot of people make it that way.

GL: It's terrible but that has become quite a novel concept in today's political climate.

BS: Well you be careful what you do, you know a great example, I'm going to get myself in trouble here, Tom Casper [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] _____ threatening kids playing in the backyard, he made that up, it never happened, he had to apologize later. So if you don't have integrity on the issue then you can't work with either side, you got to have your integrity. So don't be running off and making stupid statements, and I'm sure I've made some stupid statements in my life time, if you are trying to work with someone, I'm not a big fan of,

LS: You're always a big fan of keeping the dialogue open.

BS: And we will disagree at times.

LS: And not demonizing the other side like they do now.

BS: I say when you get in an argument with someone leave them with their respect, leave them with their dignity at the end of an argument and even if you disagree you just leave it there. Even the book I could have taken some real shots at people but I didn't do it, it solves nothing, it gets you nothing, it's not worth it, so leave them with their dignity.

GL: And your book signing is today, at the Peter White?

BS: Yep, yep.

GL: Are we still good on time?

BS: Yep we are good.

GL: Okay, lets, your eagle scout and your growing up in the Upper Peninsula, were there any other factors that led you to this appreciation of the environment, decide to protect the environment?

BS: Well as I said I grew up right across the street from the little baby knock there, I was always on the lake it seemed. So I have a great love for the great lakes, and you know during my career you saw when I

took off, we had record high water levels and people were screaming at me to open up the Soo Lock to let the water out of lake superior, like that's going to make a difference, it doesn't. And then within ten years they are screaming at me to close the locks because we were in a drought. But to see the great lakes, a body of water, the world's largest body of freshwater swing from record high to record low in ten years, you can't tell me there's not a problem with climate change. And if you go to the biological stations they have on Beaver Island and also on lower northern lower Michigan alongside Pellston area and that and the U of M biological station, and explain how Steele mills in China are polluting our environment and particles are trapped here around the great lakes it just really gives you a greater appreciation of what we have and how we have to protect it.

GL: So a steel mill in China is that the molecular, carrying all the way over in the winds here?

BS: Right you always thought it went up higher and went up and dissipated no it actually comes curving right around. It actually hits the great lakes, the great lakes are so big, it stabilizes them and the particles sort of drop to the ground. So you know what happens in China, you know what happens in other parts of the world because, of the two biological stations.

LS: Looking back to Gabe's question for you, as a kid growing up in Gladstone not only did you have a great appreciation for the water but you were always outside.

BS: And we talked about that camping, hiking,

LS: And you talked about the fact that at one point you thought you would be a conservation officer.

BS: Right, we went through that.

LS: Okay.

GL: It's great to have you here following up on it.

BS: She is on top of it. She was the editor on the book and she is still editing.

GL: The healthcare policy is, well people can read your book about your political positions and so for but I am more curious, what were the influences in your life that made you set out here's what you want to do for the American people's health, and again the word architect what allowed you to architect those?

BS: Sure, I made three promises when I ran in '92 and then after that I stopped making promises, and I stopped signing all those oaths and things like that, I believe you should not do that. But anyway I made three promises in '92 and they were, increase minimum wage, get our fiscal health in order and pass national health care. '92 they gave me the health care, I had been, a couple things, of course injured in the line duty, so I had the state police, medical pension which was a second act of legislature that was over funded and so my medical, I received the state police retirement benefit, I paid part of it, but when it comes to my knee the operations are paid for I had a little bit of copay, but I've always had insurance. I went into Michigan state legislature, '92 race was a tough one, I'm sorry not '92, '88 race, '89 January I had to have another operation, doing door to door, and it convinced me to go to the legislative health care, because it was much better, it claimed. So I did it and they knew about my injuries and they said no problem we have you covered, well I had that operation and guess what, I'm not covered because of the preexisting injury. So they said no no you have old state police they have to pay it, I was in this window where I could switch back, they always give you like 30 days or 60 days, so I switched back to

my state police. That taught me right there when they promise you that we will cover your injuries, they won't once they see what the cost is, they won't do it. So preexisting injuries, supposed to be covered but wasn't. And in the legislature we tried to pass a bill just for Medicare and Medicaid, public programs, so Medicare pays 80 percent of the approved money, and you have a supplemental, so it pays 80 percent of the last 20 percent so it is a small amount. But for people on fixed incomes like seniors back in the 80's that was a large amount of money. And we kept bringing that bill up, bringing that bill up, and losing by 1, 1 vote all the time. And so I thought that was wrong that we were balance billing first of all the government is paying for basically the policy both state and federal so why are we down spilling the seniors, the last 4 or 6 or 10 dollars, but the medical community, doctors, hospitals and everybody were against it, and we kept losing by one vote. The one vote we kept losing it by, was Dominic Jacobetti. And it taught me a very good lesson, it's always stay with your friends, my friends were the people, his were the medical community and the insurance companies and all that and I was real disappointed with Jac but Jac did so much good for the Upper Peninsula so but that was a good lesson learned. So in '92 I was going to make sure that all my ___ had healthcare, not worrying about preexisting injuries let's get rid of the balanced billing, we still have balanced billing and couldn't get that through. The insurance companies are still the only industry other than major league baseball that doesn't have any trust laws, and the federal government still cannot negotiate to get lower drug prices, so that's pretty big disappointments in healthcare that we still have.

