

The Political Styles of Bumpers and Pryor: Models of Representation for Arkansas

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This article examines the political styles of former U.S. Senators Dale Bumpers and David Pryor, both from Arkansas. It argues that both Pryor and Bumpers exhibited a representational style different from those of their regional colleagues and that this difference was in large part a product of the particular political culture of Arkansas. It also argues that the representational style of Bumpers and Pryor, intertwined with Arkansas's political culture, has subsequently had a strong influence on the political and representational styles exhibited by both of Arkansas's current United States Senators and that this Bumpers\Pryor model is likely to continue to influence the presentational and representational style of future members of the Arkansas congressional delegation.

Introduction

This article addresses the concept of senatorial political and representational style by focusing on two of Arkansas's most renowned United States Senators: Dale Bumpers and David Pryor. Political style is particularly difficult to conceptualize and operationally apply because each political actor has unique political abilities and skills (English, 1993, 1997). Despite this intrinsic difficulty, congressional scholars have found that attention to stylistic differences across members provides rich insight into the institutional and member behaviors of Congress and that theory-building is not impossible (Mayhew; Sinclair; and Fenno, 1978).

In addition, scholars have found that members of Congress pay attention to the norms and values of their constituencies' political cultures in developing their representational styles. In particular, Richard Fenno has written most perceptively on the issues of political and representational styles in his classic work *Home Style: House Members in Their District*. Fenno characterizes representational style as the perception by the legislator of their constituency combined with the actual geographic, electoral, and attitudinal configurations of the district. A congressional member configures her or his presentation of self to the nature and character of the district. The nature of the district shapes in part the attitudes of the constituents and their expectations of their congressional representative. A member therefore presents themselves in a manner that best advantages them with their constituents. While a member's policy positions and voting behavior are largely influenced by the nature

of their constituency (Miller and Stokes, 1963), members usually but do not always vote with their district or party. Fenno, through his interviews, discovered several different types of representational styles: “person to person,” “issue independence one-on-one,” “political leadership,” “personal accessibility, issue independence,” or any other style that melds his or her personal political traits with those of the constituency (Fenno, 1978). Patterns that members exhibit in their interaction with constituents shape their congressional reputation within their districts and may insulate them from being classified as incompatible with the district or state which they represent. The present application of this concept analyzes the kinds of interactions that Bumpers and Pryor have had with constituents (Mayhew, 1974) and how they adapted their political and representational styles to Arkansas's political culture (Fenno, 1978; Fenno, 1996, p. 283).

Interest in the political and representational styles of Dale Bumpers and David Pryor exists for several reasons. First, the longevity and durability of their careers, and the reasons for their political successes, are striking. David Pryor has been in public life since the early 1960's when he successfully ran for the Arkansas General Assembly. In this span of more than 30 years, he served three terms in the United States House of Representatives, two terms as Governor, and three terms as United States Senator. Pryor completed his third and last term as Arkansas's junior senator in 1996, announcing his retirement from the Senate on April 21, 1995.

Dale Bumpers emerged as a political force in Arkansas from a school board position in the small town of Charleston after a failed attempt at the state legislature. With just that one elective experience, he defeated Orval Faubus in the 1970 Democratic run-off primary and then won the governorship against the incumbent Republican Winthrop Rockefeller. After serving as Governor for the two terms immediately preceding those of Pryor, Bumpers defeated J. William Fulbright, then a national figure in his own right, in the 1974 Democratic primary to win his first of four terms to the United States Senate. With Pryor's departure in 1996 and a Republican Congress in place, speculation began that Bumpers, then in his early seventies, would not run for re-election. That speculation became real when Bumpers, after what appeared to be a very emotional struggle, decided to leave the Senate in 1998. In just the length of a congressional biennium Arkansas had lost two Senators who most state and national political experts acknowledged were politically unbeatable.

Both Pryor and Bumpers were what Richard Fenno refers to as “Senate institutions,” Senators whose popularity is so institutionalized in their state that it transcends viable electoral challenge (Fenno, 1996). Pryor was considered to be one of the most popular members among his Senate colleagues. He served as Chair of the Special Committee on Aging and was elected Secretary of the Democratic Conference, the number three position on the Democratic leadership ladder. Before a heart attack compromised his health, Pryor was considered a viable contender for the majority whip position in the Senate and a future competitor for majority leader.

Bumpers was also well respected both inside and outside the Senate. Among his Senate peers he was known as one of the best orators in that body, had been Chair of the Small Business Committee and a senior member of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. In addition, Bumpers had a national profile. With the South solidifying as a Republican stronghold, the few remaining moderate/progressive Democratic Senators from the South like Bumpers could be considered as potential presidential or vice presidential candidates. Aware of his special status, Bumpers gave more than just passing consideration to running for president in both 1976 and 1988.

In fact, as close friends of Bill Clinton, Bumpers and Pryor together with Clinton constituted the "Big Three" of Arkansas politics from the early seventies into the mid-nineties (Blair, 1995). Bumpers and Pryor had been intimately linked with Bill Clinton since Clinton's entrance onto the Arkansas political stage in 1976, and continued their associations into the Clinton presidency and beyond. Bumpers' biggest national platform occurred when, just after leaving the Senate, when he was asked by Clinton to speak in his defense during his impeachment trial. Bumpers continues to have an active career in Washington as a lobbyist. David Pryor, after serving as the resident United States Senator at the JFK School of Government at Harvard University, accepted an offer by Clinton in 2004 to become the first Dean of the Clinton School of Public Service. Pryor continues to be active in Arkansas as a frequent speaker at political and civic events and an ardent supporter of Arkansas political history.

