

JOHN KROGER INTERVIEW, JAN. 26 and MARCH 2, 2010

Literary Justice

Writer and prosecutor John Kroger discusses his life's work and love of books—and what it means to be Oregon's attorney general

Interview by Casey Bush and Tom Webb

John Kroger's memoir, *Convictions* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2008) chronicles his decade-long career as an assistant U.S. prosecutor working out of lower Manhattan, where he tackled organized crime's biggest names and lowest operatives. In addition to tracing his criminal convictions, Kroger's book also follows the path of his personal convictions. That narrative provides a brief summary of his early years—a stressful youth growing up outside of Houston, Texas, acceptance into the U.S. Marines Special Forces, a degree in philosophy from Yale University, a law degree from Harvard University, and then time as a senior adviser to presidential hopeful Bill Clinton. But while the bulk of the book is about bringing criminals to justice, Kroger also tells the story of his own disillusionment with the profession and the circumstances of a journey that brought him to Portland, Oregon, and his current position as the state's attorney general. After years of taking down mobsters he needed a break and went on a solo bike ride across the country, attending to his own spiritual needs with as much energy as he fought for the public well-being. It's this theme that resonates throughout: maintaining his personal convictions while convicting as many criminals as possible. In the end, he lasted longer as a prosecutor than most but eventually burned out and headed west. Still, after only a year of teaching at Lewis & Clark College, he was pulled back into the Enron investigations, and then found himself in the race for state attorney general. Kroger won the Democratic primary in May 2008 and faced only token opposition during the general election because no one had run in the Republican primary. After only one year in office he has already fulfilled a campaign promise to establish an environmental crimes task force. Meanwhile, his book *Convictions* garnered critical praise and won the Oregon Book Award for nonfiction in 2009.

The Bear Deluxe editors Casey Bush and Tom Webb sat down with Kroger at his office this past winter.

TW So in our last issue we interviewed Jon Raymond, who happened to win the 2009 Oregon Book Award for fiction. What was your first reaction when you heard about winning the award for nonfiction?

JK You know it's bizarre because, of course, you don't know beforehand. I actually thought the odds of my winning were tiny, in part because some very well-respected authors were in that category as well. They don't announce your name. So you sit there and they start reading a passage from the book, and everyone else is going, "Which book is that?" That passage they were reading involved a .357 Magnum, and my wife Michelle turns to me and goes, "Well, that must be you." Which was true—really kind of stunned and really honored. It was kind of odd the book came out right before my primary election, and I think some people thought of it as, "He's the guy who's running for office and he wrote a book." Certainly I'd been working on the book for years, and the timing of the book just happened to be that I was running for office. But in a way when it was published, the political campaign detracted from the publication of the book. For me, I really never got to enjoy the book being published, which was a very big deal for me personally. As someone who loves literature and loves to write, it was a very big deal for me, but it happened right around my election, and I never really got a time to celebrate. That night was really where it was. That was a really special moment for me. To be recognized not as a lawyer or as a public servant but to be recognized as a writer that other writers think is a good writer meant a lot to me, and that's when it really hit.

TW As a prosecutor you have obviously interviewed thousands of people. And you have a really good knack for knowing when someone is not telling the truth. As a reader, when you are reading other

nonfiction, does that transfer over and do you have a sense of when an author might be stretching the truth or isn't passing some of your tests for credibility?

JK You know, I don't think so. It's funny, as an interviewer a lot of the skills have to do with that face-to-face reaction. I would say, particularly travel literature, which I read a lot of—I'm often reading something and I'm wondering whether it is true as opposed to...it's not like when I'm interviewing a defendant and I think I'm being lied to, I usually have a pretty strong sense. When I was writing this I tried to put myself back into a conversation and trying to re-create it. I tried to bring up that experience in my mind as closely as possible, precisely because I did want readers to feel that it was true and that it had happened. And I was worried that if I didn't have clarity in my mind about the experience, I wouldn't be able to convey that.

CB You apologize a little about the accuracy of your memory at one point and, of course, in a lot of the book you've had group characters together or change names, and that's because of the topics being so sensitive. Were you concerned in writing the book that you were putting some things out there that some of your colleagues would think you were overstepping?

