

*State Health  
Leadership Initiative*



# State Health Leadership Initiative

## Mentoring Guide

A Guide for Mentors

THE  
ROBERT WOOD  
JOHNSON  
FOUNDATION



ASSOCIATION OF STATE AND  
TERRITORIAL HEALTH OFFICIALS

## Foreword

Taking the helm of an agency can be a lonely and frightening experience. As State Health Official, you must appear that you have all the answers for your employees, the public, the press, the legislature, and, of course, for your boss, the governor. We all know that it is impossible to have the expanse of skills needed for these very tough jobs. As a new State Health Official, you first must assess your skills, and then ask for help and advice in a safe environment. A mentor is a wonderful resource for that advice, for talking about your strengths and weaknesses and mapping out a plan -- all without the scrutiny of your employees or the press. In a mentor you will find the gift of an experienced colleague willing to spend time discussing your plan of action to become a successful State Health Official. We'll give you some ideas to get you started on your mentoring journey. The most important step, however, is to connect with a wise person and initiate a relationship of trust. We do not have the luxury of unlimited time to figure out how to run these departments. Use the Mentoring Guide to get started, and then start talking and listening. Then you will be on your way to becoming a successful State Health Official.

Catherine R. Eden

Director of Health, State of Arizona

*Starting my third year as director because I had a good mentor*

## State Health Leadership Initiative

In September 1998, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation funded the National Governors Association (NGA) to serve as National Program Office for the *State Health Leadership Initiative*. This Initiative was established to accelerate the leadership capacity development of new State Health Officials as policy makers, administrators, and advocates for the public's health. This program provides a flexible package of training, mentoring, and other support to help health officials bridge the gap between scientific or public health challenges and the broad policy, economic, and political processes at the state level. Working with Initiative staff, each health official tailors a program to his or her interests and needs.

In addition to NGA, the *State Health Leadership Initiative* partnership includes the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Initiative components available to newly appointed state health officials include: the Mentoring Program, Technical Assistance and Web-based Resources, Networking, an Annual Leadership Retreat, and a Personalized Skill-building Assessment.

The ***State Health Officials Mentoring Program*** is available to newly appointed State Health Officials for up to one year. The purpose of this flexible, customized program is to provide support, advice, feedback, and strategy development to the New State Health Official (NSHO) from an Experienced Colleague (EC), a current or previous state health official. The goal is to reduce the New State Health Officials's transition time into this new and demanding assignment.

NSHOs are offered the services of an EC for a period of up to one year. The one-on-one mentoring relationship includes an on-site meeting, calls, and e-mail exchanges. Program staff assists the NSHO with selecting an EC, orients the participants, facilitates the relationship as needed, provides a variety of mentoring resources, and monitors progress through written feedback and year-end interviews. ECs receive modest honoraria and travel assistance to facilitate meeting in-person with the NSHO.

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## What is Mentoring?

In *The Odyssey* (written by Homer, a Greek poet), Odysseus (known as Ulysses in the Latin translation) was preparing to fight the Trojan War when he realized he would be leaving behind his only son and heir, Telemachus. Since the child was young and wars typically dragged on for years (the Trojan War lasted 10 years), Ulysses entrusted Telemachus' care and education to Mentor, his wise, trusted friend.

Today, mentoring is a process in which an experienced individual helps another person develop his or her goals and skills through a series of time-limited, confidential, one-on-one conversations and other learning activities. Mentors also draw benefits from the mentoring relationship. As an Experienced Colleague (EC), our term for mentor in the program, you will have the opportunity to share your wisdom and experiences, evolve your own thinking about the issues affecting the New State Health Official (NSHO), develop your skills as a mentor, and develop a new relationship.