A second reason for why the representational style of Bumpers and Pryor deserves attention is because at first blush Arkansas political culture does not seem to mesh with some of the prevailing political patterns associated with Arkansas. Arkansas is often described as a conservative state (Blair and Barth, 2005), with widespread socially conservative attitudes among its population. For example, Arkansans take their "old time" religion seriously, and many are pro-life. Arkansas voters adopted Amendment 68 to the state constitution in 1989 which states that the official policy of the state is supportive of life and which prohibits the indirect and direct support of abortions by the state except to save the life of the mother.¹ Arkansans in general have not supported "liberal" Democratic presidential candidates in the last half century, with a majority of voters most recently supporting George W. Bush for president in both 2000 and, in dramatically greater numbers, again in 2004. How could Bumpers and Pryor sustain themselves in a region that was realigning from conservative blue to a very Republican red?

Since 1972, in fact, Arkansas has been a reliable state for national Republicans, with Jimmy Carter and Clinton the only exceptions. In 1968, the state's electoral

¹ See Constitution of the State of Arkansas of 1874, 2005 edition (Secretary of State Charlie Daniels). The federal courts have found this amendment unconstitutional in respect to Medicaid payments for abortions in cases of incest and rape.

votes went to George Wallace, but the two other victorious major state candidates, Democratic United States Senator J. William Fulbright and Republican Governor Winthrop Rockefeller also won suggesting the electorate's independence if not its political schizophrenia. Despite Jimmy Carter's victory in 1976, Arkansans did not support his reelection bid in 1980 and even more firmly rejected the candidacies of Walter Mondale in 1984 and Michael Dukakis in 1988. Arkansas did not even give its "favorite son" Bill Clinton a landslide victory in 1992. He earned just 53 percent of the state's vote. Why then did Bumpers and Pryor do so well in Arkansas, especially against attacks declaring them to be "too liberal" and "too out-of-step" with their constituents? Bumpers has even said, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, "that if Arkansans actually knew how liberal he really was, he might not ever have been elected."²

A third frame for this study is to shed light on why Arkansas has not undergone the Democratic-to-Republican political realignment typical of other Southern states. Most local governments, counties, cities, and towns are still run by Democratic officeholders, although many of them adhere to moderate or even conservative ideological views. The Arkansas General Assembly has had so few Republicans over the years that partisan affiliation was not even noted in the biographical portraits of legislators included in interest group publications. Republican could actually be counted on both hands in the House until the early nineties when term limits opened up a large number of incumbent seats to candidates who were willing to run as Republicans. That trend of increasing Republican legislative representation, though small in number, so alarmed Democratic lawmakers that the Democratic Speaker of the House during the 80th General Assembly (1997) called for a Democratic caucus in the House to develop legislative strategy and unified positions. House Democrats later twice elected the same person as Speaker, bucking the one-term tradition for Speaker, not only to combat increasing legislative Republicanism but, more significantly, to arm themselves with extra fire-power against Republican Governor Mike Huckabee. However, the 85th Assembly (2005-2006) counted only eight Republicans in the Senate and 28 in the House, imposing numbers when compared to Republican representation during much of the 20th century, but actually two fewer House seats than in the 84th Assembly (2003-2004). Even with term limits and Republican Party candidacies becoming more common, Arkansas remains one of the most nominally Democratic states in the nation perhaps in part because of the influence of Bumpers and Pryor.

Some partisan change in Arkansas's congressional delegation did occur during the 1990's. For years it had been an electoral given in Arkansas that, except for the 3rd Congressional district in northwest Arkansas, five of the six members of the state's congressional delegation would always be Democrats. That changed in 1992

² Bumpers has made this comment numerous times, particularly to University of Arkansas at Little Rock and Ouachita Baptist University Capitol Hill Seminar students who visit him in DC where he is now a lobbyist/lawyer.

when the Republicans picked up the 4th Congressional seat in southwest Arkansas, Democratic by long tradition and demographics. But that seat was ultimately reclaimed by a blue dog Democrat Mike Ross in 2000 and has remained his ever since. As for the 3rd Congressional District where mountain Republicanism has long been ensconced and where Bill Clinton's first try for elective office in 1974 failed, Republicans retained that seat when John Paul HammerSchmidt retired in 1992 with the election of state representative Tim Hutchinson who held the seat until 1996 when his brother Asa Hutchinson succeeded him after Tim Hutchinson was elected to the United States Senate. As the 1996 presidential election approached, the state's two other House seats, the 1st held by Blanche Lambert (now Lincoln) and the 2nd held by Ray Thorton, also became open when Lincoln left the House to raise twins and Thorton, who had opposed term limits, felt he should follow the principle of the term limit amendment adopted by 60 percent of the state electorate in 1992 even though it did not apply to federal office-holders as decided by the United States Supreme Court.³

With the nearly simultaneous departures of Pryor (also in 1996) and then Bumpers (1998), it was not out of the realm of possibility that both United State Senate seats might become Republican and that, regardless of party, both Senate seats would likely be won by politicians very different from Bumpers and Pryor. How those changes might affect the culture of senatorial representation on which Arkansans had relied for almost two decades presented another intriguing aspect of the relationship between culture and representation.

