

Saxby Chambliss interviewed by Bob Short
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Saxby Chambliss**

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BOB SHORT: Saxby Chambliss, who is our senior citizen - - senior senator, I'm sorry; I'm the senior citizen - - in Washington. Senator, you're very welcome to our program.

SAXBY CHAMBLISS: Thank you, Bob. Good to be with you.

BOB SHORT: We're delighted to have you here, and we've talked, I think - - I hope properly explained to you our program and what we're interested in. So I'd like for you, if you would, in the very beginning, to tell us a little bit about yourself and your background.

SAXBY CHAMBLISS: Sure, I'd be happy to, Bob. First of all, let me just say, though, congratulations to Young Harris College on your selection of Cathy Cox as your new president. Cathy is a dear friend of mine, has been for a couple of decades. She and I both practiced law together down in south Georgia. She was in Bainbridge; I was in Moultrie. So I've known Cathy for a long time. She's a great public servant, but most importantly, she's just a great individual, great person, and you folks are very fortunate to have her leading your college. And,

of course, I know you have my great friend Zell Miller up there, who has always been such a strong supporter of Young Harris College, so you have a lot going for you.

BOB SHORT: Thank you.

SAXBY CHAMBLISS: I didn't grow up in Georgia. My dad was a minister, and we kind of bounced around all over the southeast. I actually went to high school in Shreveport, Louisiana. We moved to Darien, Georgia the year I graduated from high school, so I've always called Darien home. That's a town on the coast between Brunswick and Savannah, a beautiful part of the state. But actually, I was always off at college or law school while my folks lived there. I went to the University of Georgia. I had four great years there and was fortunate enough to get a degree. But the most fortunate thing that happened to me while I was there was I met my wife. Julianne and I just celebrated our 40th year of marriage. She's from Thomasville, and after I graduated from Georgia, I went to law school at the University of Tennessee. A lot of folks say I strayed away, you know, but I pull for Tennessee 10 games a year, but I pull for the Bulldogs every game. But Julianne and I got married, and were trying to decide whether to -- what part of the state we wanted to come back to and wound up fairly close to her home in Moultrie. We've been in Moultrie now for, gosh, 38 years I guess. And I practiced law for 26 years until I had a group of folks that came to see me in 1992, actually, right after reapportionment and asked me to think about running for Congress. I'd never thought about it. I had always supported a lot of individuals, Republicans and Democrats, who were friends that were running for public office, but I'd never ever thought about getting involved from the standpoint of being a candidate. But the more I got to thinking about it, the more I realized that, you know, sometimes folks who are true believers have to stand up, and so I did make a decision to run in 1992.

I lost in a primary for the Eighth District seat, but Julianne and I had a great time traveling around our congressional district and meeting people and talking to them about concerns that people had. And we found out that people were just as concerned as we were about the direction in which our country was heading. So basically, I never stopped campaigning. The individual that beat me in the primary lost in the general election, and then I just started campaigning again for that seat in 1994. And the best thing that ever happened to me politically was Dr. Roy Rowland, who was the incumbent member of Congress, deciding not to run. Roy is such a great guy. He was a good conservative member of Congress, and I would have been extremely fortunate if I had been able to prevail over him. But he decided not to run and has since become one of my dearest friends and a guy that I call on.

I spent eight great years in the House, where a preacher's kid from south Georgia to have the opportunity that I had in my eight years in the House is unbelievable. It was very humbling. And now to serve four years in the Senate, I still am very humbled by the fact that I have a chance to represent nine million people -- nine of the greatest million people in the whole world, residents of Georgia. And that's sort of how I got started and where I come from.

Julianne and I have two children. Most importantly, we have two grandchildren who are kind of the light of our lives, and as a result of them living in Moultrie, where my daughter lives and her husband's a farmer there, Julianne doesn't spend a lot of time in Washington. She stays at home where she can be close to the grandchildren. Days and nights in Washington are so hectic that even when she's there, we don't get to see a lot of each other. So we're very fortunate but feel very humbled and very privileged to represent the people of Georgia.

BOB SHORT: You do a great job.

SAXBY CHAMBLISS: Well, thank you.

BOB SHORT: I think that - - didn't your experience in the House give you sort of a leg up on some of the senators, and with your experience in terrorism and national security and that sort of thing?