JK Yeah, It was particularly sensitive in two areas. One is, I wanted to describe investigations and how they go forward as accurately as possible. I worried that some of my colleagues in law enforcement would think I was giving away the keys to the store by letting [out] how we actually think about and approach our cases. At the end of the day, no one has really given me any guff about that. I think the fact of the matter is that, particularly in drug and narcotics cases and Mafia cases, people out there who are engaged in this, they know what the feds are doing. The thing that some people have given me guff for is, I talk very frankly about the way in which prosecutors and the government bring coercion into play, particularly when we are interviewing people. Some people in federal law enforcement have felt like I'm supposed to be part of the law enforcement team, and I'm not suppose to criticize what we're doing. I think some people felt that was kind of disloyal for me to give what I think is an honest account of some of the flaws in federal law enforcement. That is probably the biggest single thing where people gave me some feedback.

TW Now, as a prosecutor and a writer, if there is anyone alive today who you could interview, who might come to the top of the list?

JK That is interesting. I don't think my mind works like that.

CB What if you got to interview Obama? What would be the one question you would ask him?

JK I hate to sound like a very matter-of-fact person. I don't think my mind works in hypotheticals that way. I could make something up, but it wouldn't really be true to me. That sounds stupid, but I guess my brain doesn't work that way.

CB In your book you describe this bicycle trip you took across the United States. You started out and you swear off coffee and swear off reading. You get 10 days into the trip, and you're in Cheboygan, Michigan. All of a sudden you're passing a used bookstore. You can't help yourself, you rush right in and buy three books and then spend an entire evening reading in your tent by Lake Huron. So my big question for you is, why did you read Trollope's *Cousin Henry* first?

JK I had this experience before going on the trip: I would work extraordinarily long hours, drink a lot of coffee to work those extraordinarily long hours, and then unwind by reading a lot. And it just felt like this bike ride would change my life, like I would be a different person because I was doing something crazy. I didn't even own a bike before I went on this trip. So it was totally out of character really. What I discovered very quick is that the things you really love, it doesn't matter where you are, you still really love them and that's what gives your life satisfaction. So even though I had ridden 90 miles that day, what I really wanted to do was sit in my tent with a flashlight and have a cup of coffee and read. And I am a big Anthony Trollope fan. I've read most of Trollope, and I read *Cousin Henry* because I stumbled across it, and it is one of the few Trollope novels I haven't read.

CB The other two books made more sense considering the journey you were on: *The Nick Adams Stories*, Hemingway. You were almost in Nick Adams' territory. And the other one, Slocum's *Sailing Alone Around the World*. Of course, that's sort of what you were doing.

JK Slocum I had actually tried to read when I was young and had been bored with it. I thought what better time than when you're biking alone across country. Maybe Slocum would maybe speak to me more. The Nick Adams stories, I think, are some of the greatest writing ever. I don't think later Hemingway can hold a candle to early Hemingway. It just happened that I was heading toward the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and had the bizarre experience. I forget whether I wrote about it in the book, but literarily I was in a diner along one of the rivers he was writing about, reading, I don't think...

CB What was supposed to be the Big Two-Hearted River...

JK There is a point where he describes how to make a perfect cup of coffee in one of the stories. I forget which one it is, it maybe "Big Two-Hearted River," but he is describing how you properly make coffee. I'm having a cup of coffee along the river he was writing about. It was extraordinary to read those stories in a tent on the Upper Peninsula.

CB Have you been interested in Oregon writers? I think of H.L. Davis or Kesey or, you know, the people who lived here, wrote about here. Have you read *Sometimes a Great Notion*?

JK It will sound irresponsible of me as an Oregonian. It has been on my list, but I haven't read it.

CB So are you familiar with William O. Douglas' *Of Men and Mountains*?

JK Yes, I have, but not for years.

CB And I understand one of your interests is in hiking. Have you ever hiked in the William O. Douglas Wilderness Area?

JK I've never been to the William O. Douglas Wilderness Area. Douglas, I have a huge ambivalence about. He was a hero of mine when I was young. When I was young, I loved his environmental concerns, I loved his career of public service as a lawyer. As I've gotten older I've become highly ambivalent about his skills as a judge, and some of his views on the law I have come fundamentally to disagree with. The recent biographies of Douglas reveal that he was extraordinarily deceptive about parts of his life history. Some of his infidelity in marriage I'm not crazy about. It is interesting, I feel, in some ways because I loved and respected him so much. He was kind of a role model for me when I was in my 20s and trying to think about what my career would be like. As I've come to know more about his legal work and him personally, I kind of feel a little bit let down. This is an aside, but he gave the whole story about walking his way back from polio, which apparently is basically false. I guess as I've gotten older integrity has become more and more valued to me as a characteristic. A lot of his stories about his own life were self-mythologizing.

