

All the President's Pens

March 24, 2010. (2 min. 42 sec.)

00:00

(Mr. Brown)

I am not quite sure when it started.

[Lisa Brown – Staff Secretary]

We know that President Kenney and President Johnson each use a number of pens when they were – when they signed bills and the Clerk believes that it started with either Truman or Roosevelt.

00:17

And the practice is that a – the President uses a number of pens and – then gives the pens to people who worked pens and – then gives the pens to people who worked particularly hard on a bill, who sponsored the bill,

00:22

[May 22, 2009]

who really fought to get it done, or to whom the bill means a great deal.

00:30

Four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, no, there's one more.

00:38

This is the most pens that we've ever used.

00:41

It will be 20 pens today.

00:43

He has gotten much better at this.

He, in fact, jokes about this, actually, that he's – at the beginning it was just not – come naturally,

00:48

[January 29, 2009]

to use a number of pens when you're signing your name,

00:52

[March 30, 2009]

and so – but he has now gotten very much in the groove.

00:56

(The President)

I've gotten good at this.

00:59

(Ms. Brown)

Today will be interesting, because this is almost twice as many as he's used before.

01:03

And he signed off on 20, so I'll just – just pass it back upstairs (inaudible).

01:08

All right, two more.

01:10

Two more pens – 22.

01:15

Since he's a lefty, as you can see, actually, this is done so that somebody who's left-handed, when they sign it, it's facing...

01:25

Hey! Do you know what the record is on number of pens used on a bill?

01:30

We have 22 today.

01:33

The President used 40 pens in 1997 to sign the Taxpayer Relief Act.

01:38

Is that right, Tim? Okay. Thank you. Okay, bye – great work.

01:43

(Unidentified Speaker)

But we don't know if that's a record at all.

01:45

(Ms. Brown)

We don't know, we're – that was – Tim just said he'd found that one, so I'll do a Google search and see if we can figure out what the – what the actual record is, but the – I bet you that's pretty close.

There it is.

01:56

(Group of men)
(chanting)

02:04

(The President)

Today, after almost a century of trying;
today after over a year of debate;
today, after all the votes have been tallied,
health insurance reform becomes law in the United States of America.