SAXBY CHAMBLISS: Well, it did. I - - when I got elected to the House, my priorities were to go on the House Armed Services Committee and the House Agriculture Committee because those were the main parochial interests in my district, and I was fortunate enough for that to happen. Then my last two years in the House, the speaker, Denny Hastert came to me and asked me to serve on the Intelligence Committee. And he said he wanted to create a new subcommittee on terrorism and homeland security and asked me to chair that, and so I did beginning in early 2001, and I had a great experience.

My ranking member was Jane Harman, a congresswoman from California who became a very dear friend. She and I thought alike on the issue of terrorism, and we began working on trying to figure out who Al Qaeda is, trying to educate members of not only Intelligence Committee but members of the House. So we did extensive work. We traveled extensively and around the world talking to people, and along comes September the 11th, and Jane and I were both kind of thrust to the forefront because of our experience and our knowledge and our work on terrorism. And I was very fortunate, from an election standpoint, to have that knowledge and have that reputation of knowing a little bit about something that not many people knew about.

BOB SHORT: Having served on that committee, were you surprised by 9/11?

SAXBY CHAMBLISS: Well, I was surprised by the magnitude of it. You have to remember, Bob, that was not the first attack by terrorists on U.S. property. We had just prior to that had the attack on the USS Cole. We had had the attack on the embassies in Africa. We had had the previous attack on the World Trade Center in New York City that was not successful. So it was a surprise simply from the standpoint that I don't think anybody realized the magnitude that these folks would go to to try to kill and harm Americans and to destroy our way of life.

BOB SHORT: Well, and our response - - are we doing the right things? Can we win a war against these terrorists?

SAXBY CHAMBLISS: Well, we can, but it's going to be a long and enduring war. The President was very upfront about that following the attack on September the 11th in saying that this is not going to be concluded overnight. But certainly I think we can. We're doing a much better job of, number one, gathering intelligence on the terrorist community today than we were before September 11th. We're doing a better job of sharing the information that we gather between federal agencies, as well as between our friends and allies around the world who are also gathering intelligence. We share a lot of information, and we're also doing a much better job of interrupting and disrupting terrorist activity. You look at right here in Atlanta; we interrupted a potential terrorist attack last year. Not many people know a whole lot about it. It hasn't been very public, but there will be a trial upcoming on two individuals who were arrested

for potential terrorist activity. So we're doing a much better job. Militarily, we are the world's only superpower now, but you're not going to win a war against the terrorists purely from a military standpoint. You've got to have political will of people, and you've also got to have just a very, very strong intelligence gathering operation. And we're doing a much better job today than we did before September 11th.

BOB SHORT: We hear a lot about diplomacy. Do you think that the United Nations or any similar organization is capable of helping us negotiate settlements or peace with these terrorists?

SAXBY CHAMBLISS: Well, I haven't been a big fan of the United Nations in recent years. I think under the leadership of Kofi Annan, we had an individual there who basically was corrupt. He was taking payoffs. We knew it, and the organization did not do anything about it. I think we had clear indication that Saddam Hussein was carrying out atrocities and genocide against Sunni member - - excuse me, Shia members in Iraq, and we were doing nothing about it. We had resolutions that were passed imposing sanctions on Saddam Hussein. We had resolutions that required him to come forward and tell us about his program of weapons of mass destruction. Those resolutions were never enforced. So I think the United Nations has been rather weak in years past.

We've got a new head of the United Nations now, and I think he deserves the benefit of the doubt. I'm willing to give him an opportunity, and I hope, particularly with the situation we have with Iran right now, the ongoing situation in Iraq, the situation in North Korea - - we've got an opportunity for real leadership to emerge out of the United Nations, but we certainly haven't seen it in recent years. But I'm hopeful that we can see a strong diplomatic effort on the part of the United Nations to help us resolve some of these problems out there.

BOB SHORT: Well, the war, as you know, has many critics, particularly among the Democrats in Congress. You've been over there to the war zone. How are our troops reacting to all this fuss at home?