TW That, of course, is the big rub in creative nonfiction. Sometimes it gets too creative and not so much nonfiction.

JK I would say that the thing that I admired about Douglas when I was younger was really this combination of both a very powerful intellect who could have remained in the academy and been a purely intellectual but instead went into government with the aim of trying to do good for people. The move he made from academic to public service is one that obviously resonates very strongly with me. That's what I've done with my career. As time goes on, the things that I have developed reservations about Douglas, one is his, in some areas, a lack of personal integrity, which I find troubling, and which, frankly, wasn't really well known until the last 10 or 15 years. There's been a lot more research on Douglas' life and things that he said.

CB He liked to come to Portland for the strip clubs.

JK True, there's been books written about that. Claims about his military service that proved to be false. Claims about his polio as a child that proved to be false. I think legally the thing that troubles me most: Douglas was of a jurisprudential school known as the "legal realists," and they were not really believers in formal legal analysis. You can see that in Douglas' opinions on the court, they are often very short, not much analysis. And as a result, they have not garnered a lot of respect as the pendulum has swung and legal analysis has returned to a more formal model of how to adjudicate cases. And so there are certain areas of law that I think he left us a kind of a mess: I mean, the right to privacy is one of them. A lot of his writing was decisive, and yet they were not, in my view, particularly well-thought-out opinions. It left us with a kind of messy legacy that has been hard for people to deal with.

TW Does that carry over to some of his environmental opinions? Looking at things like the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act—they are very, very broad.

JK I think that the environmental tool kit we got from the late '60s and early '70s are sort of the foundational period for modern American environmental law and left us with a pretty powerful set of tools that are flexible enough so that they evolve. They're not perfect, but, for instance, the idea that carbon falls within the Clean Air Act, something that no one really considered back then, is now something that without fundamental changes to our statutory structure, we can deal with. So I think the tool kit that we got, which is mostly statutory, is pretty powerful and pretty good.

TW I thought we could switch gears and talk about prosecuting and organized crime, which is really the heart of your book. The first one is Casey's: Is the Mafia involved in environmental crimes here in America like the Camorra in Naples, Italy.

CB Where they say garbage is gold.

JK Organized crime truly is much stronger in the Northeast than anywhere else in the country at this point. People ask me all the time: Is there serious organized crime in Oregon? We have very sophisticated drug trafficking organizations, but we don't have anything like the traditional Italian-American or Sicilian-American Mafia. In the Northeastern states, waste disposal in particular has always been a field where there has been huge Mafia penetration. So garbage hauling in New York, Philadelphia, New Jersey and Connecticut has always been a field that has been dominated for decades by organized crime-controlled companies. Not a problem on the West Coast, as far as I know. Our problems here are really overwhelming drug and alcohol addiction—that's our problem out here, not organized crime.

TW How is it different prosecuting the Mafia versus prosecuting corporations?

JK You know, this will sound bizarre: I really liked the Mafia defendants more than the white-collar criminals. I mean, the Mafia defendants did despicable things, but I felt that when I sat across the table from them I understood how they got where they were. I didn't feel like they were BS'ing me all the time. When a Mafia guy decides to cooperate, they don't have any problem admitting that they are a criminal. They liked being a criminal. So you handle them with very forthright conversations. They know they're a criminal. They know you're a prosecutor and that's your job. It is almost a professional discussion. White-collar defendants, even when they're trying to cooperate with the government, they don't see themselves as criminals, and they feel you've oppressed them. They're smart people constantly working the angles, and don't think I put it in the book, but Andrew Weissmann, who was a prosecutor with me on the Enron case, is probably the single most experienced Mafia prosecutor around the country, great prosecutor; he and I were discussing at one point—we just got along better with the Mafia guys we prosecuted than we did the white-collar people.

TW What do you think of mandatory sentences and sentencing guidelines and how they refer to "ecoterrorism"?