Arkansas: A Political Culture of Intimacy and Inequality

In some very important ways Arkansas's political culture does seem to provide a good fit for the kind of senatorial representation displayed by Pryor and Bumpers. Arkansas is a state that has long displayed an underdog mentality against the "outside world." The aphorism "Thank God for Mississippi" is as familiar to Arkansans as the razorback hog call. Arkansas's inferiority complex has stemmed from its consistently low economic and educational achievements compared to most other states. Arkansas has always rated among the lowest states in per capita income and for years sent and graduated fewer students to college than almost every other state in the nation. (Blair and Barth). Unemployment and underemployment have been continuing problems, particularly in the rural Delta region of the state and the states interest group structure is considered one that often trumps citizen influence (English and Carroll).

At the same time, Arkansas has been home to some of the wealthiest individuals in the world. The late Sam Walton started the world's largest discount chain in rural Bentonville. Investment bankers Witt and Jack Stevens were renowned both in and beyond Arkansas for operating the largest investment bank not headquartered on

³ See *U.S. Term Limits, Inc. v. Thorton*, 514 U.S. 779 (1995).

Wall Street, making them both prominent among national economic elites. Jack Stevens even served as President of the Augusta National Golf club, home of the famed “green jacket” Masters Golf tournament, one of the most prestigious and visible sporting events in the world.

Arkansas has long compensated for its lack of economic standing in the nation with a fierce dedication to sports. The state-wide devotion to the University of Arkansas Razorbacks rivals the nationalism of a developing country, ironically a term that has sometimes been used to describe the state itself. For years, University of Arkansas football teams, with fewer resources than their Southwest Conference competitors in Texas, regularly defeated their better funded conference rivals. Starting in the mid-seventies, Razorback basketball teams began to make regular trips to the NCAA basketball tournaments, and the “final four,” culminating in a national championship in 1994 with a runner-up finish in 1995. Those achievements established “The Hogs” as one of the top five basketball program in the nation during the 1990’s and, along with their football program, so ensconced them in the popular culture of the state that one of the first things that Governor Jim Guy Tucker said in addressing a gathering of 2000 Democrats at the 1996 Jefferson-Jackson dinner, held just a few hours after Arkansas’s NCAA tournament victory over Marquette, was, “How about them Hogs!”⁴

What is particularly interesting about Arkansas’s political culture is that, despite its “politics of inequality” (English and Carroll, Arkansans possess a humility and civility in their personal conduct regardless of their economic and political standing. These personal characteristics are especially striking to non-Arkansans. One story noted by independent prosecutor Kenneth Starr offers a particularly vivid example of this cultural trait. According to the story, Starr was eating a hamburger and fries at McDonald’s located on Little Rock’s Markham Street not too far from his office on a beautiful fall afternoon when his beeper started to go off. As Starr hurried out the door to a pay phone to respond to the call, a man in a short-sleeved shirt came up to him and said, “Mr. Starr, I just want to wish you well in what you are doing here.” The man then went on his way. According to Starr, the same type of thing happened to him a number of times, despite the unpopularity of his “white water scandal” investigation of then-President Bill Clinton and Governor Jim Guy Tucker with many Arkansans. (English, 1997). In fact, Starr has been quoted as saying that neither he nor his staff ever encountered any incident of rudeness or hostility while they were in Arkansas, which he described as “a small, kind of wonderful, Greenbergian place” (Webb).

Such humility is a deep-seated cultural trait of Arkansans. Flaunting wealth, putting on airs, or trying to impress people do not win points in Arkansas. Sam Walton invented the high-volume, super size discount retail model, whose collegial

⁴ This writer was present when Governor Tucker made these remarks at the 1996 Jefferson/Jackson Day Dinner sponsored by the Democratic Party of Arkansas.

management style included cheer-leading rallies for his employees. But despite his immense wealth, Walton continued to live in rural Bentonville, driving his own old car to work. The Stephens brothers also maintained low personal profiles in the state, hosting other notables over country-style lunches served in their skyscraper headquarters. Other millionaires such as Charles Murphy, head of Murphy Oil, a Fortune 500 company, and Don Tyson of Tyson Chicken, which is the largest meat company in the United States, joined Sam Walton and other Arkansas entrepreneurs in the "good suit" club to "do good" for the state by addressing persistent policy problems such as the low education levels in the state. Since politics is not only "who gets what, when, and how," but is also an interactive process in which interpersonal relations are salient to political relationships, Arkansas politics has its own special style of courtesy, civility, and politics of manners.

Another trait of the Arkansas political culture is the intimacy and accessibility of Arkansas politics to those who practice it as well as those who study it (Cornwell and Goodman, 1969). Arkansas is still very much a small-town, rural state, rather than a suburban or urban polity, even in 2006. Outside of Little Rock; Fort Smith; the exploding population belt of Fayetteville, Rogers, Springdale; and small cities such as Hot Springs, El Dorado, and Jonesboro, Arkansans live in hundreds of tiny towns across the state. For most of these small-town residents, coming to Little Rock, the big city, is still an event. In this context, "politicking" is down-home and personal. In his first try for elective office, Bill Clinton spent 18 hours a day traveling the 3rd congressional district and meeting people where they lived and worked (English, 1993). Ray Thorton, who represented both the 4th and 2nd congressional districts at different times in his career, would station himself right next to the door after a speaking engagement so he could shake the hand of every person as they left the room. Both David Pryor and Dale Bumpers understood this personal style of "politicking" very well and refined it to an art form. They would tour coffee shops and diners, speak to college classes, and attend the Slovak oyster supper, the Mt. Nebo chicken fry, and the Gillett coon dinner. Bumpers and Pryor learned early in their political careers that Arkansans like to communicate with their representatives personally. In fact, Bumpers' easy victory over J. William Fulbright in the 1974 Democratic primary has been attributed to Fulbright's failure to keep his Arkansas image from being overshadowed by his national political stature and not spending enough time politicking at home.