SAXBY CHAMBLISS: Well, anybody who says that you support the troops but you want to cut off their funding is - - the American people are much smarter than they are. You can't support the troops and at the same time say you want to eliminate the funding for this operation. The troops in Iraq see TV live. They see Fox News, they see CNN, they see Al Jazeera. I get emails regularly from troops in theater in Iraq, and they get really upset when they hear these comments being made on the floor of the Senate or the floor of the House or in news conferences relative to what needs to happen in Iraq and how it needs to happen. I mean, these are professional men and women. First of all, they're very brave men and women wearing the uniform of the United States of America, and they're doing a terrific job. But for us to think that as members of the House or Senate that we should micromanage that war, we're kidding ourselves. We need to leave it to the military officials on the ground to do what's best to try to prevail in this conflict.

BOB SHORT: Well, 20 years from now, if we look back on the period, do you - -

SAXBY CHAMBLISS: Osama Bin Laden, Al-Zawahiri are two of the meanest, most notorious killers in the world today, and the nastiest folks we've ever seen in the history of the world. So yes, I think we were right in going into Afghanistan, taking out terrorists, the terrorists' ability to

train the jihadist members of their organization. We know that they were not only training them physically on how to fight in close quarters, they were teaching them how to use chemical weapons, biological weapons. So certainly, I think we were right to do that.

The situation in Iraq will always be questioned. Every country in the world that had an intelligence organization believed the same thing that we did, and that was that Saddam Hussein possessed chemical and biological weapons and that he intended to use those weapons to kill and harm Americans. Anybody who intends to do that, in my opinion, we should be on the offensive with them, and we should try to do what we can to prevent their capability of utilizing those weapons, and that's what we did.

We were - - because of what we've done in Iraq, you've seen Libya come forward and basically give up their nuclear program. They were in the process of becoming weaponized, but they said, you know, we see what's going on in our neighboring country. We don't want that to happen there, so Qaddafi has given up his nuclear program. We took down Saddam Hussein. We took down his two sons. They were responsible for killing and torturing literally hundreds of thousands of people inside of Iraq. They were paying terrorists in Israel to kill innocent people. So I think it was the right thing to do.

I'm not particularly happy with some things that have gone on. We've made some very bad decisions, I think, militarily. But at the end of the day, you look back on any war, beginning with our Revolutionary War, Bob, and carrying all the way through the War of 1812, the Civil War, the Korean, World War II. We made some mistakes, but at the end of the day, it was the right thing to do. And we have, I think, corrected a lot of our problems, and we're moving in the right direction today.

BOB SHORT: So you see no value in any plan of withdrawing.

SAXBY CHAMBLISS: No, I don't. Here's what'll happen if we withdraw precipitously from Iraq. We will see an immediate genocide in Iraq like we've never seen before. The Sunnis have been in power under Saddam all these years. He was a Sunni. They are the minority party, a very vast minority party. The Shias will immediately try to eradicate the Sunnis, and we truly will see a civil war. There's the potential for the Iranians to move into the southern part of Iraq and try to dominate that area. A lot of oil reserves in that area. There's the potential for the Kurds in the north to engage in a conflict with the Turks who have always - - there's always been a little friction - - a lot of friction - - between those two groups of people. So I think what you would see is genocide. You would see the terrorists, members of Al Qaeda, immediately have a safe haven for training their Jihadist members. They would have an income stream that they have not enjoyed to this point in time with the oil revenues there. So I think it would create a truly unstable Middle East. The Iranians have said that - - the leader of the Iranians has said his goal is to destroy Israel and to obliterate it from the earth. It would give them more of an opportunity there. So it's incumbent on us to do what's necessary to try to make sure that we destroy the terrorist network. But at the same time, we need to have some sort of stability in that part of the world.

BOB SHORT: You have had a very broad perspective on the issue of immigration. There are several schools of thought about that, as you know. Is there a solution to that problem?

SAXBY CHAMBLISS: Well, I wish there was an easy solution to it, but unfortunately there

isn't. You know, the last major immigration reform bill that we had was in 1986 when Ronald Reagan was President. We knew there were a lot of illegal immigrants in this country at that time. We thought it was somewhere between two and three million. It turned out that it was significantly higher than that. And the solution that the administration came up with at that time was to grant amnesty to those individuals that were here illegally, and they thought, you know, if we enforce securing the border and the other laws on the books that we can solve this problem. Well, the fact is they granted amnesty to about three and a half million people, and they didn't secure the border, and it simply made the problem worse.