### The State Health Officials Mentoring Program

There are many kinds of mentoring, ranging from informal to formal. The State Health Officials Executive Mentoring and Consultation Program offers many of the features of a formal or "facilitated" mentoring program. Facilitated mentoring has been defined as "...a structure and series of processes designed to create effective mentoring relationships; guide the desired behavior change of those involved; and evaluate the results for the protégés, the mentors, and the organization." <sup>1</sup>

To that end, program staff:

- assist the New State Health Official with selecting an Experienced Colleague
- facilitate an Orientation Call between the EC and NSHO
- provide mentoring resources and tools
- monitor the relationship's progress through periodic feedback
- provide the EC with an honorarium and travel support
- conduct individual year-end interviews with the EC and NSHO

This guide, and the other mentoring resources offered by the Program, will help you develop the skills you need to help your New State Health Official learn and grow. The guide's format is intentionally simple and brief to facilitate its use. The New State Health Official will be using a similar guide to develop the skills he or she needs to make the most of the mentoring relationship.

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<sup>1</sup> Murray, M. *Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring: How to Facilitate an Effective Mentoring Process*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 2001.

## Key Mentoring Skills

The mentoring literature shows that mentors and mentees tend to employ certain mentoring skills. Research also indicates that these skills can be developed, and that particular skills or competencies seem to result in the most successful mentoring relationships. Linda Phillips-Jones, Ph.D., mentoring expert and author of *The New Mentors & Proteges: How to Succeed with the New Mentoring Partnerships*, and numerous guides and tools for mentors and mentees (see Appendix III), studied hundreds of mentor-mentee relationships and developed a set of critical mentoring skills and competencies. The key mentoring skills discussed here are adapted from her work.

KEY MENTORING SKILLS
<i>Listening Actively</i>
<i>Building Trust</i>
<i>Determining Goals and Building Capacity</i>
<i>Encouraging &amp; Inspiring</i>

You will likely recognize the skills outlined here and may have experience employing them successfully in other relationships. As you progress through the year-long mentoring relationship, try to employ these skills whenever possible.

### 1. Listening Actively

Listening actively is the most basic skill you will use throughout your relationship. Active listening not only establishes rapport but creates a positive, accepting environment that permits open communication. By listening actively, you will ascertain your New State Health Official's interests and needs. Examples include the following:

- Show interest in what he or she is saying, and reflect back important aspects of what he or she has said to show that you've understood.
- Use body language (such as making eye contact) that shows you are paying attention to what he or she is saying.
- If you are talking to him or her by phone, reduce background noise, and limit interruptions. Your NSHO will feel that he or she has your undivided attention. When utilizing e-mail, answer within 24 hours if possible, and be sure your message is responsive to his or her original message.

- Reserve discussing your own experiences or giving advice until after your NSHO has had a chance to thoroughly explain his or her issue, question, or concern.

## **2. Building Trust**

Trust is built over time. You will increase trust by keeping your conversations and other communications with your NSHO confidential (as discussed during the Orientation Call), honoring your scheduled calls and meetings, consistently showing interest and support, and by being honest with your NSHO.

## **3. Determining Goals and Building Capacity**

As a role model, you should have your own career and personal goals and share these, when appropriate, with your NSHO. It is also likely that he or she will ask you how you set and achieved goals while you were a NSHO. In addition, you can help your NSHO identify and achieve his or her career and personal goals.

You will develop your NSHO's capacity for learning and achieving his or her goals by doing the following:

- Assisting him or her with finding resources such as people, books, articles, case studies, tools and web-based information;
- Imparting knowledge and skills by explaining, giving useful examples, demonstrating processes, and asking thought-provoking questions;
- Helping him or her gain broader perspectives of his or her responsibilities and organization; and
- Discussing actions you've taken in your career and explaining your rationale.

## **4. Encouraging and Inspiring**

According to Dr. Phillips-Jones' research, giving encouragement is the mentoring skill most valued by mentees. There are many ways to encourage your NSHO.

Try some of these:

- Comment favorably on his or her accomplishments;
- Communicate your belief in his or her capacity to grow and reach his or her goals; and
- Respond to his or her frustrations and challenges with words of support, understanding, encouragement and praise. (Just knowing that someone else has been there can be tremendously helpful.)

You can also inspire your NSHO to excel. Examples include the following:

- Share your personal vision or those of other leaders;
- Describe experiences, mistakes, and successes you or others have encountered on the road to achieving your goals;
- Talk with him or her about people and events that have inspired and motivated you; and
- Introduce him or her to your colleagues who can be additional useful contacts or inspiring models.

