

Episode 268—Dr. Victor Manalo: Social Work Careers in Politics

[00:00:08] Welcome to inSocialWork, the podcast series of the University at Buffalo School of Social Work at www.inSocialWork.org. We're glad you could join us today. The purpose of inSocialWork is to engage practitioners and researchers in lifelong learning and to promote research to practice and practice to research. We educate. We connect. We care. We're inSocialWork.

[00:00:37] Hi from Buffalo! Our Frank Lloyd Wright architectural masterpiece, The Darwin Martin Complex, has just completed a 27 year 52 million dollar restoration. Wright not only designed the home and other buildings, he designed everything; the furniture, the art glass, light fixtures and all of the landscaping it's all reclaimed, restored and ready to be appreciated in Buffalo's Parkside Community. Mick Jagger and The Stones approved following their visit. I'm Peter Sobota. In this episode, our guest, Dr. Victor Manalo, describes his early inspiration leading to a path as a social worker in the political arena and he looks back and forward over his long career. Capitalizing on the social work core value and focus on relationships, He discusses the perfect fit with the "it's who you know" reality of political life. Dr. Manalo addresses the social work skills that fit well with a political career and the opportunities to innovate and think disruptively. He concludes by sharing his insights on using technology in this context and applications of trauma informed practice. Victor Manalo PhD is a retired university professor from the School of Social Work at California State University Los Angeles. He served as mayor of Artesia and on the city council there. He was interviewed in May of 2019 by our own doctor Gokul Mandayam, clinical associate professor here at the UB School of Social Work.

[00:02:05] Hello everybody. This is Gokul Mandayam, clinical associate professor at the University at Buffalo School of Social Work. Today I'm in a conversation with Dr. Victor Manalo who is a social worker and who's been an active part of city and county politics in Southern California. And we will be talking to him about his experience in the political arena and how his social work education and practice has helped him navigate through this experience. So Dr. Manalo welcome to the podcast. And if you're ready then I will go ahead and ask my first question.

[00:02:41] Absolutely. Thank you so much for having me. I appreciate it.

[00:02:44] Pleasure is ours. All right. So Dr. Manalo could you tell us about your background and what led you to have a career trajectory that has taken you now to being a part of city county politics in Southern California?

[00:02:58] I started off getting involved when I was a graduate student in social work, getting my master's degree here at California State University Long Beach. And after I graduated I was fortunate enough to meet the director of the social work program that Long Beach. His name is Jim Kelly and he's been a mentor of mine ever since. He was the person that gave me my first opportunity to teach a course at Cal State Long Beach. And at the time I was working at a law office called the Alliance for Children's Rights. So I was very interested in macro work as a social worker and he gave me my first class teaching policy and other courses in the graduate program there and I realized after teaching policy for a while, for a couple years I realized that the same theme was coming up for me as I was exhorting my students to be more involved in policy and that is politics is the way to go, that you really need to be involved in politics at all levels. And one day I looked in the mirror and I said to myself "Yeah, that's so good that you're telling your students to do things. But what are you doing in the political sector?" And that's when I realized I had to

really expand my professional experience and become more involved in politics. And so I got involved in electoral politics working on some propositions here in California and I was always interested in what was going on here in the state of California. And through a number of different experiences and events, when we bought a home here in the city of Artesia, I met someone that was running for Artesia city council and I expressed my interest in learning more about what was happening in the city and he appointed me to a Planning Commission and once I got onto the Planning Commission, which is an advisory body to the city council, I knew that I had found my place as a social worker in local government.

[00:04:44] That's an impressive trajectory in its own way. So could you tell us further about your journey from the masters program to the doctoral program and as you were doing that you were actively being engaged in the political circles, so could you tell us that story?