Our economy has been thriving during the '90s as well as during the 21st century here in 2000. As a result of that, there has been a need for employees on the part of American employers. They simply haven't had the ability to have all Americans employed in every industry in the United States, so there's been a need for migrant workers, whether it's in agriculture or whether it's in some other segments of our economy, and there's been a flood of people coming into the United States over the last 20 years illegally.

Here, in my opinion, is what we need to do. We've got a kind of three pegs to the stool, Bob, relative to immigration. The first thing we've got to do is we've got to seal the border. I don't care what we do relative to immigration reform; if we don't seal the border, we've done nothing. So we've got to do that, and we can do that. My colleague, my good friend, Johnny Isaacson, had an idea during the last immigration reform bill that unfortunately didn't get put in place, of putting a trigger in. And putting some objective standards out there to say this is what you need to do, Department of Homeland Security, and when you do this, then we can have - - kick in a temporary worker program and some other things that are a necessary part of the overall package of immigration reform. We need - - we've doubled the size of the border patrol. We need to double it again. We have not taken advantage of the technology that's available out there. We need to put more cameras on the border. We need to be flying unmanned aerial vehicles so that we can tell our border patrol where the hot spots are, where these folks are coming across, and we can direct the border patrol there so that they can stop these individuals. We need to put more beds on the border so that when we catch somebody, instead of releasing them and telling them to show up at a hearing next Tuesday, we can actually incarcerate them and hold them, because we all know that none of them are going to show up for a hearing, but we don't have the beds to house these people. We actually stopped about one and a half million individuals coming across the border last year. Unfortunately, another 400,000 got across that we didn't stop. But we can seal that border.

The second thing we've got to do is we've got to create a temporary worker program. Whether it's in agriculture where they may stay here for 90 days, 120, or 180 days, or whether it's in the hotel industry, or in the chicken processing facilities, or the carpet mills, construction, or whatever. They may need to stay here for longer periods. It may be 12 months; it may be 24 months. Whatever the period is, but it's important that they be temporary, that we know who they are, that we give them a biometric card that identifies who they are and has some facets about their life on that card so that when they walk in and sit across the table from you and want a job, and you say, "Well, show me your birth certificate that says you're a U.S. citizen or show me your biometric card," you can take that card, swipe it through a machine, and you'll know that they're exactly who they say they are and that they're here for the right reason.

The third part of the issue that we've got to come to grips with is what do we do with these five-, ten-, fifteen million, whatever the number is - - people who are here illegally. Bob, I think the worst thing we could do is to grant these people who came to this country illegally a pathway to

the most prized possession in the world today, which is American citizenship. I feel very strongly about that, and I am not going to support any kind of immigration reform bill that allows these people who are here illegally to step in line ahead of those individuals who have worked hard to become an American citizen. We're a country founded on immigrants and by immigrants, and we will always have somewhat of an open door policy. But open door means you come here the right way, and we're going to treat you right; but you come here the wrong way, and you're simply going to have to pay a penalty, which means you're going to have to go back to where you came from, if you want to become a citizen, and begin your process just like the current law says you have to.

It's a very, very complex issue and there's no simple solution to it, but I do think that we're going to have another bill on the floor of the Senate, probably sometime this summer, and it'll be an interesting process for your students to follow as we go through that this year.

BOB SHORT: All right, good. Well, speaking of agriculture, you've been chairman and now you're a ranking member. There was an item in the paper the other day that says that we are now importing more food than we export. Should we be concerned about that?

SAXBY CHAMBLISS: Sure, we should. Bob, today oil drives the economy of this country. We import 62 percent of the petroleum needed in this country today. We can never afford to get in that position when it comes to food. You know, our farmers are not only the salt of the earth people in this country, but they're the individuals that produce the highest quality and the most abundant food supply of anybody in the world. We have a very safe food supply in this country today, and it's important that we maintain that supply and the safety of that food supply. We get criticized, as members of the ag community, from time to time when we write a farm bill and we give these payments to farmers. A lot of people call them subsidies; I never call them a subsidy. I always refer to government payments as an investment by the United States in agriculture, because that's exactly what it is. As a result of government payments going to farmers, the food that Americans buy in the grocery store every day costs them less out of every dollar earned than any other industrialized country in the world. And if we're going to have that forever and ever, then we've got to have farm programs. They need to be reasonable. They need to be fair. We need to make sure that when times are good, prices are good, yields are good, that there is very little in the way of payments going to farmers. But when times are tough and we have droughts, or when prices are extremely low in the world market, we need to make sure that we extend a helping hand to the agriculture community, not to guarantee them a profit but to hopefully let them go for another year in the hopes that prices will get better. I tell you, our farmers in this country are the most optimistic men and women that we have. They always think next year is going to be better, and we always hope it is.