This writer has had more than a few encounters with Senator Pryor over the years, but a chance meeting with the Senator during the spring of 1995 gave me the opportunity to observe first hand his typically Arkansan friendliness and accessibility. Not long after Pryor had declared that he would not run for reelection, a colleague and I were at the Kettle coffee shop in Little Rock for a breakfast meeting with the university's development officer. Shortly after we began our conversation, Senator Pryor and his wife entered the restaurant. He immediately spotted us, came over and greeted two of us by our first names (he had not met our new development officer), and carried on a friendly, unhurried conversation for

several minutes. After that, he went around to each table in the coffee shop to shake hands and exchange greetings with every person there, before he sat down to his own breakfast. Everyone in the café knew him, and it seemed that he personally knew every one of them. It was Arkansas personal politics at its best, carried on so informally, so easily, and so naturally, that it seemed like meeting and talking with old friends, and people do not usually vote against old friends.

The Rhetoric of Bumpers and Pryor

The political styles of Senators Dale Bumpers and David Pryor have clearly been well suited to the Arkansas political culture of civility, intimacy, and humility. But both Bumpers and Pryor also have other political characteristics that resonate in Arkansas, in particular, their firmness, independence, and common sense as expressed rhetorically. Bumpers displayed these characteristics especially in speeches that exemplified basic political truths and good old common sense. Bumpers is a master story teller who used words of wisdom from his family, from great statesmen, great books, the Bible and other classic sources to argue against insipid ideas and mass conformity. Some examples from his speeches illustrate his ability to convey political wisdom to constituents in a simple story.

On the nation's lack of an energy policy in 1987:

And we have no energy policy. Among other things I did besides practice law was own a cemetery, and I sold it because I found that as good salesman as I am, I had a tough time selling cemetery lots to healthy people. And so it is with energy policy. As long as people can drive up to a gas tank and fill their tanks, it's very difficult to get them excited about energy. So today, because we have no energy policy, we are becoming more dependent on Persian Gulf oil.⁵

Or in instructing about the dangers of cynicism toward government:

...Mark Twain said, "If Congress had been present when God said, 'Let there be light,' mankind would still be in the dark."...As Will Rogers once said, "The good old days ain't what they used to be, and they never was."...It has always been fashionable to criticize Congress. But the nation should keep it all in perspective, and remember that James Madison said 207 years ago in Philadelphia: "Congress must be the bulwark between the people and what would otherwise become a tyrannical Presidency." ...The gravest threat to our political process and our democracy is not the

⁵ U.S. Senator Dale Bumpers, Speech at the Southern Legislative Conference, August 18, 1987, Little Rock, Arkansas.

legislative process, which often is chaotic and disorganized. The real threat is cynicism. The increasingly pervasive belief is that our system can't be made to work, and so "I'm washing my hands of it." ...⁶

Or in his fundamental belief in the worth of public service:

...As a child I was expected to be on the Courthouse, lawn for virtually all campaign speeches, and I was questioned at dinner about my reactions. My father had served in the legislature, and I was taught that public service was a noble calling. So, the greatest disappointment of my life was becoming Governor and Senator after my father's death.⁷

And on the fundamental importance of diversity and basic constitutional freedoms:

The very strength of this nation hinges on our diversity. Diversity of ideas, religions, political thought, free speech and freedom from persecution because of our diversity. The Constitution says you will be free to associate with whomever you wish, politically, religiously, academically, etc. And you will be secure in your home from somebody knocking your door down without a search warrant. A lawyer came to me recently and said, "Why haven't you guys put Dan Rostenkowski behind bars?" I said, "Bob, surely you don't mind him having a trial, do you?"⁸

In short, Bumpers presented himself to Arkansans as a legislator who paid attention to his constituents but was not afraid to demonstrate his own firm convictions, as a Senator that people could disagree with but still respect, and as a man completely dedicated to public service. Bumpers demonstrated his independence probably most directly and dangerously when he supported Jimmy Carter's Panama Canal treaty in 1978. Bumpers' vote was crucial to the two-thirds Senate majority needed to confirm the controversial treaty, but his first reelection bid was only two years away and his support of the treaty did not square with the beliefs of many Arkansans. His Republican challenger the next year, Bill Clark, besides having strong church connections and support in Northwest Arkansas, distributed thousands of bumper stickers and campaign pamphlets simply stating that Bumpers "gave away the Panama Canal." Nonetheless, Bumpers used his persuasive

⁶ Dale Bumpers, Commencement Address, Arkansas State University, August 1994

⁷ Dale Bumpers, Speech at Southern Illinois University, April 21, 1995.

⁸ Dale Bumpers, Speech at the Governor's School, date unknown (personal papers of author).

representational style to educate the electorate on the soundness of his vote and, despite a Reagan victory in Arkansas and the defeat of numerous liberal Senators throughout the nation, won his race with 60 percent of the vote.

Senator David Pryor too had a rhetorical style characterized by a fundamental likeability that charmed constituents and peers alike. From Senator Pete Domenici, speaking in the Senate, on Pryor's decency:

Mr. President, I want to say a few words about a Senator on the other side of the aisle, Senator Pryor. Let me just say that this Senator, as I view it, has been a marvelous, quiet, strong advocate for the issues that concern him. Whether it was the Taxpayers' Bill of Rights, which he proposed, or whether it was his advocacy for small business, he obviously did it with a kind of calm and calmness that many of us wish we could have every day we come to the floor of the Senate.