[00:05:02] Sure absolutely. When I was a graduate student at Cal State Long Beach I was fully prepared to be a clinician and to get my license and to be a licensed clinical social worker as the majority of social work students are when they come into the social work program and being involved in the macro level social work was not even on my radar. When I started my first internship as a graduate student I was placed at a Kaiser Watts Counseling Center, which is located in Watts, which is in South Los Angeles. And while I was there, I was having a great time learning how to be a clinician and doing my internship there. But in the spring of 1992 was when the Rodney King Verdicts came down and there then subsequently were rioting that occurred and that was right smack where I was doing my internship and that event really changed my whole outlook on social work and my role as a social worker and I realized as there was frustration and anger and that was being demonstrated by people in the community in the rioting, the looting, the burning of businesses that was occurring in that community. I immediately recognized that that was a condition of frustration and anger born out of oppression and I recognized that there wasn't much I could do about that as a clinician. But if I were to somehow gain more experience in community level practice that I could play a role in trying to address some of those macro level issues. So that's what really turned my mind around and from then on I decided I wanted to focus on communities. I didn't know it was going to be in politics but shortly thereafter there was a proposition that then Governor Wilson had proposed that was gonna cut the AFDC, which is the Aid to Families with Dependent Children which is now known as here in California as CalWORKS or TANF. And when I realized that the families that I was working with and the Department of Children and Family Services here, if that proposition were to pass and the families I was working with were to receive a 30 percent cut in their benefits I knew that that would only lead to children being further put in jeopardy and at risk of further child abuse and neglect. So that's when I got involved in electoral politics and especially working on trying to defeat this proposition. So that's when I learned all the basics of electoral politics in terms of knocking on people's doors, looking at voter lists, targeting voters, getting people out to vote on Election Day. Bringing donuts to poll workers so that they wouldn't question me when I came into the poll to make sure that my voters were voting. So we were successful in defeating that proposition. So it really gave me an acknowledgement that I was in the right place in terms of working in community and working through politics, and thereafter as I mentioned earlier is when I met the person here in Artesia that was running for city council and got involved more specifically with politics and local government here where I live.

[00:08:14] Thanks for sharing that. So were you in the doctoral program by then? Or... just wanted to hear your thoughts are on why you got into a doctoral program and how has that really shaped your work as a social worker in the political arena.

[00:08:29] Right. Well I got into the doctoral program, it was all around this time there was a lot of change going on in my own personal professional life. And so couple of years after I finished my master's degree in social work I decided even before I decided to go to macro practice I knew I wanted to teach and so I had always kind of had wondered and thought about entering a doctoral program. So with the doctoral program that I think was really helped me to appreciate a couple of things. One, the complexity of things. And secondly that sometimes things are so complex that there's no way that I could ever know what the answer to those complex questions are. Sometimes they're very difficult for us to wrap our heads around. So it helped me to deal with a certain level of uncertainty. And I think that that's very helpful in the political arena in which I find myself. But it really helped me to look at the importance of research, the importance of data and help me to, at the same time, make a lot of connections in the social work community. And also I think it helped me with my own confidence as a professional social worker because I was building on the skills and knowledge that I had received as a graduate student and I was really finding opportunities to apply those across a number of different settings, whether that was in the classroom or in the community doing research or in the community doing practice or even on the dais as a councilman and working with elected officials and local government staff and other government staff and other elected officials in my work as a council member.

[00:10:04] Thank you so much Dr. Manalo. So I hear you were wearing different hats; a faculty member, a social worker, a politician or quasi politician, if I may. How has all these experiences is really shaped your interactions within the classroom and outside the classroom in your academic career so far?