But I'm very proud of my relationship to the agriculture community. I enjoyed, obviously, my two years as chairman, and now I'm enjoying being the ranking member as we move into the farm bill, because we will be a major player in crafting policy that is going to affect farmers and ranchers not just in Georgia but all across America for the next five years. And this will be my third farm bill. I don't know a farmer in America that wouldn't rather get every dime of their income from the marketplace, and we're going to strive to craft a farm bill that will allow that to happen, but in the tough times to also extend that helping hand to agriculture.

BOB SHORT: Do you think global warming will have an effect on farms and agriculture?

SAXBY CHAMBLISS: Well, certainly it's going to have an effect on this country and thereby it will have some effect on agriculture. I'm - - I went to Greenland last summer, and I was there in August so it was not the coldest time of the year, but there's something going on there. There was a lot of melting. Now, I can't tell you whether there was more ice being frozen on the back end of this than there was melting on the front end, but I did have an opportunity to talk with scientists, individuals from America as well as from around Europe, who had been working in Greenland for 25 years or more. And the consensus there was that there is something happening, but they could not tell us whether the melting that's going on is caused by nature itself - - because this whole area melted on its own 4,000 years ago - - or whether it's attributable to mankind and some of the things that we're doing. The real answer probably is it's part of both. And we've got an opportunity now to do something about it. I think we need to be careful. We do not need to do anything drastic that will destroy the economy of this country, but we need to take a look at and figure out, over the long term, how we can make sure that we don't destroy the environment in this country. And we can do that, and farmers will play a key role in that.

BOB SHORT: Well, you are following in the footsteps of two great Georgia senators, Russell and Nunn, as a member of the Armed Services Committee. They, of course, devoted a great deal of their time in Washington to fighting for a strong military. Do you think that our present strength, militarily, is strong enough to carry out our mission all over the world?

SAXBY CHAMBLISS: Bob, you know it's interesting. We have been criticized a lot by some of our friends in Europe, as well as some developing countries around the world for what's going on in Iraq and some of our policies there, and yet when any of these countries gets in trouble, who is the individual country they look to? It's always the United States when it comes to military operations. Iran, for example, with all the criticism we've had in Iraq, the European countries have basically come to us and said, look, we don't have the capability of protecting ourselves from Iran. You're the only country in the world that can afford to take them on. Lord knows, I hope we don't have to do that. But we are the world's greatest country in large part because we have the world's strongest military. We can never afford to be second best and we won't. We're very blessed with brave young men and women who even in these difficult and dangerous times in the world today, times when you can't pick up the paper or turn on the TV without seeing individuals that have been wounded or killed in Iraq, we still have an all volunteer military, and we have men and women every day signing up to join our military because they're patriotic and they want to help their country.

So I think from the standpoint of our force structure, while its been strong even though we've downsized it some, we're looking at increasing our numbers again right now. We're going to add about 90,000 individuals to the Marine Corps and the Army. I think we need to do that, but I think our force structure is very solid.

From a weapons standpoint, we have the latest, most technologically advanced weapons systems of anybody in the world. A lot of them are made right here in Georgia - - the F-22, the C-130, the C-17. Any number of other weapon systems are manufactured right here in Georgia by Georgians. And we've got to continue down that road of staying ahead of the curve. A lot of people say, for example, with the F-22, well, that's a very expensive airplane. Why do we need the F-22 when we're not worried about Russia now like we used to during the Cold War days when this program was developed? Well, my response is pretty simple. If you tell me who our next adversary is going to be 20 years from now, then I'll tell you what weapon system we need,

but obviously nobody knows the answer to that question. And so what we have to do, militarily and from a policy standpoint in the Senate and the House, is to make sure that we do stay ahead of that curve. It's real expensive to do that, but if our children and our grandchildren are going to enjoy the same safe and secure America that we have all enjoyed, then we simply have got to continue down this road of making sure that we are the world's strongest military.