I also want to commend him, because it fell to him--and I assume it was with relish on his part--to be the principal defender in many instances of the current occupant of the White House, President Bill Clinton. They are from the same state. Senator Pryor had been Governor, as had Senator Bumpers, of that state. I think his efforts to support the President and fellow Arkansas resident was done eloquently and articulately. But I also believe that he had the ability to do that, which puts him in an extremely partisan mode, without ruffling the feathers of those of us on this side of the aisle because of the way he did it. It seems to me that he added some great character to his personality, because he did it in a way that was not intended to offend us on this side of the aisle, and he did it in great, good spirit. I commend him for that. He had a heart attack and came close to death in that episode. He brought a great deal of calmness to all of us, as he shared going through the rigors of that incident. I thank him for the personal way he has affected all of us in a positive manner.⁹

And Senator Bumpers in his tribute to the retiring Pryor:

After losing a race for the Senate in 1972, he came back in 1974 and ran for Governor and won handily, and served our state for 4 years. That was two terms, then, two-year terms. He served our State admirably.

⁹ *Congressional Record: Senate*, Wednesday, October 2, 1996, 104th Congress, 2nd Session, 142 Cong Rec S 12177: "Tribute To Retiring Senators."

He became then, and has remained ever since, the most popular politician in Arkansas by far. I said the other evening, and I have said it many times, it pains me to say that. The thing that makes it bearable is I know it is true. Everybody in our State, virtually everybody, loves David Pryor, as does virtually every Member of the U.S. Senate. In all of the years that David has been in politics, and certainly all the years he has been in Congress, I have never heard anybody accuse him of having Potomac fever, and the reason he is easily the most popular politician in Arkansas is because he has never lost that common touch of letting people know that he is concerned about them. He never looks past you to see who is next in line. You get his undivided attention, no matter how crazy the idea might be. David Pryor has always been a listener.¹⁰

Where Bumpers would persuade and educate through impassioned speeches that mixed facts with basic moral truths, David Pryor conveyed to constituents an unrivaled sincerity and firmness of congressional character in defending the small man against unregulated corporations, big defense contractors and arbitrary government agencies like the IRS. In Arkansas's politics of inequality, Pryor was a champion against powerful interests that exceed the ordinary citizen's capacities and offend their sensibilities. In this crusade, Pryor has taken on "the big boys" that tried to extract more than their fair share from the citizenry and the commonwealth. Pryor faced down the belt-way consultants and their exorbitant governmental fees, confronted defense contractors who overcharged the government, sought regulation of nursing home operators who imposed high fees and rendered inferior care, and sponsored two Taxpayers' Bills of Rights to limit arbitrary actions by the IRS. Whether it was nursing home safety, free postal privileges for soldiers in Desert Storm, or fairness for the farmer, Pryor's representational style precisely fitted the "underdog and small person" culture of Arkansas. A few examples from Pryor's speeches further illustrate this point.

...Madam President. On December 27, 1994, while in Arkansas over the last Christmas holiday, I announced one of the most important legislative initiatives for the 104th Congress. I call it "Bringing Opportunity to Our Small Businesses and Taxpayers"--or BOOST. BOOST is a five point initiative that addresses problems faced by everyday individual taxpayers, small businesses, and family farms.¹¹

¹⁰ Congressional Record: Senate, Tuesday, September 24, 1996, 104th Congress, 2nd Session, 142 Cong Rec S 11134: "Tribute to Senator Pryor."

¹¹ Congressional Record: Senate, Tuesday, October 10, 1985, 104th Congress, 1st Session, 141 Cong Rec S14883.

Pryor on consulting firms that charge the government and taxpayers exorbitant fees for contract services:

As a U.S. Senator, I am ashamed about the scandal taking place at the Pentagon. I am ashamed of the message that it sends to the young sailor in the Persian Gulf on the midnight watch, the private standing guard at the DMZ, and the supply officer in Europe rationing boots and ammunition, while the abuses of U.S. tax dollars continue here at home. And I firmly believe that the loosely monitored consultant contracting system at the Pentagon is conducive to such a scandal. That is why I am standing up now before this body, to force some oversight into this part of the defense procurement system.¹²

And his concern for health care:

If ever we needed a change of direction, or a reevaluation or a change in policy, it is in our nation's health care system. This year, we will be spending over \$670 billion and almost 12 percent of our gross national product on health care. Despite this investment, 20 percent of the population of my home State of Arkansas has absolutely no insurance, no possibility of having insurance, and many more today in my home State are afraid that they and their employers will no longer be able to afford the high cost of becoming ill. The cost of the insurance that they have and the health care services and the products that they need are going to very soon be beyond their grasp. It is plain as plain can be that the individuals and the businesses simply cannot afford the health care price inflation that continually doubles the general inflation rate.¹³

And in a speech about what he had learned about political campaigns:

1. Don't spend your own money. 2. When asking voters for support, let them do all the talking. 3. At least once every day sit down and laugh at yourself because everyone else is. 4. On the campaign trail, try and look honest, sincere and earnest. 5. If, on election day, you happen to win 60 percent of the vote, just remember the following day of the first ten people you met, four of them wanted someone else for the job. 6. Do not drive a foreign

¹² Congressional Record: Senate, Monday, August 8, 1988, 100th Congress, 2nd Session, 134, Cong Rec S 11090.