[00:10:25] Well I think when it comes down to it, my frame of reference when I entered into politics already being in the doctoral program and knowing that eventually I was going to complete my dissertation and find a full time teaching position somewhere and a social work program at a university. My frame of reference is really how much can I learn about accessing the system and how the whole local government system works so that I could go into the classroom and share my experience and my observation with students so that they could access government at all levels, but more specifically at the local level, and most importantly not only could they access it for themselves but they could access it on behalf of their clients or even organize their clients and empower their clients to access local government for themselves. And the greatest thing that I learned, Gokul, from being in local government for over almost 12 years now, is that in my mind local government is where the rubber hits the road because all of the quality of life issues that people are concerned about in their communities all are directly tied to local government. Local government controls all those aspects that many of us take for granted in our communities. So for example public safety. Public safety is a local government run service. In my city of Artesia, we contract with the L.A. County Sheriff's Department to provide our public safety. We contract with Los Angeles County Fire Department to provide our fire and ambulance and paramedic services. People are always concerned about the quality of the streets and sidewalks in their neighborhoods whether there are enough open space and park land, whether it's safer for their kids to ride their bikes in the streets, whether they have easy access to shopping, schools, services in their community, whether your trash gets picked up, whether your neighborhood is full of empty lots or abandoned buildings or nicer homes and quality businesses. Those are all within the purview of local government. So I took all of that experience and knowledge and really brought that home into the classroom to provide my students with one way to easily access government and I believe is the most easily accessible level of government because it's where you live or it's where you work.

These local government officials and staff are all around you. Yet we don't normally think about them or wish to get access with them and develop relationships with them to help improve the quality of life not only for us but for our clients.

[00:13:00] Thank you again Dr. Manalo. I want to go back to your earlier comment about the perception of a social worker as somebody who is working largely one on one with individual clients or possibly at the mezzo level. And given your prolific experience in working with communities and in the political arena, in simple terms what are your thoughts around what the role of a social worker in the political arena is?

[00:13:30] Well I think over the years obviously that I think my role as a social worker in the political level continues to evolve and I think that where I'm at right now is that it's interesting that with my political experience and my social work background I'm now involved in a project in the local community here called the city of Downey where I have been tasked with building public and private coalition to support the work that is being done by social workers who work in the Department of Children and Family Services, which is the Child Protective Service Agency here in Los Angeles County. And we just celebrated our first year of that coalition and we call it the Downey Carers Collaborative, DCC. But my role in convening that collaborative would not have been possible if I didn't have contacts from my political experience as a councilman or if I didn't have contacts as a social worker as a professional social worker with people in the county system of social service system and specifically in the child welfare system. So I've been able to bring those two worlds together to bring private sector in the form of nonprofits and the public sector in the form of city government and city resources to help social workers in the Department of Children Family Services or DCFS to help them do their jobs. We had a meeting yesterday to celebrate our first year and one of the social workers said something very telling to me and very interesting. She said because of our collaborative I can do social work. I can be a social worker because I am now able to access resources for my clients and the families that I work with because of the contacts that I've been able to make through this collaborative and through the partnerships that we've been able to make. I worked for DCFS for a long time and I know it's frustrating when your clients need a service or they need something and you can't provide it for them. So what's been great about this collaborative is that these social workers are saying we actually now have resources that are local in our community that we can access very easily and they feel now that they can be a complete social worker.

[00:15:41] Thank you again. So in that vein, if I may ask you, would you agree or disagree with the fact that the social work presence in politics is crucial for coming out with very effective interventions at the individual mezzo and macro levels?

[00:15:58] Absolutely, and I think the thing that has been very clear for me in working with this particular coalition and collaborative is that there are so many people in our communities that are not aware of what we do as social workers. As many people are very well aware, Child Protective Services has a very poor reputation. And because most people think about Child Protective Services as "Oh you go in and you remove children from their families" and these elected officials that I've worked with over the last ten or eleven years, they are also aware of these biases but they don't know once they sit down across the table with a social worker and find out the complexity of these cases that they work on and the difficulty of removing a child from a home who is at risk of physical sexual abuse or neglect, they finally understand not in the head, they understand in the heart. They realize that we're not just taking children away from their homes without cause, but it's because we truly care and have compassion and want to protect children and at the

same time want to be able to strengthen families and ensure that children can grow up with their families if at all possible or in a family setting and to try to minimize the impact of removing children from their homes as much as possible. So it took a social worker who knew politics and politicians to be able to bring elected officials to the table and say "listen to what these social workers are saying. Look at what their jobs entail and recognize the opportunities that you have to be able to help children and families throughout your city and throughout your community."