GL: Okay. You left politics, that schedule oh my god that made me tired just hearing that, other than the grueling hours on the road, we are speaking about the campaign trail, were there any other mitigating circumstances that encouraged you to say I've had enough or I've done my duty my civic,

BS: Yeah I've , I accomplished my last goals and when Obama was elected on election night we were here at the Landmark, popped Champaign and I said I've ran my last race we passed healthcare and I'm done. I was just tired of it, I couldn't do it anymore and Obama went in, gave the state of the union so I came back home, flew back home right after, Jack Gingras had died he was one of my mentors in the state house, and his family asked me to come to the funeral which I absolutely would because he helped me out a lot, got in the car went to start it and couldn't even put it in drive, I couldn't do it anymore I was just physically and mentally worn out. So I promised Laurie I was leaving, I just couldn't do it anymore, even today when I drive long distances Laurie drives, and I think once I've driven back to D.C., I don't think ___ done it a couple times but I've never done it. So id had it, I just couldn't do it anymore I just didn't want to spend another night in a cold motel room after being get up, the crack of dawn, you knew even when you're not on election years you're still running a campaign, it's a very difficult seat for a democrat to hold. And again I lasted 18 years and most of them only lasted 10 or 12, and I had accomplished what, I wanted to do something else in my life.

LS: Not to mention you already talked about the size of the district.

BS: Yeah we did. Different time zones, 600 miles.

LS: You lived with Tom Barret for a while and his congressional district was 10 square miles.

BS: 10 square mile verses 28,000 miles and he had laughed because we had the same resources to service our constituencies, he had one office with four people I had 7 offices with like 8 people. He just thought it was always so unfair, he was like I could walk across my district.

GL: That's pretty much all my questions is there anything else you would like to add? A story or anything?

LS: Well thank you, I would imagine you have just about discussed everything.

BS: Quite a bit, I think we discussed everything. You know and getting back to leaving the party was just so far out there you couldn't talk to them anymore. I knew that it was unfortunate those of us who were moderate conservative democrats no longer trusted our leadership. In fact an interesting story, very few people know this, there was one of the members that helped negotiate the executive order with me, we stayed in the background in fact I don't mention it very much in the book, the seven of us can probably figure it out eventually, but when Obama did the executive order, signed the executive order I called the seven or eight guys, and ladies there were two ladies, and they stood with me and I said hey we are going to do the executive order on Wednesday or whatever it was, and he said okay because he had to sign the law first or whatever it was, they had they executive order to implement the law, no no I'm not going I'm staying away from it, glad to help you out glad we got it passed, we all believed in healthcare but we had to have the language we needed on there, sanctity of life. We go to the Whitehouse, Laurie is with me we jump out of the car, here is the guy who said he wasn't going to come. And we are walking in the entrance of the white house, the west entrance of the white house and I said what are you doing I didn't think you were going to come? He said, he is not going to sign the executive order. I said get out of here, he didn't invite us all down here to not sign the executive order, he said I don't believe it, I got to see it with my own eyes. This is the most pro-choice president ever and you made him blink and I don't think he is going to sign the executive order. That's how much I don't want to say, distrust, the leadership had sort of left us. 2009 2010 when we were trying to do the healthcare, the first time ever, a speaker would not allow the traditional right to life amendments to the floor. They have to come to the floor every year because we are tied to into the appropriation bills and we do them once a year. So every year, no matter who is in charge, we would go through the committee, hey we need the Hyde Amendment and the ___ says nope, the federal government should not pay for, promote, or encourage abortion. It was either made a part of a main bill or it was a separate amendment on the floor we always got it, 2009 Obama's in, prochoice, __ prochoice never did we not get one minute nothing, and there were about four or five... and he would say oh no we will give you your amendment, but he never gave us our amendment. We would go testify Chris Smith and I, the republican and I would be the democrat we would get done testifying and they would say thank you, no questions no nothing. The rule comes out, the rule comes out with the amendments in order, we were never in the order for fifteen months until the Stupak order came up,