¹³ Congressional Record: Senate, Tuesday, September 10, 1991, 102nd Congress, 1st Session, 137 Cong Rec S 12617.

car. 7. Tell the truth. 8. Don't ever forget to ask people for their vote. 9. If you do win, don't ever complain about the hard work, low pay and long hours, because nobody made you do it. 10. Don't have any campaign functions or fundraisers at country clubs and don't wear cuff links. 11. Have fun.¹⁴

Finally, on the family farmer and his colleague, Dale Bumpers:

As many of my colleagues know, I have not nor will I today support the freedom-to-farm concept espoused in the philosophy of this legislation. I believe it ends the much-needed safety net for our family farmers. However, I have stated my opinion numerous times on this floor, in the Agriculture Committee, and most recently, in the last week or so, as a member of the conference committee that brought this bill to the floor of the U.S. Senate. Nevertheless, I would like to very quickly highlight one particular provision which was included to recognize one of our distinguished colleagues in the U.S. Senate. Section 926 of the Report designates the research facility operated by the Agricultural Research Service--ARS--near Booneville, AR, as the "Dale Bumpers Small Farms Research Center." Booneville, AR, by the way, is less than 15 miles south from an even smaller Arkansas town known as Charleston. The reason I bring this up is that Charleston, AR, just so happens to be the hometown of our colleague, the senior Senator from Arkansas, the Honorable Dale Bumpers. At one time Senator Bumpers not only operated a small business, which was a hardware store, but he was also an attorney in Charleston, AR. He took great pride in stating that he was not only the only attorney but that he was the best attorney in Charleston, AR.

Mr. President, naming this research facility after the Honorable Dale Bumpers could not be more appropriate, and I am very pleased today to play a very small part in making this distinction possible. Senator Dale Bumpers has been a tremendous ally for the farmers and ranchers of Arkansas and across the whole country. Over the next couple of years working with Senator Bumpers, with his help, vision, and foresight, with the feasibility studies that he was responsible for when they were conducted, additional backing was gained. Certainly they showed that a research facility for small farmers in small farming operations was justified. On behalf of the citizens of Booneville, AR, and throughout our entire State, on

¹⁴ Senator David Pryor, Remarks at the Arkansas Bankers Convention, May 20, 1995 (personal papers of author).

behalf of the farmers and the ranchers who have and will continue to benefit from the important research conducted there, let me at this time express the much-deserved appreciation for all of Senator Bumpers' efforts in making a worthy project become reality. We hope that this small token of recognition will demonstrate our gratitude to Senator Dale Bumpers. It is a great opportunity, and I must say a great challenge that lies ahead to benefit not only small farmers in our State but small farmers in research across this great country of ours. It is a great honor for me. It is great to be able to assist in the proper naming of this U.S. Department of Agriculture research center after our distinguished colleague and senior Senator from the State of Arkansas.¹⁵

Representational Style in the Senate

Another way in which Senators display their representational style is through their voting behavior in Congress and the degree to which their voting records fit the culture of their state, particularly in the level of their support or opposition of the incumbent president. Whether a state's U.S. Senators support the president when the president takes a clear position on an issue is often of interest to the media and to more politically active citizens. Thus, for example, continued opposition to a president popular in a member's home state might jeopardize that Senator's congressional career. But although Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush carried Arkansas in three successive presidential elections, both Pryor and Bumpers supported these presidents consistently less than their fellow senatorial partisans and their southern colleagues (see Table 1: 1980, 1984, and 1988).

Table 1: Presidential Support Scores for Pryor and Bumpers

Congress, Session (Year)	96th, 2nd (1980)	97 th , 2nd (1982)	98 th , 2nd (1984)	100th, 1st (1987)	101st, 1st (1989)	103rd, 1st (1993)	104th, 1st (1995)
All Democrats	68	43	41	36	55	87	81
Southern Democrats	60	41	37	40	65	82	78
Bumpers	67	29	36	38	50	91	87
Pryor	64	46	45	32	53	87	83

¹⁵ *Congressional Record: Senate*, Thursday, March 28, 104th Congress, 2nd Session, 142 Cong Rec S 3039.

On the other hand in two congressional sessions presided over by President Bill Clinton (1993 and 1995), Bumpers' and Pryor's voting scores show larger but not significantly greater support than their regular Democratic and regional Democratic colleagues. The general pattern of data for all the Congresses in which Pryor and Bumpers served together, however, is that, despite their representing a southern state, they usually supported Democratic presidents more and Republican presidents less than their southern Democratic colleagues and were actually closer to the presidential support scores of northern Democrats than to their southern brethren (shouldn't the table include the scores for northern Democrats also?).

Perhaps even more striking is that in their electoral careers, both Bumpers and Pryor steamrolled their electoral opponents despite ferocious attacks for not being in tune with Reagan or Bush. Despite Bumpers' easy victories in 1980 and 1986, Pryor is actually the best example of popular electoral success in Arkansas. While Ronald Reagan was winning an easy victory nationally and in Arkansas, Ed Bethune, a three term Republican incumbent second district Congressman, who had attacked Pryor incessantly as a liberal, dinosaur Democrat inconsistent with state values and traditions, could only get 40.7 percent of the vote against Pryor in 1984. Of course, Pryor's conservative coalition score was higher and his party unity score lower during the reelection period, but this only demonstrated the good sense of looking a bit more conservative in the face of a strong Republican challenge in what turned out to be a Reagan landslide in the 1984 presidential election. Pryor's easy reelection victory so convinced national and state Republicans of his standing in Arkansas that he drew no Republican opposition at all in 1990.