[00:17:48] Thank you again, Dr. Manalo. So you know this as somebody who has been teaching social work students you very well understand that a partnership between social work and politics is always not necessarily viewed in a very positive light. And so how would you explain the kind of work you do to people who might not necessarily have much background on or exposure to the world off the nexus between social work and politics?

[00:18:16] Well I think that the easiest way for me to explain it to both constituencies, for social workers and social work students, how I explain it is that I am building relationships and creating connections. And social workers understand that because that's one of our primary values as social workers is the importance of relationships. We don't do anything as social workers outside of a relationship with somebody else. And then when I let people know that in politics it's not what you know, it's who you know. Everybody knows that. And so there's the connection between social work and politics is that as a social worker, because I am professionally educated to be able to form and create positive relationships. That's how politics works. Politics works through relationships. It's through who you know. And so I've been able to help social workers to understand that you have the tools and the skills and the knowledge to be able to work in the political sector because those are transferable skills, taking your ability to create relationships and then use them, apply them in the political sector, would be if our students were able to do that at any level. Wow we could really make a big difference for our communities and for our clients. And the same thing for people who are not social workers or who are politicians, what I tell them, what I do in politics is that I say "I just want you to see how we have to prioritize the people that we serve." In local government, for example, we're a public service institution. We provide services to our constituents, to the people that live and work and play in our cities. Having a good parks system and having park and recreation programs in our city, that's a service that we provide to our constituents and so we have to be oriented towards the people that we are serving like we are in social work. We have to treat them with respect, We have to be able to have good relationships with them and provide them the best service with integrity. And so that's how I'm able to bridge those two worlds.

[00:20:24] Thank you. I want to go back to a statement that you just made about social work students learning about skills of practice at different levels, micro, mezzo and macro. And in your classes, in your practice arenas, how have you been able to convey the notion that these skills are really translatable to the world of politics and policy?

[00:20:49] This came up in my groups class that I taught this semester and because in this collaborative coalition that I'm working on that I spoke of earlier, in the first few meetings that we had I recognized that there was some difficulty between members of the coalition that were present. There seemed to be some friction, there seemed to be some frustration between some members of the public sector between some people that were working in the schools and some of the employees of the Child Protective Service Agency. And as a social worker and someone who's familiar with working with groups, I had to bring my clinical skills even though I don't consider myself a clinician by any means, but I noticed that I had to intervene in that situation because we were at the very beginning of building

this coalition and I didn't want that friction or that problem to fester and to grow and to maybe affect people's attendance or participation in this collaborative. And so I really had to intervene within the group as a whole to kind of set a standard for remind people why we were together. And I also had to address that individually with people and to say "hey, seems like you're a little bit frustrated or concerned about certain issues that are going on. How can I help you with those or how can we address those concerns that you have?" And so those are the process issues that we social workers are very very familiar with. So even in a setting where I'm working on bringing different collaborators to the table, I have to bring those clinical skills to the table lest something goes wrong and the coalition falls apart because those difficulties were not dealt with in expedient manner. So that's what I said to my group work life. You may be wanting to get a task done but if you don't attend to the process of what's happening within the group you may lose members and then the tasks that you want to accomplish as a group may suffer because of the lack of motivation or the lack of attendance or participation by the members of that group.

[00:22:58] Thank you Dr. Manalo. I'm going to shift gears a little bit now. So as a social worker who has had a tremendous amount of experience in the political arena and now currently having your own consulting firm, what are your thoughts about innovating in social work practice? I would like to hear your thoughts on the same.

