

Mitch McConnell: There's an Opportunity to Move America in a New Direction

During a wide-ranging interview Tuesday morning with nationally syndicated radio host Hugh Hewitt to promote his new book, *The Long Game*, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) discussed everything from baseball to the 2020 general election.

In the interview, McConnell told Hewitt he feels he's still "at the top of my game," and suggested he's eager to run for re-election in another four years. The six-term Republican was first elected to the Senate in 1984.

"I appreciate the support I've had from my constituents over the years and from my Republican colleagues in the Senate in making me the leader," he said. "And now, I get to set the agenda as the majority leader. So I'm certainly not looking at retiring. I think we've got an opportunity to begin to move the country in a different direction."

McConnell chose the title of his book, he said, because he's "a little skeptical of overnight sensations who have simple answers to complicated problems." He said he's "taken a different path from what seems to be fashionable in the era of Obama," but he thinks that is true for most Americans.

"I think life, for most of us, is a long game, you know, and getting used to the inevitable setbacks that we have along the way, sort of the speed bumps of life, and finding out that rarely are those setbacks fatal, and keeping at it," he said. "It's worked for me, and I think I had an early lesson in that, Hugh, when my mother helped me come back from polio when I was just a little kid."

Hewitt later asked McConnell if, as a result of his leadership in the Senate, he felt somewhat responsible for the current level of “angst” among Republican voters. The senator instead placed much of the blame on President Obama.

“I think some of the upset that people have is related to the fact that they aren’t fully focusing on the fact that there is a president under our system,” he said. “People need to understand that there’s a limit to what you can do when you don’t have the White House.

“I think of, for example, the suggestion of some that we shut down the government in order to defund Obamacare, what my friend George Will called the politics of futile gesture. In other words, you set up a mission that can’t possibly be achieved. And then when it isn’t achieved, rather than blaming the guy in the White House, blaming people like John Boehner or Paul Ryan or me for being insufficiently committed to the cause.

“I think people need to remember the presidency is a very, very important position. Most things we do require presidential signature. There’s one thing that doesn’t, and that’s filling a Supreme Court vacancy, which I’m sure we’ll get to at some point here. But we can’t completely change the country and go in a different direction without somebody different in the White House.”

McConnell also argued he’s been “combative” with Democrats, noting that he has a speech every morning in the Senate, which he usually reserves for pointing out “the shortcomings” of the Obama administration. But he says he tries to be combative in “as skillful and articulate way as possible.”

“The average American is about \$3,000 dollars a year worse off now than when the president came to office,” he said. “The over-regulation of our economy, the slow growth, is all producing this frustration and anger out there in the

country.”