While all senatorial Democrats supported Carter and Clinton, the only two Democratic presidents since 1976, at a 77 percent level, Bumpers and Pryor had support scores of 82 percent each, five points higher. The pattern is less dramatic in terms of Democratic support of Republican presidents, where the relative mean is 40, but Bumpers and Pryor were still lower at 37 and 39 respectively. In terms of differences with their regional Democratic colleagues, Bumpers and Pryor average nine points higher support for Democratic presidents and ten and eight points lower for Republican presidents. All of this underscores the uniqueness of Pryor and Bumpers in Arkansas and Arkansas's special political culture and style of politics. Where the conservative coalition was slowly being relegated to the scrap heap in most southern states, the more progressive politics of Bumpers and Pryor was resonating in Arkansas.

What kind of Democrats were Bumpers and Pryor? Table 3 demonstrates that the party unity scores for Bumpers and Pryor exceeded that of all Democrats and Southern Democrats. This support was exceptional among southern Democrats. During the 97th Congress when boll weevil Democrats were helping Reagan pass his supply side budget package, party unity scores for Bumpers and Pryor exceeded the average support score for all Democrats and far exceeded the party unity score

Table 2: Selected Party Unity Scores for Pryor and Bumpers

Congress, Session (Year)	96th, 1st (1979)	97th, 2nd (1982)	99th, 2nd (1986)	100th, 1st (1987)	101st, 1st (1989)	103rd, 1st (1993)	104th, 1st (1995)
All Democrats	69	72	72	81	78	85	81
Southern Democrats	56	59	68	76	68	76	74
Bumpers	72	86	77	89	88	89	90
Pryor	63	73	70	87	81	87	87

recorded by Southern Senatorial Democrats. A decade later Bumpers and Pryor were still recording higher party unity scores than the average for all Democrats and did considerably better than their declining, but perhaps increasingly more liberal, southern Democratic colleagues as the realignment in the South played out.

Table 3: Selected Conservative Coalition Scores for Pryor and Bumpers

Congress, Session (Year)	97th, 2nd (1982)	99th, 2nd (1986)	101st, 1st (1989)	103rd, 1st (1993)	103rd, 1st (1993)
Southern Republicans	76	91	92	93	92
Southern Democrats	73	67	68	68	68
Bumpers	20	49	27	45	35
Pryor	56	55	43	49	43

Table 3 shows selected levels of conservative coalition support for Bumpers and Pryor. These conservative coalition scores further illuminate the policy differences that Bumpers and Pryor had with their regional colleagues. In each congressional session displayed in the table, except for Pryor in the first session of the 96th (his Senate debut) and the second session of the 98th when he was up for reelection against Congressman Ed Bethune, both Bumpers and Pryor had considerably lower conservative coalition support scores than did their peers in the South. Perhaps as interesting as these scores was the diminishing presence of the conservative coalition. Although it still had its moments in the 1990's, its appearance in Congress decreased as party differentiation became more widespread in the South (Fleisher,

1993). During the latter part of their tenures, Bumpers and Pryor represented one of only two Southern states with two Democratic Senators (Louisiana being the other state).

Discussion: Political Style and Senatorial Representation in the Future

Despite their small town backgrounds in which political parochialism is common (Rieselbach, 1970) and despite being part of a strong conservative regional political culture, Dale Bumpers and David Pryor did not display traditionally conservative traits and behaviors in their representational styles. While many senators are excellent at constituent service in their own way, Bumpers and Pryor stand out for their humility, civility, and dedication to public service. One explanation for their unique representational style and the differences between them and their regional colleagues over the years is that their representational style was deeply layered into unique political culture of the state that they served. Bumpers and Pryor displayed common sense, strong constituent service, firmness of beliefs, a degree of independence in their votes, and a strong commitment to essential state constituencies such as farming, tourism, and the elderly to note a few. They opposed balanced budget amendments, were critical of pentagon spending for weapon systems like the B-1 and the Strategic Defense Initiative, fought against belt-way consultants, and opposed constitutional amendments that would impose penalties for flag desecration that in their view would trivialize the constitution. Bumpers has offered as his legacy the preservation of a constitution uncluttered by special interest amendments. Bumpers and Pryor were never involved in any kind of scandal and they displayed a remarkable and durable ethic for public service and representative government.

Bumpers' and Pryor's courage and decency made them stand out in the United States Senate and fixtures at home. Besides serving as the junior and senior Senators from Arkansas, Bumpers and Pryor were close friends and admirers of each other. In fact, at his speech announcing that he would not seek another term to the United States Senate, Pryor said this about his good friend: "As to my friend and colleague, Dale Bumpers--no member of the United States Senate today has a greater working relationship with his or her state's colleague than I. Dale Bumpers is a true gentleman and is the greatest advocate for common sense the Senate has today. Listen to him, he is good. Most times he is right and he tells us the truth. Arkansas is indeed fortunate to have him as a strong voice of reason."¹⁶

While Pryor's health was certainly a factor in his decision not to seek reelection, Bumpers became increasingly cynical of the changing norms in Washington and in the country affecting public service. In a 1994 speech he said:

¹⁶ Senator David Pryor, Speech on his retirement from the United States Senate, April 21, 1995.