[00:23:18] I think it's great that you and many others in the social work profession are talking about innovation because I don't know where I got this innovative spirit but I think it's certainly demonstrated in the work that I'm doing and it seems to me that innovation for me is really related to what we just talked about and that is applying knowledge, experience, practice to new venues and being able to help people that you're working with to see things in a different way. And I'm always looking for those opportunities to bring something new and to enlighten people and to educate people as to what social workers are, what we do to educate them about our clients and the challenges of our clients, how systems and institutions affect them. So I'm really excited that when I run across other colleagues that are doing innovative things, that are doing innovative things with their students like the experiences that we've had together in working with students, bring students into communities and helping them see different cultural and ethnic groups that are living in our communities and neighborhoods or even the article that you shared with me from your colleagues about trauma informed policy. I mean these are all exciting, not only to implement innovative approaches but to also read and to hear about innovative approaches that our colleagues are working on that I can then try to apply in my own practice.

[00:24:43] Thank you. Piggybacking on that, given the kind of Grand Challenges that we face in the society today in the 21st century, what is your thinking around embracing the notion of creative thinking, disruptive thinking in the world of social work practice, either at the micro, mezzo or macro levels.

[00:25:06] I definitely think that's a challenge. I, You know, as an educator, have always looked to help students to think creatively, to think critically, and yes, to think innovatively and even disruptively. And Saul Alinsky, the great community organizer who many of us are familiar with him and his work, he was the great disruptor. And I think there's a time and place for disruption. I've seen it in many of the institutions that I work with. We worked very hard to keep the equilibrium within the institution, which means stabilizing the status quo and protecting the status quo. And I think we as social workers who are working within those institutions in those systems, I think we have an ethical obligation to be disruptors because none of us are involved in services and programs that are perfect. And we need

to be thinking in this innovative way to be able to make the changes necessary in our programs, our policies and our services, that are really going to address the needs specifically of the people that we work with at the individual level, the families that we work with, and the communities and the cities and neighborhoods that we all live in and work in and thrive in and all the way up to state, national and international level policies. There is enough room for all of us social workers to be involved at some level. And so I think I want to make sure in my professional life, I want more students to think innovatively and to think about disrupting. I don't want necessarily to have students that are just going to be learning how to be comfortable within the status quo. So that's not our history of our profession and I think we need to make sure that we hang on to that and pass that along to our students.

[00:26:52] Thank you again. Speaking of innovation, technology and innovation go hand in hand as you're well aware. As a social worker in the political arena and as a faculty member teaching social work students at the University in California, I was wondering if you could share any examples that come across in your mind of incorporating technology into social work practice either at the micro, mezzo or macro level? Any story would be really great.

[00:27:23] Well I think there are obviously a lot of opportunities and for social workers I think we are starting to, and I certainly am starting to learn how to incorporate these technologies that not only lead to my own practice but for my student's, and I think one area that I am starting to learn more about and to incorporate into my practice is how to use social media, not only to build my own professional brand as a social worker but also to be able to show people and to show the public what we do as social workers. And I think because one of the great things I think about being a social worker is that there are so many ways and avenues and venues and contexts where social workers work that we could really use the outreach potential of social media to really educate people about what we do as social workers. And so I'm starting to be more active on my social media accounts and as a social worker to document and to demonstrate to people what I as a social worker do, what I as an educator do, what I as a former elected official and public servant do in my community. One of my colleagues who's a councilman for a city next door said to me he was introducing me to a colleague of his at the community college and he said "Victor is so involved in so many things in his community." And I realized that he got it from all the social media postings that I've been putting on over the last few weeks and I'm making a distinction here between my personal life, which is, you know, separate, which I am working to maintain as a separate social media account versus my professional social media accounts. And so I'm exploring the ways in which I can further social work as a profession, further the work that we do, highlight the clients, the stories and the challenges that we have as social workers, the challenges that our clients have, the challenges that are out there in the community. There's a great potential there and I'm looking forward to seeing how that develops and grows over the next few months.

