



Stockton Hosts Congress to Campus Event Designed to Engage Students in Civic Life

For Immediate Release; with photo attached and link to more photos at end

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Galloway Township, NJ -Two retired congressmen recently engaged with faculty, staff and students at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, as part of the Congress to Campus program hosted by the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy.

Robert Clement, a Democrat who represented Tennessee's 5th district from 1988-2003, and Louis Frey, a Republican who served Florida's 9th district from 1973-1979, and Florida's 5th district from 1969- 1973, spent Oct. 13-14 on campus. The two were accompanied by Ambassador William J. Hughes, a former congressman from southern New Jersey's 2nd District for whom the Hughes Center is named.

Congress to Campus, a program of the United States Association of Former Members of Congress (FMC) of Washington, D.C., connects former representatives and senators of each major political party with college students. The program is designed to increase civic engagement and encourage students to pursue careers in public service.

"The Hughes Center applied to host the program so that we could provide another opportunity to enhance their academic studies with practitioners of public policy and politics. We hope that students become more engaged in civic life," said Daniel J. Douglas, director of the Hughes Center.

John Froomjian, senior research associate for the Hughes Center, said the former congressmen spoke on a range of topics: gridlock in Washington, D.C., their interactions with presidents, and the need for young people to vote.

"This program provided Stockton students with a rare opportunity to learn about our political system up close," he said.

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Frey and Clement visited a class taught by Dr. Michael Rodriguez, associate professor of Political Science, and discussed factors contributing to gridlock in Washington, D.C. They advocated campaign finance reform and students getting involved.

The two former congressmen held a discussion on civic education with Dr. Claudine Keenan, dean of Education, Patty Weeks, director of the Southern Regional Institute & Educational Technology Training Center (SRI&ETTC), and local educators. Frey has established The Louis Frey Institute of Politics & Government in 2008 at the University of Central Florida.

Dr. Keenan said Clement and Frey complemented Ambassador Hughes' passion for civics education.

"Their ideas for advancing civics education among Stockton's K-12 partners have led to planning for a conference enhanced by some excellent curricular resources," she said.

Clement, who served in the National Guard and reserves, and Frey, who served in the U.S. Navy and reserves, were able to share their military experience with student veterans during one of the sessions.

"It was wonderful to have these two outstanding [former] congressmen, who served this country, meet with our Stockton student veterans," said Tom O'Donnell, assistant dean of Students/Veteran's Affairs.

"They provided a very important discussion on ways we can enhance the combat to classroom experience."

They also met with members of the Student Senate. Students in the *Advanced Constitutional Litigation* class taught by Linda Wharton, associate professor of Political Science, and members of the Political Engagement Project were also able to meet with Clement and Frey during an informal reception.

"This was a rare and valuable opportunity for my students to gain insights into the reality of life as a candidate and a member of Congress," Wharton said. "Former Members Frey and Clement shared their real life experiences with students and offered constructive ideas about how to move beyond the current partisan gridlock in Washington."

Both former congressmen started their careers in public service at a young age. Clement was 29 when he ran for political office as a Public Service Commissioner, becoming the youngest Tennessean ever elected to a statewide position. Frey was elected a congressman at the age of 35.

"Even though politics has a negative connotation today, I challenged the students not to shy away from politics," Clement said. "What we need today is political courage in order to move this country forward. There's nothing that we can't accomplish."

Clement said he was highly impressed with Stockton and the Hughes Center and the Polling Institute. Frey agreed.

"I think it's a homerun," said Frey about the Hughes Center and the Polling Institute.

For more photos, [click here](#).

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