Reflecting on your mentoring practice, noting use of the key mentoring skills, observing progress made in the relationship, and requesting feedback from your NSHO are excellent ways to assess whether you are employing these skills.

## Stages of Formal Mentoring Relationships<sup>2</sup>

Like most relationships, mentoring relationships progress through stages. Your formal mentoring relationship will likely reflect four developmental stages with each stage forming an inherent part of the next:

- I. Building the Relationship
- II. Exchanging Information and Setting Goals
- III. Working Towards Goals/Deepening the Engagement
- IV. Ending the Formal Mentoring Relationship and Planning for the Future

There is no strict formula for determining the length of each stage. From our experience, Stages I and II typically unfold during the first three to four months of the relationship. Typically, the relationship winds down in months 11 and 12. Options for continuing the relationship in a less formal way are addressed in Stage IV.

The sections that follow discuss practical activities for progressing successfully through each stage.

### Stage I: Building the Relationship

During this phase, you will get to know each other and begin to establish trust.

During the first call (the Orientation Call facilitated by program staff), you will briefly discuss your backgrounds, experiences, interests, and expectations. You will also make agreements about confidentiality and the frequency of contact.

During this first stage, it is important to establish a schedule for communicating regularly. If your NSHO's staff has not yet contacted you to set up regular calls, follow up. You will immediately demonstrate to him or her that the relationship is important! You should also plan on visiting your NSHO as early as possible in the relationship. This is a good time to set a date for that visit.

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<sup>2</sup> Phillips-Jones, L. (2001) Personal communication. Adapted from CCC/The Mentoring Group's Mentor and Mentee training materials.

There are a number of questions you may want to ask your NSHO during your second contact (usually a phone call):

- Tell me a little more about yourself, your skills, your organization, the political environment, and some key challenges you are facing. (Begin by reflecting back a few of the key experiences and interests he or she expressed during the Orientation Call.)
- How have you benefited from other mentoring relationships?
- What are some of your preliminary goals for our mentoring relationship?

## Stage II: Exchanging Information and Setting Goals

During Stage II, you will exchange more information and set goals. Ideally, you will visit your NSHO at his or her place of work during this stage. Observing your NSHO in “the now” has a powerful impact because of the personal interest and caring it imparts. Your relationship and trust will deepen.

### **TIPS FOR MAXIMIZING THE SITE VISIT**

*Schedule the on-site visit for early in the relationship.*

*Discuss the agenda in advance.*

*Meet your NSHO’s key staff, if appropriate.*

As the mentoring relationship unfolds by telephone and e-mail, be attentive to practicing active listening and consistently expressing encouragement.

### Helping Your New State Health Official Set Goals:

By exchanging information, you will gain insight into the goals your NSHO hopes to achieve through the mentoring relationship. ECs have provided their NSHOs with input and support on a great variety of issues and challenges. For example, your NSHO may want to improve his or her skills advocating for public health with the Legislature or Governor’s office. Alternatively, he or she may need your guidance on a major organizational restructuring.

Goals are helpful because they help the NSHO see beyond the day-to-day demands of his or her position and help him or her gain clarity on how to get the most out of the mentoring relationship. Encourage your NSHO to discuss his or her goals with you. Suggest that he or she complete the Goal Form (Appendix II) and share it with you.

Coach your NSHO to refer back to his or her goals periodically as a way of re-focusing on goals and measuring progress. Referring to the goals regularly is also a good way for you to know if you are helping him or her achieve them.

### Stage III: Working Towards Goals/Deepening the Engagement

During Stage III, which is the longest and typically occurs during months four through ten, you will help your New State Health Official work towards achieving his or her goals through conversations, sharing written materials, trying various learning and development activities, and introducing him or her to other colleagues. This is a rich phase marked by openness and trust, meaningful discussion, and application of new insights and approaches. Your NSHO needs your ongoing encouragement at this stage. You may also feel comfortable enough to challenge him or her to think in new ways or approach a problem differently.