JK Generally, I'm fine with mandatory minimum sentencing. We got it in this country really through a strange alliance of the left wing and right wing. The left wing was concerned that without more uniform sentencing people of color would receive much greater sentences than the white people, and that if you had

less discretionary sentencing you'd get more equal sentencing. The right wing thought we needed higher sentences in general, so they wanted a point beyond which judges couldn't go beneath. And I'm perfectly fine with it. The honest answer is that some people really want the judge to be able to assess each defendant and come up with a sentence. I think our history of doing that kind of shows that it is actually really hard. The honest answer is, I don't think a judge looking at a single defendant typically can tell whether they're going to commit more crimes again or not. I think it is very hard for humans to judge when someone is going to be truly reformed or not. So I can live with it.

CB So where we're going with these questions is your campaign promise to prosecute environmental crimes and that you have established a group that's going to do that. These bring up a lot of things besides ecoterrorism. But how should environmental crimes be prosecuted? Are they criminal cases? Are they just civil cases?

JK A lot of them will be civil cases. A case that is civil is for me a one-time event or an accidental event which still does environmental harm. A case that is more criminal to me is something that is really egregious, something that is really harmful to the public health or the environment—a repeat event, when someone has already done something, been caught by regulators and told not to do it again, and it keeps happening. That seems to be more criminal than civil. So those sorts of things we're looking at. We've got a number of cases under investigation now, and we have to figure out, is that something we want to sue them [for] or is that something we want to indict?

TW Can you give us a sense of how many cases are under that umbrella currently?

JK As a ballpark, I think we have about a dozen cases now under investigation. Some of those will ultimately be handled civilly, some will be handled criminally, some we will conclude that nothing was done wrong. And we'll be charging cases this spring. By this spring you will see some cases in court.

CB So your book is entitled *Convictions*. It is mostly about convicting kingpins, but it is also about evolution of your convictions. And one of the things that you come to in your book is that you're a little uncomfortable being the prosecutor. I wonder now as attorney general how will you prosecute environmental crimes?

JK I think we have traditionally under-enforced environmental crimes in this country, generally, but more specifically in Oregon. And so what we are trying to do now is to compensate for that. I'll give you an example: We've had law firms email all their clients, "You know, the attorney general is now looking for people who are violating environmental laws; this might be a good time to check that you are really in compliance." We've heard of companies contacting their lawyers, saying, "Now we don't think we're doing anything wrong, but you guys gotta come in here and make sure we're doing everything right." I think by the sheer fact that we are looking to hold people accountable when they violate environmental laws, [that] is going to have a significant impact on compliance in the state. So I do believe that anyone who has prosecuted for a while grows more and more conscious of how great that power really is, and I would not want people to be cowboys about it. When you're prosecuting someone, you're changing their life forever, and you better be darn certain it's the right thing to do before you act. But you can't be squeamish about it either. There are people who violate the law, and if you don't enforce those laws people will feel like it's fine to break them. I do think, personally, the biggest challenge for me as a prosecutor is, you are sitting in judgment on people. That didn't bother me when I took the job, and you do it for a while. Then a lot of people get out of prosecuting because they don't want that responsibility, and I still struggle with that.

CB It is the most revelatory part of your book.

JK I feel that it is a fact that I often feel sorry for the people I am prosecuting, even when I know 100 percent that they've done something horrible and they need to be held accountable. I think prosecutors who don't have empathy I worry about.

CB Again in your book, you found the prosecution of Lea Fastow and her husband at the same time distasteful, that they would go to jail at the same time. Their children would end up in foster care. And yet, the judge in the case made sure that they had concurrent terms. Now was that a case of justice or, in fact, was it the two-tiered system that we see the white-collared criminals being treated differently?

JK With every generalization you can find exceptions, but I would say as a generalization the courts bend over backward much more with white-collar defendants. I do think that is true. I think that has changed somewhat. The thing that has changed is that we are now getting sentences in white-collar cases that are very large. Bernie Madoff and people like that are going to prison for a very long period of time. Skilling's sentence is a very long sentence. You know, Michael Milken in the junk bond scandal went to prison for a very short period of time and was back out on the street. So I think there is change. I think there is a reaction to the feeling of a lot of lawyers whose perception that white-collar defendants got a lot better treatment was true and troublesome. I still think it's an issue. In a federal white-collar case, a judge is going to have more time and more energy to spend worrying about the fates of individual defendants. Poor criminal defendants who are in front of state court judges on other cases are less likely to have individual circumstances like that taken into account. And part of that is, if you can afford privately retained counsel, who can spend more time on your case. You're more likely to be able to get those issues in front of the judge. I still think that's an issue—that two-tiered system.