...Back to shunning politics. When I was a lad, my father instilled in his three children the idea that politics is a noble profession. I used that theme when I ran for Governor. I believed it then and I believe it now. Even so, I have reached the point where I have been unable to encourage my own children to choose a political career. There are indeed some gratifications, but there are many more lows. There is adulation enough for those who live on approval but the hate mail, which has grown exponentially since I went to the Senate, is a big offset. Incidentally, some of the most vicious are signed "Yours in Christ."¹⁷

What kind of senatorial representational style emerged in Arkansas as Pryor and Bumpers ended their long senate careers? To what degree if any would their legacy and the political culture of Arkansas set certain representational limits on new occupants? Would the new Arkansas Senators adopt the model of representation established by Bumpers and Pryor: keeping Arkansas first in their legislative and rhetorical agenda, keeping partisan rhetoric at a minimum, conveying to the citizens of Arkansas their independence, and providing easy access to constituents by effective staff services as well as accessibility to themselves? Pryor and Bumpers despite their voting differences more frequent difference with their constituents as argued than their regional peers were able to beautifully identify with Arkansas political culture. They were at the outset authentic Arkansans in style and character. (Fenno, 2007, p. 27). You could take Pryor and Bumpers out of Arkansas to the United States Senate, but you could never take Arkansas out of Pryor and Bumpers.

Arkansas's current U.S. Senators, Blanche Lincoln and Mark Pryor, have not had the time in office to match the stylistic careers of Pryor and Bumpers, but they seem like "two soybeans from the same row" given the manner in which they present themselves to the Arkansas electorate. Lincoln is a spunky woman who, when elected at 38, was the youngest female ever elected to the United States Senate. Her first term in the Senate was characterized by a centrist voting record and an aggressive plan for achieving committee posts that would benefit Arkansas. She, like Bumpers, is pro-choice and has been a good friend of the less powerful interests in Arkansas, e.g., family farmers and small business owners. Lincoln, like her junior colleague, Mark Pryor, is also a strong supporter of gun rights and has cultivated a reputation for being an independent voice. She demonstrated that voice as the only one of Arkansas's four Democratic congressional members to support President George W. Bush's prescription drug program because she thought it was, on balance, better than the status quo. But she opposed the President's proposal for a constitutional amendment banning same sex marriage although she voted for a similar ban at the state level believing that this was an issue for the states and not one

¹⁷ Senator Dale Bumpers, Speech at Northwestern University Law School Alumni meeting, Chicago, Illinois, May 9, 1994.

of federal uniformity as mandated by an amendment to the United States Constitution.

Senator Mark Pryor, the son of David Pryor, has much of the same likeability characteristics of his father, and he has embraced the Pryor style of presentation and representation as Senator. In his campaign challenging the one-term incumbent, Tim Hutchinson, Pryor used the senior Pryor's blue, red and white Arkansas logo while emphasizing the theme that the election was not about partisanship but about who could serve Arkansas better. He placed on his campaign desk the very same sign that his father used during his entire tenure in the Senate: "Arkansas comes first."

David Pryor and Dale Bumpers are both still active in the state of Arkansas. While Bumpers spends a good deal of his time in Washington lobbying for a major DC law firm, Pryor has completed a two-year tenure in 2006 as Dean of the new Clinton School of Public Leadership. They both continue to make frequent appearances in their home state. They are highly esteemed by their fellow Arkansans and have been ranked as two of the state's best 20th century governors, in addition to their Senate service (Ledbetter and Williams). Their authenticity and character as Arkansas personalities and leaders has earned them a permanent place in the state's political hall of fame (Fenno, 2007, p.27). Their political styles continue in the confines of politically cozy and intimate Arkansas. Both Blanche Lincoln and Mark Pryor appear to have embraced the Bumpers\Pryor model in their presentation and representational styles. Lincoln and Pryor perceive themselves as independent Senators not beholden to partisan interests. They both emphasize "Arkansas first" in their public presentations. Neither is a sure vote for the Democratic leadership, but neither of them is a Republican in Democratic clothing, although some liberals take that view. Pryor is one of the "gang of 14," seven Republicans and seven Democrats in the Senate, who have worked together to avoid conflict over judicial nominations that might result in the end of the filibuster rule and lead to further political polarization. Pryor and Lincoln are also members of the "blue dog caucus" of moderate, centrist Democrats who work on both sides of the aisle when in the interests of good public policy. Their presidential support and party unity scores for the first session of the 109th Congress (2005) indicate their centerist style. Lincoln and Pryor supported President Bush on, respectively, 50 percent and 58 percent of the roll calls where the president took a clear cut position on an issue, compared to 86 percent for all Republican Senators and 38 percent for all Democrats. An analysis of party unity votes in which a majority of voting Democrats were opposed by a majority of voting Republicans found Lincoln and Pryor supporting their party 81 percent and 80 percent of the time, which, while lower than the 88 percent average for all Democrats, still demonstrates that they are loyal Democrats.¹⁸

Twenty five years ago, Bumpers and Pryor represented a different kind of politics from their conservative colleagues in the South. While more conservative,

¹⁸ CQ Weekly 64.8 (January 9, 2006).

Blanche Lincoln and Mark Pryor continue some of those same political traits through their presentation and representational styles. That Lincoln and Mark Pryor survive and prosper in an increasingly polarized congressional system and in a conservative and Republican dominated South demonstrates the appropriateness of their fit with Arkansas's political culture and the representational style of their eminent predecessors. The Bumpers/Pryor model of representation would not fit every state or every congressional or Senatorial member, but it seems worthwhile to learn and use it, especially as a candidate for, or a member of, the United States House and Senate from Arkansas.

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