This is a good point in the journey to reflect on progress toward goals and on the relationship itself. Consider discussing the following:

- What are the benefits of the relationship up to this point? How am I helping you achieve your goals?
- What changes do you (NSHO) see in yourself and in the way you approach your work as a result of the mentoring relationship?
- What kinds of adjustments or changes, if any, are needed in your goals or in our relationship?

This is also the stage during which energy in the relationship can wane! Often, the NSHO will feel concerned that he or she is burdening you. The demands of the new job will often compete with his or her commitment to the mentoring relationship. If you haven't heard from your NSHO, check in with him or her.

Take the lead if necessary. Also take stock of your own time and energy. Is the partnership working well for you? Do you need to make some adjustments?

This is a highly rewarding phase of the relationship, but challenges may arise. Here are some examples of challenges other ECs and NSHOs have faced and resolved.

- **Time and energy.** The most common challenge by far is finding sufficient time to do all you want to do in the partnership. Despite good intentions, other priorities interfere for both of you.

**Solution:** *Think small rather than large, especially in the beginning. Avoid promising more time than you can deliver. Check with your NSHO to be certain you are both comfortable with the time you are spending and with the learning that is occurring.*

- **Building trust quickly.** With only a couple of hours of contact each month for 12 months, it is not easy to build the kind of trust you both would like.

**Solution:** *Other ECs have successfully used several strategies, such as the following: Listen very carefully, and remember what your NSHO has said in the past. Demonstrate your credibility. Keep your promises and commitments -- if any need to be changed, let your NSHO know immediately and reschedule or renegotiate them. Admit some errors made and lessons learned. Avoid talking negatively about others. Above all, keep the confidences your NSHO shares with you.*

- **Not being the “expert” on all your NSHO’s needs.** Many ECs find it difficult when they do not have all the answers.

**Solution:** *Explain your role as “learning facilitator” early in your partnership. Tell your NSHO that you will not have all the answers, and you are looking forward to learning together as well as seeking help from others who are more expert on different topics. (Program staff can help you with linkages to other resources.)*

- **Being sensitive to differences.** Particularly in the beginning, it is tempting to assume that both of you are the same. It is easy to envision the NSHO’s situation and to give advice based on your unique experiences.

**Solution:** *In addition to discovering all your similarities, work carefully to identify the differences between you and your NSHO. For example, how do the specifics of his or her position differ from the health official role you played? What political factors are occurring now for him or her that you did not face? If you are of different generations/ages, genders, races,*

*cultural groups, or professional backgrounds, what different experiences have you both had? Assume a learning mode, and invite discussion about all of these topics. As Stephen Covey reminds us in **Seven Habits of Highly Effective People**, "Seek first to understand."*

During this phase, Program staff will also check in with you and the NSHO on the relationship's progress, request feedback on the overall program, answer any questions, and offer assistance as needed.

#### Stage IV: Ending the Formal Mentoring Relationship and Planning for the Future

During this stage, planning for the NSHO's continued success is balanced with bringing the formal mentoring relationship to a close. Work with your NSHO to define the types of support he or she may need in the future. You may want to connect him or her with additional colleagues who can provide benefits other than those provided by you. This is also a good time to explore your NSHO's own interest in becoming an Experienced Colleague.

Adjournment brings closure to the journey. Your final telephone call or discussion should be dedicated to the following:

- Reflecting on accomplishments, challenges, and progress towards goals;
  - What will your NSHO remember most about this year?
  - What challenges lie ahead for him or her?
- Exploring other types of support he or she may still need;
- Discussing whether the relationship will continue informally and how you will implement that; and
- Expressing thanks and best wishes!

Program staff will schedule individual Year-end Feedback Interviews with you and your NSHO.