BOB SHORT: One of our policies in our reflections program is to submit questions asked by either students or the adults in continuing learning. Naturally, the adults are interested in social security. They want to know how you feel about the future of social security in the United States.

SAXBY CHAMBLISS: Well, social security has been a very valuable asset to our senior citizens in this country. It's a little over 60 years old now, and it's done well. But we all know, because independent groups have come forward over the last several years and told us, that if we don't do something about the funding for social security, then not the current generation, maybe not the next generation, but these young folks who are coming into the workplace today, they're not going to have the benefits that are promised to them under social security, even though they're going to pay into this system for 40 or 50 years or so. So I think we've got to look at social security.

We've made some changes in years past. I was born in 1943. My year of 1943 is the first year that anybody has to be 66 before you can collect social security benefits. So I won't collect them at 65; it'll be when I reach 66. We have increased social security taxes from time to time. I don't think we need to do that again. I think we can make reforms in social security that don't reduce the benefits but that don't require taxes. We can do things like if somebody has an income of X number of dollars - - and I don't even know what it is, what that should be from a retirement standpoint. Bill Gates, for example, or Warren Buffett - - billionaires - - why should they get social security benefits? We can means test social security and save an awful lot of money. I think that those are the kinds of reforms that we ought to lay on the table and debate. And I don't know what the answers are, but I do know that we've got to do something, not to protect those who are getting benefits today - - they will always get their check every month as long as they live - - but these young folks that are coming into the marketplace. It's simply not going to be there for them if we don't start making some changes now.

BOB SHORT: Do you think there's merit in the President's idea of having to invest a part of their contributions to social security?

SAXBY CHAMBLISS: I think it is. All you have to do is look at 401(k)s that people have invested in over the last couple of decades. Gosh, the average rate of return on the social security trust fund for the life of the trust fund is about 2.8 percent. Well, you and I can go to any bank in Atlanta or Young Harris today, and we can buy a CD that's going to pay us significantly more than 2.8 percent. I think that individuals who pay money in ought to have the opportunity to take their money - - not the employer portion of the money, but the individual's portion of that money that's paid into social security - - and if they want to direct all or any part of that money to go into something other than the general revenues of the United States where they're going to earn 2.8 percent. If they want to earn higher than that then they ought to have that opportunity. It would have no effect on benefits to seniors today, but it will allow those individuals who are coming into the marketplace the opportunity to have 100 percent of the

benefits when they reach retirement age.

BOB SHORT: A lot of talk about taxes. The fair tax proposal has been brought forth. Do you think that has a chance of passage?

SAXBY CHAMBLISS: I know two things about our current tax system. Number one, it's not fair and it's not equitable. Every time we try to provide tax relief to hardworking, tax-paying Americans, we complicate an already complicated tax code even more. And Zell and I talked about this while he and I were serving together in the Senate. I am a supporter of the fair tax, as is Zell. I think, secondly, that within the next decade, within the next 10 years, that we probably will be moving to some sort of change from the current system into something different. I think the fair tax is the best way to go. If somebody has a better idea, I'm willing to listen to it. But here's what the fair tax will do. If you are working today, obviously you have income taxes taken out of your weekly check, your monthly check, whenever you get paid. You have social security taxes taken out. You have unemployment taxes taken out. You have any number of federal taxes that are withheld. All of that - - all of that money would be added back to your check because all of those taxes would be paid for with a consumption tax. Every head of household in America today, every tax-paying head of the household would receive a check from the government every week - - excuse me - - every month. And the purpose of that check would be to offset the basic supplies, food, medicine, whatever that that individual will be purchasing during that month. So if somebody is low income, they will get a check every month, and that check will be used to pay their 23 percent consumption tax on goods that they purchase. If they are a high income earner, it won't do - - it won't nearly pay the 23 percent that they will be buying, because naturally people who make more money will spend more money, and thereby they will pay more in taxes. It's just like the current system. Those that earn the most money pay the most in taxes.

But that system would be fair for a couple of different reasons. First of all, we would eliminate the Internal Revenue Service. We would not need it. There are 47 out of 50 states today that have a current sales tax in place. We could contract with all 50 states to collect this money and send a check to the federal government every month, and we could pay them a healthy fee to do that.

