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Tell me a little about the difficulty of commuting between Washington and Kansas during your time in Congress?

"I would drop the kids off at school on a Monday morning. Go straight to the airport. Fly to D.C. We would have votes on Monday night. I am one that stays in my office. They tell me there's over 100 members of the House that stay in their office. I was one of them. So, I'd stay there Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. We'd have votes on Thursday morning, and then I would fly back home and be home for dinner on Thursday nights. Now, that's what happened most of the time unless there was some looming deadline. The difficulty with it is, beyond just the logistics, is missing out on family time.

"Strangely enough, it's not missing a ball game or a concert. That is awful. But the real trouble is, it's missing the bedtime routine and dinner with the family and the wakeup routine. You leave and you come back. It's just a hard thing to do. For me, it kind of started during the speaker's battle in D.C. When we were going through that big speaker's fight in October of 2023, I started thinking because we were there for many weeks in a row trying to pick a new speaker. I was away from the family and I started to think, 'What in the world am I doing?' Then in January that was the first time I ever really thought about it. I had a memory pop up of my daughter – she's two or less – and I'm holding her as I'm being sworn into the state Senate and I thought, 'This has been her whole life.' Here she is. She's going to go into high school this next year, and I'm going to miss the whole darn thing. I started thinking four kids, my youngest is eight, I need to be closer to home."

Given that you slept in your office during the week, was serving in Congress as glamorous as some might think?

"Sleeping in my office was not the issue. That was fine. The schedule is not very family friendly. And to the extent that the last four years I've been there, Congress hasn't gotten a lot done. That's frustrating. If the sacrifice that you make and your family makes, if the achievement came anywhere close to the sacrifice, this would be a whole different ball game. It just hasn't been the case. I'm hopeful that this next Congress, I think they are going to get a lot done. Republicans have the House and the Senate and the White House, and they have a very well-defined agenda that the American people expect them to do. I am hopeful that things are going to get done."

Did your family ever appeal to you not to go to Congress?

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“No. We entered into this as a family. Everybody is very well aware where Dad’s going, but that doesn’t make it any easier when I’m gone.”

Was there any specific event in your children’s lives that you missed because you were in Congress?

“Of course, I’ve had to miss games or recitals. And that stinks to miss. But the worst of it, in my opinion, is missing the daily routine, missing the bedtime routine and the wakeup routine and dinner with the family at night. Missing that daily stuff – that is the hardest part. Everybody is different. Some members figure a way to make it work, and God bless them. But for us, I thought for the next decade while we have kids in the house, I really don’t want to miss out on it.”

Two years ago, [a federal jury convicted a man](#) who threatened to kill you. What role, if any, did that play in deciding whether to remain in Congress?

“I received threats while I was in Congress multiple times. The difference with that one was that he threatened to do harm to my family, specifically to my daughters. It was the most repugnant, disgusting thing I’ve ever heard. We signed up to do this as a family. I don’t care what the circumstances are. No one signs up for that kind of garbage. My family didn’t sign up for that. To the extent that those things affect me, it’s something sadly me and my colleagues have to deal with at an increasing rate. But when it affects your family, that’s different. We were not intimidated by this crazy character. But it certainly wasn’t an enjoyable period and sheltering our kids from that and explaining why there’s a police car in front of the house. It was not an enjoyable experience, and it is something I did not want my family to go through. I felt like I was in a fever dream when I’m sitting in the federal courtroom – he had fired his attorney – and I’m getting questioned by the very man that had threatened my children. It was a bizarre, tragic experience.”

What did you want to achieve when you were first elected to Congress?

“I wanted to be able to work on the issues that I heard about most in my district and that was economic issues, that was the border, that was making sure that we have safe communities. If you look back at what the House has done, we have passed bills that address all of those things and I am proud of that. In divided government, it’s been a struggle to get the Biden administration to do anything or the Democrat-controlled Senate to do anything. We’ve been able to pass through the House a great deal of those things.”

Is there anything that you accomplished for your district you're proud of?