## Appendix I

### Mentoring Best Practices

- Think of yourself as a “learning facilitator” rather than the person with all the answers. Help your NSHO find people and other resources that go beyond your experience and wisdom on a topic.
- Emphasize questions over advice giving. Use probes that help your NSHO think more broadly and deeply. If he or she talks only about facts, ask about feelings. If he or she focuses on feelings, ask him or her to review the facts. If he or she seems stuck in an immediate crisis, help him or her see the big picture.
- When requested, share your own experiences, lessons learned, and advice. Emphasize how your experiences could be different from his or her experiences and are merely examples. Limit your urge to solve the problem for him or her.
- Resist the temptation to control the relationship and steer its outcomes; your NSHO is responsible for his or her own growth.
- Help your NSHO see alternative interpretations and approaches.
- Build your NSHO's confidence through supportive feedback.
- Encourage, inspire, and challenge your NSHO to achieve his or her goals.
- Help your NSHO reflect on successful strategies he or she has used in the past that could apply to new challenges.
- Be spontaneous now and then. Beyond your planned conversations, call or e-mail “out of the blue” just to leave an encouraging word or piece of new information.
- Reflect on your mentoring practice. Request feedback.
- Enjoy the privilege of mentoring. Know that your efforts will likely have a significant impact on your NSHO's development as well as your own.

## Appendix II

### MENTORING GOAL FORM\*

(To be completed by the New State Health Official.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What do you want to achieve through engaging in the mentoring relationship?  
Complete this form and discuss your goals with your Experienced Colleague.  
Examine your goals periodically, and discuss progress made.

Goal #1:

*Benefits to You or Your Organization:*

*Potential Barriers to Success:*

*Resources/Support Needed to Achieve Goal:*

*How Progress Will Be Measured:*

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\* Adapted from Leadership Enterprises ([www.leadershipenterprises.com](http://www.leadershipenterprises.com))

Goal #2:

*Benefits to You or Your Organization:*

*Potential Barriers to Success:*

*Resources/Support Needed to Achieve Goal:*

*How Progress Will Be Measured:*

Goal #3:

*Benefits to You or Your Organization:*

*Potential Barriers to Success:*

*Resources/Support Needed to Achieve Goal:*

*How Progress Will Be Measured:*

## Appendix III

### Selected Annotated Bibliography

#### Mentoring

Bell, C. R. (1998) ***Managers as Mentors***. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers. Chip Bell's approach to mentoring embodies development for both the mentee and the mentor as well as important psychological principles of interpersonal development. Bell's approach is suitable for individuals at differing levels of both work and mentoring experience.

Cohen, N. (1999) ***Effective Mentoring***. Amherst, Massachusetts: HRD Press. This practical small pocket guide provides quick access to basic mentoring concepts and techniques. It supports the developmental approach to mentoring relationships, i.e. the need to be aware of mentor behaviors, importance of maintaining/monitoring the relationship via written documentation, etc. Critical keys to successful mentoring are clarity of goals and making connections.

Murray, M. (2001) ***Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring: How to Facilitate an Effective Mentoring Process***. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Provides models and guidelines for designing, implementing and evaluating a facilitated mentoring process within organizations. Includes useful tools and case examples.

Peterson, D.B. & Hicks, M.D. (1996) ***Leader as Coach***. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Personnel Decisions International Corporation. The authors approach coaching as a critical dimension of leadership. Many of the strategies, techniques, and models presented can be applied to mentoring relationships.

Phillips-Jones, L. (2000) ***The Mentor's Guide***. Grass Valley, CA: Coalition of Counseling Centers (CCC)/The Mentoring Group. Practical workbook for mentors. Includes Mentor's View of Mentoring Process, Frequently Asked Questions, Critical Mentoring Skills, Mentoring Etiquette, detailed Mentor's Checklist of Tasks, Sample Activities, blank and sample Mentor Plans, etc. Appropriate for new and experienced mentors.

Phillips-Jones, L. (2000) ***The Mentee's Guide***. Grass Valley, CA: Coalition of Counseling Centers (CCC)/The Mentoring Group. Practical workbook for persons seeking or paired with mentors. Includes Mentee's View of Mentoring Process, Frequently Asked Questions, Critical Mentoring Skills, detailed Mentee's Checklist, Mentoring Etiquette, blank and sample Mentee plans, etc.

Phillips-Jones, L. (2001) ***The New Mentors and Proteges: How to Succeed with the New Mentoring Partnerships***. Grass Valley, CA: Coalition of Counseling Centers (CCC)/The Mentoring Group. Describes how to find the right mentors and

become a mentor for others. Includes numerous cases, how mentoring changed in the nineties, the new mentoring etiquette, and design ideas for planned mentoring.