LS: They didn't think they needed your votes

BS: They didn't think they needed us, we were throwaway. Then they realized they needed us, so we negotiated with Pelosi on the Stupak amendment so it wouldn't be a controversy in November when we were going to pass ____. The night before we sat there and negotiated and she had me and Mike Doyle [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] call all of our little coalition and said vote for the ____. We got all of our amendments for 2009, 2010 and every year there afterword's just like the Hyde amendment we got a vote on the Stupak amendment and healthcare, and that was the agreement. Mike and I called everybody said the deals off, went down to the democratic club, ordered our steak and a celebratory beer, I didn't even get done with my beer and the phone starts ringing, it's Pelosi the deal is off, shook hands and everything, the deal was off. He said was you amendment for the rules committee? I said yes,

he said you better get down there because you have to testify. So I went down there and of course they wouldn't recognize me, waited until the very end, the very very end, waited until about 1 o'clock in the morning and they called off the amendment, even though I should have been first since I am the committee of jurisdiction. That's the way you do it, but Slater [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] was the chair, co-chair of the pro-choice caucus, she was also head of rules committee and then at 1 o'clock in the morning she just simply said to Jim McGowan, would the gentlemen take the chair, because she was going to pull out my amendment, so he came it, called up the amendment, and as soon as he called up the amendment the women on the democratic side got up and left the room. They wouldn't even sit in the room while we were negotiating. That's how disrespectful it got at the end. So it was very easy for me to leave, after _____ was chairman, the way we were treated through this whole process, it just reinforced my decision that I made in November of 2008 to leave. That's how it got at the end, but yet they needed us. And then we recently Perez [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] had said we don't need right to life democrats, Pelosi was defending him, of course I wasn't there because I wasn't a member but she said we don't need right to life democrats, we don't need democrats like that, we should just be prochoice. And to credit the caucus a lot of them said get out of here we need them, we are going to need the majority and plus they passed healthcare, she said no they didn't, I did, and then it got really ugly argument in the caucus. And then they reminded her of Bart Stupak and all of that and she said no he didn't do it.

LS: How many right to life democrats are there now?

BS: Probably about 10 or at least 35, we all left Bart Gordon [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] left, John Tanner [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] left,

LS: Olby [SPELLED PHONETICALLY].

BS: Olby [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] left, well he wasn't right to life but he voted for the Stupak amendment. ___ left there was a whole group of us that left, we had just had it, the leadership had just gone so, we can disagree but don't disrespect us. If you aren't going to give me my amendment just tell me, not look we don't need your vote we are a prochoice party now we are out of here, it would have made life easier. They didn't even include most of these members because Ron, Ron ___ was a very good political strategist, very good politically he is the one who recruited all of these conservative, we have to win these conservative modest democratic districts to be in the, and then when you recruit them then when we vote the way we should, the way we feel, our beliefs, our district's beliefs, we catch holy hell, it just wasn't worth it anymore. I mean I was gone, I just burned out I couldn't do it anymore. The party is just,

GL: When Bernie Sanders rolled in, in this last election did, it seemed to me like he brought a fresh breath to the Democratic Party, do you have any thoughts on that one way or another?

BS: Well I worked with Bernie, all these years, first of all Bernie was never a democrat, he ran as a socialist, so our biggest problem was how is this guy going to represent the democratic party when he had never declared until that year that he was a democrat. So that was a problem, I had known Hillary, probably the most qualified person to run for office is Hillary Clinton, and the way she was portrayed is not the person we know, and so it was easy for Laurie and I to support Hillary because we know her so well,

LS: But Bernie really did bring a new enthusiasm, especially among the youth into the Democratic Party, maybe not necessarily into the democratic party but there were Bernie supporters because they saw him as a change, someone that was different and they pretty much saw Hillary as same old, same old.

BS: And you know Bernie was promising free college tuition early on and he had a populous message, and I am really disappointed that, why Bernie didn't come into Michigan towards the end and help out, I mean he only lost by 10,000 votes he could have got Michigan there and Wisconsin was only 22, 000.

LS: Especially when he had won the primary in Michigan.

GL: Yeah he won in Michigan.

BS: And those of us who worked with Bernie, it was difficult for us to support Bernie because Bernie never helped us when we needed things. So we knew Bernie, the legislative Bernie the populous he was showing was not the same Bernie in congress. And I joined him once we were trying to put a little pressure on, raise the wages for workers in Vietnam, and so I believe in someone with populous views but with Bernie, very very difficult.

GL: Okay.

BS: And he was, it was just very difficult to work with him. He was in his own world, he never reached out to help other members.

GL: Maybe that's Vermont [laughter].

BS: But he did bring a new enthusiasm, I wish we could tap into that.

GL: So are you going to retire here in the Upper Peninsula as far as you know, is this it?

BS: Yeah we still live, Menomonee, same house same everything, I work the law firm out there but I come back and forth like I did in congress, the big difference is I'm not all over the place. This weekend was,

LS: yeah when you come home you get to stay home, camp,

GL: Get to be at home.

LS: Yeah exactly.

GL: Well with your political papers if you are looking for some place to house them we would certainly have them at NMU.

BS: That was all congressional, the political stuff is pretty much gone. We might have a box or two,

LS: I thought Northern had,

BS: That was just congressional, political I don't think,

GL: Did you meet a lady in the diplomatic, Katy Kossaros [SPELLED PHONETICALLY], or Lena Tyman [SPELLED PHONETICALLY] from the Upper Peninsula?

BS: Not really.

GL: Rob ____, out in the copper country?

BS: Oh yeah.

GL: My wife's family,

BS: He sent me a few checks too...

GL: I won't take up anymore of your time, Mrs. Stupak it was a pleasure.

BS: Thank you.