

George W. Andrews III

Collegiality in the House

Remembering an era of collegiality and camaraderie in the House.

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When my dad was in Congress, it was, I think, a much more collegial place than it is now. The cloakroom was a gathering place. Big, deep, stuffed leather chairs, leather couches. And the Members would go back there and basically tell war stories. They'd talk about the events of the day, but most of the time, they'd tell jokes, and even occasionally take a nap. I worked in the other end of the cloakroom. The cloakroom was an L-shaped room. One side of the L was the phone booths, where I worked, and the other side of the L was the cloakroom, where the chairs and the sofas were. And, from time to time, I would just hear bursts of uproarious laughter coming from the cloakroom. Somebody had told a funny one. Often as not, it was my dad that told the funny one. Political viewpoints, geographic location, was totally erased back then. They just went back there and enjoyed the fellowship of each other, and it was great.