TW What do you think of Obama's decision, which just came down, to continue the Bush policy to allow the FBI to get people's phone records without any court oversight?

JK The phone records don't trouble me so much. The policy that really worried me was when the Bush administration started wiretapping people without warrants. That drove me berserk. One of the things I teach as a law professor is the Fourth Amendment, the right to be free of unreasonable searches and seizures. One of the things I taught people always is, before you get a wiretap, you have to have a warrant. It was a stunning day, the day I had to get up in front of a group of law students and tell them that's no longer true. As a constitutional law professor, that was a depressing moment, and I'm still pretty angry about that. I'm sorry, if you're going wiretap people in the United States, you need a warrant. I just think that the Constitution requires that.

CB One of the problems in prosecuting environmental crimes is, all of a sudden, the corporation is gone. That's the problem we have with the Superfund site here in Portland. Who are you going after? They're gone. Do you have a sense of how you're going to work with the EPA at all with the Willamette River problem?

JK We're obviously intimately involved in the Port of Portland cleanup. There is going to be a certain number of sites where the corporate entity which was responsible for them is long gone. The main thing I think in terms of environmental crimes, we're trying to respond swiftly to things which are ongoing or just happened. I don't think the corporate structure will deter us. Frankly, I'm more than happy to charge not the company but the individuals running the company. So I don't think that's going to impede our efforts.

TW You mentioned that one of your current investigations was prompted by a citizen complaint. How would it be best approach for a citizen to log a complaint with your office?

JK The environmental one is easy because we put an environmental crimes reporting form on our website. We specifically did that because in other areas of crime, the victims complain to the police, but then you also have a lot of police officers out there watching. In environmental cases, there's really no one watching, which is the problem. We don't have people out in a lot of areas where there could be an environmental crime. It's just harder for people to stop. So we need more public involvement. So in that area, we put a spot up on the website. You click a button and there's the reporting form. So you could provide us information about something.

CB And you can expect to get about 500 more when our next issue comes out.

JK There you go. It's interesting, the more we talk about it, the more people actually do say, "You know, I saw something that looked a little funny. You might want to look at it." So that really does happen.

CB The last couple of questions are about what we are calling the "political horizon." I know you're the attorney general, you're not necessarily truly a politician. You're a public servant. But you are a target for, let's say, the blogosphere. You may not follow it very closely. And I can't even tell you that much about where I got this, but type your name in Google, it comes up. So there's this woman named Karen DeCosta, who's a self-proclaimed paleo-libertarian, propagandist for the consolidated state. And she also seems to be a small-arms expert. She's written about your environmental agenda on the LRC blog. And I quote: "So now people who don't conform to arbitrary laws created by special interests will be deemed criminals and will serve jail time. So now Mr. Kroger is a CFO and a cost expert, except that Mr. Kroger has already failed the test. Small businesses are always at a disadvantage whenever regulations and associated costs are concerned. Remind me why you want to remain a business owner in Oregon." What do you have to say to the blogosphere as represented by Ms. DeCosta?

JK Well, the thing that is really interesting to me is when we proposed creating an environmental crimes unit, the business community did not oppose it in front of the Legislature. And why is that? One answer is, the overwhelming majority of businesses actually do play by the rules. The second reason is that the small number of businesses that do cheat put everyone else at a competitive disadvantage. And so when one person cheats enough, isn't paying to properly dispose for waste for example, they have a higher profit margin, they can drop their prices, and they drive companies that are playing by the rules out of business. And no one in business wants that. What they want is a level playing field. So the idea that environmental enforcement drives businesses out of the state is bizarrely inaccurate. If you think of what's been good for Oregon, Intel coming to Oregon clearly was a good thing. There have been thousands and thousands and thousands of high-tech jobs that have come from that decision. One of the main reasons they came was, chip manufacturing requires a lot of water. If you are going to make microchips, it takes a lot of water. And they have to have a lot of water, and the dirtier it is, the more expensive it is to make the chip, because the more you have to spend on water purification. Part of the reason they moved here is because they could get water out of the Tualatin River and it was still pretty clean. And that's not an isolated example when you think about it. When people worry about the economic fate of the Pacific Northwest, one of the things we have is water. Compare that to Las Vegas, Phoenix, Southern California. We still have some, but it's not going to be valuable to anyone if it's trashed. So our comparative advantage as a region in part comes from the fact that we've done a relatively good job of protecting the environment. And so I think that is kind of misdirected criticism.