[00:29:33] Thank you. You mentioned about trauma informed care and social policy.

[00:29:37] Yes.

[00:29:37] And I wanted to ask you, as a social worker and an elected official, what effects of trauma do you see in your community? And how do you think policy that sort of incorporates Trauma Informed Care concepts and principles could possibly address and prevent trauma in the future.

[00:29:58] Right. Well I think that from what I know of Trauma Informed practice, I'm certainly not an expert in it, but what I get from it is that everyone has experienced trauma in their lives. And to some extent that trauma, if not addressed in a positive way, affects the way that we behave in a variety of different settings. And so, for example as an elected official it's a very common experience and understanding in local government that people will not engage in local government unless they're angry about something. And I can easily see though I don't have specific evidence of this but I could see that people who feel that they have been traumatized at any level can see that being repeated in the way that they are treated by their local governments, whether they're local government specifically meets their needs or doesn't meet their need or is not providing them with things that they believe that they are entitled to as a resident, as a taxpayer in this particular city or in any city, I believe that that people can respond in ways and the government does not respond to people in a Trauma Informed way. And I think that's one of the things that I've learned and it's not so much that governments have to address people's trauma, because there are a lot of institutions that can do that more directly, but government can certainly be more empowering to its constituents. Government can include people in the decision making process. Government can include, can encourage participation, give people choices, give people agency to be able to make decisions about what's happening in their community. And this came up very clear to me over the last year because we have a housing problem here in the state of California. A, We don't have enough housing. B, We don't have housing that's affordable to even people that are working because the rents and the properties are so expensive here. So one of the solutions to that is to build more housing. Well here in an urban area we can't build enough single family homes to meet the demand of housing here, so we're gonna have to build multilevel story buildings with apartment complexes and condos to be able to meet that need. Well people that live in single family homes don't necessarily want to live by a six or seven story building and they're concerned about the increased traffic and noise and problems that more having that kind of dense urban area can bring to your neighborhood and community. So I think people need to be included in those types of processes at the local level, but local government, they don't act out of encouraging participation. They will only act based on what they need to do to meet the letter of the law. So if the law says "well the only thing you have to do is send out notices to people within 500 feet of this potential project," people generally are not going to get that notice. They're going to see the notices from the city and they may throw it away, they may ignore it and even though we've done our due diligence by sending out these notices, that's much different than actually encouraging people to participate in the decision making process. So there's certainly a lot of room in government to be able to incorporate Trauma Informed process in reaching out to constituents and really making them part of the decision making process.

[00:33:20] Thank you Dr. Manalo. I want to go back to the discussion on innovation and social work practice. As a former mayor of Artesia, as a council member and given your extensive experience with policy practice as a social worker, could you share any examples of very interesting collaborations or policy ruminations at the city level county level that you've been a part of to describe what it means to have a component of innovation in macro social work practice?

[00:33:54] I guess speaking about empowering our constituents, for example, this is probably one of the first things that happened to me when I was first elected as a city council member in 2007. After the election, probably within six months the first year of my being elected, I thought to myself "Well, I should continue to knock on people's doors because I want people to know that I'm their council member and I want them to know that I'm open to listening to their concerns." And that was based again from my values as a