Secondly, we would be able to fund social security and Medicare, all of our social programs, without ever having to raise taxes. And we could make sure that those individuals who are operating on a cash basis today - - and there's a large legal and illegal network out there operating on a cash basis that don't pay taxes today but yet they spend money - - they would all of a sudden be paying their fair share of the tax revenues coming into Washington every year. So I just think it's a direction in which we need to go, and, like I say, if somebody has a better way to do it, I'm certainly willing to listen.

BOB SHORT: How about inheritance taxes?

SAXBY CHAMBLISS: Well, again, under the fair tax, all inheritance taxes would be eliminated. I have been a proponent of elimination of the death tax. I think it's the most unfair tax we have on the book. I mean, we tell all of our senior citizens all of their lives, the federal government says work as hard as you can, save everything you can save. And at your death, Uncle Sam's going to reach in your back pocket and take 55 percent of everything you've earned. There's something that's not right about that kind of a system. I don't think it's fair. I

think we ought to eliminate it. And the one thing we know is if we leave money to our children, they're going to spend it somewhere along the way. But that's okay; we've worked hard for it, and thank goodness we can leave them a little something. But 55 percent of it ought not to go to the federal government.

BOB SHORT: Senator, we appreciate you being with us. I would like to ask you, if I may, one final question that has been brought up, and that involves the Patriot Act. Do you think the Patriot Act is too severe and does it break a man's constitutional rights?

SAXBY CHAMBLISS: No, I don't think it does. Bob, you know, we have been very cautious in the original enactment of the Patriot Act, as well as the reauthorization of the Patriot Act to make sure that privacy rights of individual Americans are well protected. Now, if somebody is overseas having conversations about attacking America, if they're talking with terrorists overseas, then we ought to have the opportunity to figure out what they're saying, and we do that; we allow for that under the Patriot Act. If somebody comes into this country with the idea of breaking the law and carrying out a terrorist activity, we have methods under the Patriot Act to gather intelligence on those individuals without interfering in any way or gathering information on Americans.

So I think we've put all of the constitutional protections in place with the Patriot Act. It has been part of the reason why we have not suffered another attack on domestic soil since September 11th. You ask any FBI agent, you ask any CIA agent, you ask any law enforcement agent across the country what the Patriot Act has done for them, and they will all tell you it's the best tool we've ever had in fighting terrorism and in doing our job of protecting and securing the lives of Americans. So we need to be careful. We don't need to infringe on people's privacy rights. But at the same time, if somebody comes into this country and wants to do something in a harmful way to Americans, we need to be able to protect our citizens.

BOB SHORT: Thank you very much, Senator.

SAXBY CHAMBLISS: Bob, it's my pleasure to be with you.

BOB SHORT: Thanks.

SAXBY CHAMBLISS: Want me to just talk?

BOB SHORT: Yeah, just tell us a bit.

SAXBY CHAMBLISS: George Busbee was a dear friend of mine basically all of my adult life in Georgia. In 1969, I moved to Moultrie to practice law, and Albany and Moultrie are very close to each other. I practiced in the Dougherty Superior Court from time to time. Governor Busbee practiced in Concord [ph] Superior Court from time to time, and we would run into each other. So I got to know him well because there weren't all that many lawyers in south Georgia at that time, and we pretty well all knew each other.

I knew George as a very dedicated public servant. He's a guy for whom I have a great amount of admiration because he stood up for what his constituents thought and for what he thought was best for them. I'll never forget his vote in the legislature when the situation occurred during the

election between Lester Maddox and Ellis Arnall and Bo Callaway. George Busbee did the right thing for his constituents, and that was an act of bravery on his part, but it was an act of strong principle, and that's the kind of individual that George Busbee was.

I remember his campaign slogan, "I'm a workhorse not a show horse," and that was very true about George. He did a great job in the Georgia legislature. He was an outstanding member of the bar, a very dedicated, very ethical, smart lawyer, and he was a pleasure to know for all of the years that I knew him, and he certainly did a great job as chief executive of this state. He served us well for eight years and, I guess, was the first governor we had to serve two terms. But George Busbee was a great man, and we all miss him today.

[END]

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