TW A lot of people I've talked to—well, I haven't talked to a lot of people about us doing this interview—but a lot of people are kind of convinced that you might be thinking about running for governor at some point. And so I wanted to ask: How would you rate the effectiveness of former prosecutors serving in a more political role such as governor, which is very much based on a lot of compromise?

JK God, that's interesting.

TW What would you say to those that are convinced that you will one day run for governor? And then we'll have one more baseball question.

JK God, you know, if I do really start thinking about running for governor, one thing I will do is try to answer that question. There have been a lot of prosecutors who have become governors throughout history. You know, Gov. Dewey in New York, Earl Warren in California.

CB Ted Kulongoski. He did take a detour to the Supreme Court.

JK You know, Ted was attorney general, but he had not been a prosecutor beforehand, whereas Dewey really was a Mafia boss-beater and Earl Warren was really somewhat of a lawless district attorney in Alameda County in California. If I start to seriously think about of running for governor at some point, I will probably look at that. The example of what not to do I can certainly point to: Gov. Spitzer. The lessons there aren't particularly profound, which is, don't be a lawless hypocrite. I do think that's a valuable

question. You know, prosecutors are forced to look at things in more black and white a lot of the time, and that really could affect the way you do your job. I think it puts up strengths and weaknesses. Rudy Giuliani moved from being a prosecutor to being a very powerful mayor. There were some things that he did in New York that were great and there's some very positive things, but he also really antagonized and tore the city apart in ways. So I think it can be a plus in some ways, perhaps because it does teach you to be decisive, you have to make judgments, and you have to make calls. I never really read an assessment. I think that's a great question. I'm going to think more about it: about historically whether prosecutors have made good governors or not.

TW So we'll end with some sports questions, because we'll be coming out with our next issue around the beginning of the season. As a prosecutor, how do you view the investigation of Barry Bonds, and from your point of view, what does the evidence suggest?

JK I have to say that I have not carefully followed the case. I haven't followed the evidence to know whether it's been done properly or not, you know what I'm saying. I do think that all of the stuff that has come out has been incredibly harmful to baseball. It's made me less interested in baseball.

CB We've seen your public service announcement with Brandon Roy. Are you a Blazer fan or simply using the two-time All Star for the public good?

JK I am a huge Blazer fan. My wife, Michelle, and I watch just about every game. We've probably hit 80 percent of the games this year. We actually got a scholar from Eugene, Tony Biglan, who's one of the nation's most respected scholars on how to prevent drug and alcohol abuse amongst teens. So Tony worked on the commercial with us so that it was more than just a PR thing. We worked with Tony to make certain that the commercial might do some good. I wanted the Blazers involved because I don't think people will pay that much attention, frankly, if the attorney general says something. I mean, no one knows who the attorney general is. I believe profoundly that you need to get people's attention, and people care about sports a lot. So I approached the Blazers about the idea, and they got Brandon to do it, which I was greatly appreciative of. He was kind about it. And hopefully it will do some good.

TW Is there anything else you want to let our audience know about what your office is up to?

JK I don't know what the number of your readership is in Oregon, but I think Oregon runs the risk of being a little complacent about the quality of its environment. Everyone who follows these things really views Oregon as a nationwide leader in environmental protection. When you ask why, it's land-use planning and the Bottle Bill, both of which are a long time in the past. Right now, every major river in Oregon fails the Clean Water Act standards. That's just the facts. It's not like it is a pristine environment. Some of the challenges in air quality are huge as well. The Hanford nuclear facility poses huge challenges for the Columbia long term. We've got numerous proposals to build liquefied natural gas terminals on the coast and in the Columbia, which are potentially very significant hazards to the environment. It is not a time for people to think that we have solved the environmental problem and we can move on. I think there are huge challenges to the state. So what we are really trying to do is to partner with other people in state government and push the ball in the right direction.