"I'm proud of the infrastructure projects that we brought back to the district. I'm proud of the constituent work that we've done on a nonpartisan basis. We've helped hundreds of people, thousands of people, in the district navigate through the bureaucratic mess of Washington, D.C., whether it was helping a veteran get their rightly deserved benefits or helping with Social Security benefits, (or) helping with a passport. Working on those kinds of things are incredibly satisfying. We were able to get a lot of stuff done on that.

In some ways are constituent services most important to the people you serve?

"It's all important. I think members that move to Washington and focus on Washington are not doing the best job. I think you want somebody who is keenly focused on the people who sent them there. That involves, of course, the macro issues of the economy, border, crime, foreign policy. Of course, it involves those things. I have been focused on those things, too. But it sure as heck involves making sure that you are supporting worthy infrastructure projects in the district and making sure that you are taking care of your constituents' needs. The federal government is a huge, bureaucratic nightmare, and people need help working their way through that. I'm really, really proud that we've been able to help folks with that."

Is there anything you are disappointed didn't get done during your time in Congress?

"The most satisfying elective office I've been in is the state Senate. The reason for that is because the process still works. Everybody comes together for a common cause because you know you have to get something done at the end of the day. In D.C., the legislative process does not function in the same way that Topeka does. Serving in the state Legislature, the requirement for getting your constituents' needs taken care of is convincing a majority of your colleagues that it's a good idea, whether that's in committee, whether that's on the floor of the House or the Senate. That's the requirement. You have an idea and you introduce legislation to address the concern. All you have to do is convince a majority of your colleagues that it's the right thing to do. Any member can offer amendments in committee, any member can offer an amendment on the floor. The process is fantastic. In D.C., it is bottle-necked with leadership and it is a problem. Power is more decentralized today than it once was in D.C., but there's still a long way to go."

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How much of an abrupt change was it for you to move from the Kansas statehouse to Congress?

"It was a huge change. I recognized right away why there was so much anger and frustration among the rank and file. It's because they didn't have an opportunity to let their constituents' voices be heard. I became incredibly frustrated when you realize the extent to which 25-year-old staffers and lobbyists are writing legislation and shoving it down the throats of members of Congress. That is not the way our founders intended this process to work. I was very frustrated and reminded so quickly that my favorite time in government was under the dome in Topeka, Kansas."

How did you feel about how the election to replace you in Congress unfolded?

"I didn't endorse in that race. Several people that ran for that position, I have a very good relationship with."

Jeff Kahrs, the district director for LaTurner, has been a "loyal staffer to me and a dear friend."

"When I served in the state Legislature, I worked very close with then-Attorney General (Derek) Schmidt. I have a great relationship with him. I think he's going to a great job in the House."

"Shawn Tiffany is a very impressive agribusiness owner in this district."

"Something that I feel very deeply is that people of this district, they know exactly what they're doing and they didn't need me putting my thumb on the scale in any way."

"They know what they're doing. They know what they want, and I am happy for the voters to make all of those decisions without a lot of games being played behind the scenes."

You have been in elective office since 2013 after you were first elected to the Kansas Senate and later appointed as state treasurer. Do you feel burned out of politics?

"No. I'm not burned out at all. I've got a lot more to offer. I've got a passion for serving the people of Kansas, but making sure that I'm at home with my kids is

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just more important. I really thought about it. At the end of life, what am I going to look back on and regret? The time with kids at home...you cannot recreate that. You cannot get that back no matter what. But government service is something that if you're lucky, you can contribute to and it's something that you can contribute to even in small ways for the rest of your life, even if that's just being a good citizen and volunteering your time. Being involved with that is something I can do forever."

Do you plan to get back involved in politics in a while, although you ruled out running in state elections in 2026?

"As you mentioned, I've been doing this for a little bit. This gig is over on Friday. I'm excited about what Monday brings.

What does Monday bring?

"I won't be casting votes in the U.S. Congress that night as my former colleagues at that point will be doing. I'm going to earn a living and be with my kids and be with my family."

Do you plan have plans about what you will doing careerwise?

"I do have specific plans in mind right now, but nothing that I'm ready to announce today."

Do you think you would have any trouble getting back into Kansas politics if you take a break to spend more time with your family?

"I'm not worried about that. I don't have any plans right now other than to focus on my family. I'm really at peace with the decision that I've made, and I don't have plans to run for elective office. That's not a concern I have."