



Stories from Capitol Hill

Oregon Public Health Association – Annual Meeting
October 8, 2012

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American Public Health Association-
2010 Public Health Fellow in Government

Office of Senator Daniel K. Akaka (D-HI)

and

House Committee on Ways and Means
Health Subcommittee



On the House Floor with
my boss, Rep. Pete Stark

The Work

- Policy analysis, politics, and communications
- Access to resources
 - Calling experts
- Always thinking strategically
- Everyone is working hard for long hours



Playing softball with Senators Merkley and Franken

The Culture of Capitol Hill

- Courteous but not friendly
- Loyalty or allegiance to your boss
- Loose lips sink careers
- Suits when Congress is in session



Senator Merkley and me

The Culture of Capitol Hill

- What would happen if you showed up without coat/tie, would they let you in the door?
- Meetings start on time
- No emotion – on camera



My remaining fame – 14 minutes, 55 seconds

Capitol Hill

- “Nothing here is on the level”
- Politics all the time
- Members are always on
- Things move fast



 U.S. Senator **Mary Landrieu**
Louisiana

*Best wishes,
Mary Landrieu*

Take Your Child to Work Day



My hands (left) on CNN
during Hawaii tsunami alert

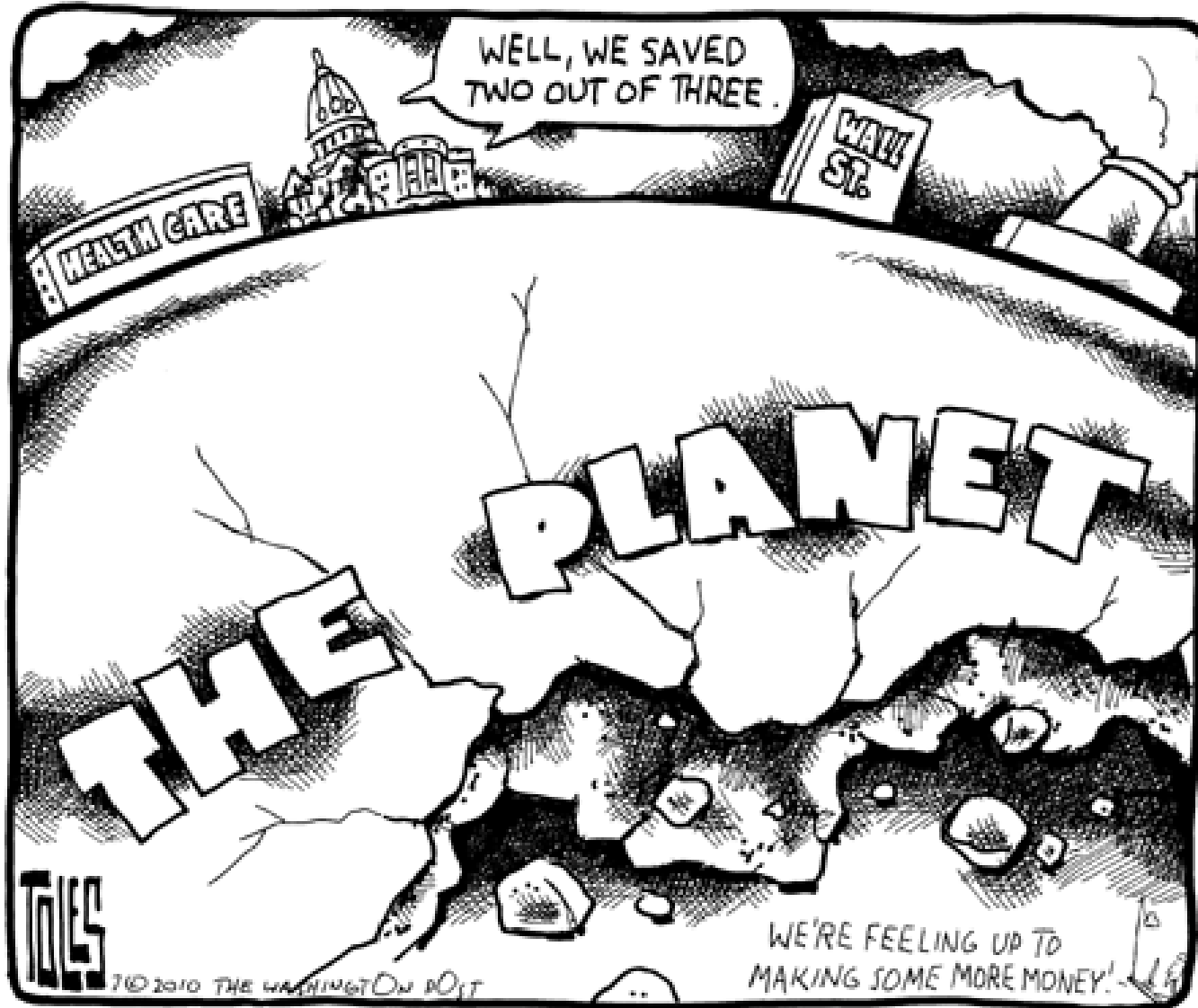
Policy and Politics

There is one set of analyses you do for policy development, and another analysis for messaging and strategy. The two interact, and the best strategists have a keen sense of the differences and the interplay between them.

Politics

- Politics is about people
- What you learn about politics applies to people and vice versa
 - Know what people are really saying
 - Know what is motivating them
- Again, thinking strategically
 - The goal is not to get people to think you are right, it is to get them to vote for your bill.

Summary of 2009-2010 Congress



What's in Healthcare Reform

- Menu labeling
- Breastfeeding in the workplace
- \$2 billion each year for Prevention and Public Health Fund
- Clinical preventive services without co-pays
- Community Benefit requirements for hospitals
- Cost efficiencies and increased value in healthcare delivery
 - Medical loss ratio
 - Accountable Care Organizations

The policy approach to public health

“As we look at the federal response to diabetes, I would suggest that we also consider the root cause of obesity. Reassessing the food stamp program so that healthy foods are encouraged. Ensuring access to local parks and recreational programs. And, promoting employer wellness programs. All the things that the federal government can and should do to encourage healthy lifestyles..”

Rep. Phil Gingrey (R-GA), July 1, 2010

House Energy and Commerce Committee, Subcommittee on Health
Hearing on "The Battle Against Diabetes: Progress Made, Challenges Unmet"

When they use your framing as a metaphor...

“Wall Street reform is preventive care;
unemployment insurance is emergency care,”

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid

[http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/14/business/14regulate.html
?ref=todayspaper](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/14/business/14regulate.html?ref=todayspaper)

Prevention is a cost saver.

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