



# Capitol Investments: The Marketability of Political Skills (Economics, Cognition, and Society)

*Glenn R. Parker*

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“Who would spend millions for a job that pays \$250k? Parker’s answer will surprise you. Required reading for Congress jocks.”

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What would you do if, the very day you were hired, you knew you could be unemployed in as little as two years? You’d seek opportunities in your current job to develop a portfolio of skills and contacts in order to make yourself more attractive to future employers. Representatives and senators think about their jobs in Congress in precisely this way, according to Glenn R. Parker.

While in office, members of Congress plan not merely for the next election but for the next stage of their careers. By networking, serving on committees, and championing particular legislation, they deliberately accumulate human capital—expertise, networks, and reputation—which later gives them advantages on the job market. Parker’s study of the postelective careers of more than 200 former members of Congress who left office during the last half century shows that, in most cases, the human capital these politicians amassed while in office increased their occupational mobility and earning power.

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