

PAUL MICHEL

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I talked to Paul in the new Hart Building offices.

Went by Kevin, who called 1688 "A success story without a happy ending. It proved to his colleagues that Arlen is a pusher, that he can get things done."

Paul talked a lot about NDAAs shenanigans. They wanted "mutual consent" on the bill and they finally put it in (Paul said it was really language he had originally had in the bill). They wanted it moved within the bill. They never, he believes, favored the bill or wanted it. But they didn't fight and so he thought he had them. Now, he believes, "They only wanted to hate it less."

He says NDAA blames Arlen for the demise of 2411 via the engrossing move. They are "sore at Specter." There would have been no veto if 1688 had been left out of the bill. And Specter, of course, put 1688 in.

The new 2411 is just like the conference report. The new 1688 has a new "Paragraph E" in it to get around the constitutional objection in the veto message.

But they've been having problems with the new 1688. The Criminal Division in Justice got burned when they supported it last time. So they (Jensen) can't help now. Paul sends new language to Gulianá and gets no response. Arlen calls Gulianá last Thursday and Gulianá says he hasn't seen the new language. Says he'll look at it.

McConnell--Justice congressional liaison--"hates us." "There are ten things he doesn't like about it. He hates it." (1688) A big problem, he thinks. "Arlen is on his shit list." He's a super - conservative, administration loyalist. He gets into policy and he only likes people who vote 100%."

He thinks the Specter-William French Smith difference can be overcome with new language, thus avoiding another veto.

Guiliani is "two faced" - "The Criminal division does not now want to get cut off at the knees. They don't want to wheel spin." That's mostly Jensen and Stevens. He thinks Guliani and Sabala are for it, but they won't commit. Within Justice, "It's a hot potato juggled from one to the other." "The bill is now wandering around in Justice." "But Paul is still hopeful that

/ Justice will support the new 1688.

Guliani's deputy called Paul and said they like it but Justice is full of objectives and there are memos written against it, etc. Paul asks him "What words would satisfy you?" "Polish Paragraph E" he says. Justice wants an escape clause of some kind says Paul.

He has written to Yelverton Exc. Director of NDAA. Paul is afraid that at their meeting next week the NDAA will pass a condemnatory resolution, worse than their resolution of last April--which is now their position.

That resolution asked for mutual consent. He thinks NDAA was "hell bent" to screw us, veto or no veto, "in last session." I asked Yelverton, why not keep quiet and he said their top priority was to kill it. There is personal bitterness at Specter because holding 2411 at the desk torpedoed justice assistance money for local people." So he thinks something worse, in a form, way is coming.

We talk in general about crime. "I said I'm amazed at how few people control crime legislation, what a narrow policy "throat" exists in this area. He agrees. (1) "Crime is ceded by non-experts to experts." "TV always interviews someone with a claim to expertise." "Crime is like nuclear physics; it's not like the environment."

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(2) "Crime has no constituency--no organized group to lobby, no defense industry, no groups acknowledged to represent the general problem. The DA's represent themselves." They say they represent the public but they don't. Crime issues are "strange," he says, "because of the lack of constituency." "That makes it easier for any group that stands in the narrow throat to stop legislation. There is no momentum coming down the stream, no pressure to force the President's attention."

(3) "Crime is a million little incidents and not a few big ones. It's not like foreign affairs. Crime is chronic--a million incidents spread out over a wide geographic area. There are a zillion career street corners. The victims are atomized; the perpetrators are atomized. The problem only gets the President's attention at the rhetorical level, not at a functional level. It's everybody's problem and nobody's problem. The NAM and the Chamber of Commerce ought to be lobbying against it. They ought to be unwilling to accept 50-80 billion in losses due to excess crime, avoidable crime. Business interests ought to focus on it--crime for profit. But it's not their issues." He wants Arlen to build a constituency, but says that's probably not realistic. "It collides with his schedule, which is a merry-go-round, a scheduling nightmare." I suggest Independent Retailers Group.

"The important thing (about 1688) is that it's a statement by Congress that the federal government has a role in dealing with violent crime." There is no significant federal operation and no commitment to do anything about violent crime. They handle drugs and organized crime but there is no commitment to help with violent crime. The bill is a foot in the door--saying that it's a great problem. It's like floods. We don't say 'it's an unfortunate circumstance.' We rush aid. Violent crime is the same."

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Paul thinks the controversy is "beatable and diversionary." He says that to get the bill will waste a lot of resources--it might never get through the House Judiciary and that we are talking about 100's of cases not 1000's.

Arlen gives less weight to difficulties in terms of federalism issue. He "believes that it is a magical solution. He is so convinced it is a great idea that he assumes that he can get it done and that it will work well... Whenever we talk it's his number one priority. When we act it seems more important than it really is."

Their attention varied over time. They spent lots of time in December and January trying to save the packages. They will spend a lot of time on it in the new congress, he says, "this spring." "If it doesn't pass the Senate this spring, it won't go anywhere." "Hughes will have more opposition this time. Congress was caught sleeping. This time there will be better organized hostility."

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Paul is pessimistic. "There are too many people in too many places who don't like the bill and are very opposed to it." If we could get it to a floor vote, it would pass in both houses. I have no doubt of that. But I'm not sure we can get it to the floor."

Justice will use the NDAA motion as an excuse and thus won't have to oppose Specter."

He keeps saying. "I thought NDAA was satisfied. But now they say 'we only wanted to make a bad bill better. We were always opposed to the whole thing."

"He has a letter from Yelirton to Strom Thurmond in August asking Strom to oppose it. That's what caused Strom to ask for a change in the Committee.

"We were not good at knowing how you get things done. Arlen is good at carrying things along by his brain and his experience. But so many people can do you in; and they are all invisible. Especially in the House, there are people who do not want to see it go anywhere--staffers at all levels, not members. We haven't done well with the invisible army of opponents."

"How do we get past the choke points? We have a hostile subcommittee chairman, Conyers. He is going to kill us. Kastenmeier is going to kill us. Rodino is going to let us die... He won't arm twist or take on the knife wielders."