Phillips-Jones, L. (2000) "**Strategies for Getting the Mentoring You Need: A Look at Best Practices of Successful Mentees.**" Grass Valley, CA: Coalition of Counseling Centers (CCC)/The Mentoring Group. 14-page booklet for individuals looking for specifics on finding mentors. Used as career development resource for individuals in all levels of organizations.

Phillips-Jones, L. (1998) "**75 Things to Do with Your Mentees: Practical and Effective Development Activities You can Try.**" Grass Valley, CA: Coalition of Counseling Centers (CCC)/The Mentoring Group. 12-page booklet of mentee development activities successfully used by mentors.

Shea, G.F. (1999) **Making the Most of Being Mentored: How to Grow from a Mentoring Partnership.** Menlo Park, CA: Crisp Publications, Inc. Offers information, exercises and self-study activities for mentees and people seeking a mentor.

Shea, G.F. (1996) **Mentoring: A Practical Guide.** Menlo Park, CA: Crisp Publications, Inc. A simple middle manager level "how to" book on mentoring that effectively presents concrete, detailed activities and exercises. The author advances the notion that mentoring is the empowerment of the mentee by developing his or her abilities in a dynamic partnership.

Zachary, L. J. (2000) **The Mentor's Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships.** San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. A comprehensive guide to developing successful mentoring relationships and programs. Includes useful examples and exercises.

### Learning/Creativity

Dalton, M.A. (1998) **Becoming a More Versatile Learner.** Greensboro, North Carolina: Center for Creative Leadership. Versatility in learning and helping a mentee understand the personal and even political power of that versatility can be critical to the success of a mentoring relationship. This 25-page book captures the expansion process of learning.

Gryskiewicz, S. (1999) **Positive Turbulence: Developing Climates for Creativity, Innovation, and Renewal.** Greensboro, North Carolina: Center for Creative Leadership. Sometimes a mentoring relationship can stall because of contextual factors for the mentee. This book is about changing climates - from roles and relationships to economics and politics.

von Oech, R. (1990) ***A Whack on the Side of the Head: How You Can Be More Creative***. New York, New York: Warner Books. This classic book is one of the best quick hits on trying to move to a different way of looking at something. Both clever and humorous, this book will help a mentee or mentor become more creative.

### **Personal Purpose/Direction/Meaning**

Hakim, C. (1994) ***We Are All Self-Employed: The New Social Contract for Working in a Changed World***. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers. Hakim presents a convincing case that everyone, whether self-employed or part of a large organization, is responsible for their own career success. He provides numerous ideas for how to discover one's passion and how to find or create satisfying work.

Leider, R.J. (1997) ***The Power of Purpose: Creating Meaning in Your Life and Work***. New York, New York: MJF Books. Leider offers a compelling discussion of the call to work, an often identified topic between mentor and mentee. He provides a practical guide for creating meaning in your life and work. He focuses on living and working from the inside out, grounding soul work in the common practice of everyday life.

Leider, R. J. & Shapiro, D.A. (1996) ***Repacking Your Bags: How to Live with a New Sense of Purpose***. New York, New York: MJF Books. Often revealed in a mentoring relationship is the dynamic of "I have no balance in my life between work and family." The authors present a step-by-step approach to help a person set down the unnecessary burdens carried in life and live with a renewed sense of purpose.

### **Interpersonal Relationships/Managing Conflict/Dealing with Politics**

Wall, B. (1999) ***Working Relationships: The Simple Truth About Getting Along with Friends and Foes at Work***. Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black Publishing. No matter how good you are at what you do, the most important factor – and often the most frustrating challenge – in determining your success and satisfaction in the workplace is your ability to forge effective relationships with others. Often a topic of discussion in a mentoring relationship, this book offers excellent examples for handling the world of interpersonal relationships.

Scott, G. G. (2000) ***Work with Me: Resolving Everyday Conflict in Your Organization***. Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black Publishing. Significant time may be spent in a mentoring relationship discussing ways to handle power struggles, politics of the work context, and friction with difficult people. Scott presents the

model ERI (emotion, reason, and intuition) for managing these issues and dealing with politics.

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