social worker, that if I'm going to be a social worker here on city council I want to make sure that people know that I am accessible and that they can let me know what their problems or their issues are. So I remembered knocking on the door of one woman. She was an elderly woman and she came to the door and I introduced myself as a council member and asked her if she had any concerns or anything in the community and she said "You know, I do have one concern. I use the bus for my transportation needs and the bus stop that I go to, I have a really hard time getting on and off the bus." and I kind of looked at her and I remember thinking to myself Huh, I couldn't picture it in my mind what the problem might be. So I took down her name and her phone number and as soon as we finished I went over to the bus stop that she was talking about and when I got to the bus stop I stood there at the curb and I realized that the bus stop was at a part of the street where the gutter was much deeper than the normal gutter because it was leading to the sewer. And so I imagined that because she was an older woman I imagined that she had to step down into the gutter and then try to step up onto the bus. I thought that's probably what's making it difficult for her to get on and off the bus. So I called at the time our city manager. City manager of our city is basically the executive director. They run the day to day operations of the city government. So I called our city manager and I said this is the situation going on at this bus stop. Is there anything that we can do about this? Her reply to me was "there's always something we can do about it." So then within a week the city had gone out there, assessed the situation, they did find yes, that that bus stop was placed at a location that would make it very difficult for people to get on and off the bus and that it was not in a safe location because the bus stop, when the bus would stop there part of the bus would be sticking out into a major intersection. So they moved the bus stop twenty feet to a new location. And when she said to me there's always something we can do about it, I realized as a social worker who's an elected official, I said basically what I'm doing here is providing service to people. I'm not doing it as a social worker, I'm not providing clinical therapeutic sessions to people, I'm not providing them with access to other kinds of services, but as a council member I'm providing them to other types of services that are provided by our local government. And so that's where I believe I was able to take my social work values and apply that knowledge and that practice to another situation where it was not usually used in that local government setting. And so I was able to bring that woman that service and so I was able to do that for many many people throughout my city, whether it was fixing a water leak that was coming up through the streets, water pipes that were broken or lanes that were not striped correctly or helping people to clean up trash in their alleyways, but also to engage people. We did a community cleanup one day where I was able to get our trash company bring out big trash bins and we got people together to go round and clean up trash in our city. So there's so many things that I was able to do to be able to think about how can I really engage people and get them to participate and get them to learn about what's going on in their city.

[00:37:43] Thank you so much for that example, Dr. Manalo, around how as a social worker you creatively applied social work skills to look at day to day city governance issues. Very quickly if I may ask, I know you work across disciplines, particularly with traders and business members in the city of Artesia to look at a collective solution to the city's issues and could you quickly share an example of that?

[00:38:13] Absolutely. I was elected in 2007 and as many people probably recall right after in the the end of 2007 beginning of 2008 we all suffered from the Great Recession, and that really affected our city in terms of a decrease in revenue because a lot of our revenue in our city is from sales tax. And during a recession people don't go out and shop, people don't go out to restaurants and spend money. So we were projecting a huge millions of dollars in lost revenue because of the recession. Well, city governments have to balance

their budget, and so halfway through the budget year we realized that we would not be able to balance our budget with that loss in revenue so we had to cut programs and we had to cut staff. We had to lay off staff. We had to incentivize staff to retire in order to make up that deficit. And I'm telling you that that was one of the most difficult things that I had to do as an elected official was to look a neighbor of mine in the eye and say "I'm sorry we have to cut this program because we couldn't afford to keep it going." So at that time I recognize that's what really drove me to see that I had to reach out to all the stakeholders in the city to try to find a solution to our economic issues and that involved reaching out to the business community because as I mentioned before we're very reliant on sales tax, which means if you want people to come to your city to spend a lot of money you have to bring in good businesses. You have to create an environment within your city where businesses want to locate, you want to make it easy for businesses to locate and you want to make sure that those businesses and those business owners are able to bring in their customers so that they can also profit in their own businesses. So I realize that helping business owners to be successful meant that a city could be successful that we could have the revenue to be able to then provide services to our constituents. And that was a big task. We made some improvements to our downtown area because of our work with the business community. We were able to secure more parking for the downtown businesses because that's one of the things that they had an issue with, that there was not enough parking for the people that were shopping in the downtown and even up until today the council is looking at being able to allow for investment into our city for investors to come in and to build new buildings, not just for business opportunities but also for service and professional uses but also for housing. And so we're looking at hopefully bringing in more investment to provide more opportunity for business and also provide more housing for the people who are continuing to come to want to live here in Southern California.

[00:40:56] Thank you again very much. So my final question to you is given your extensive experience with policy practice and macro social work in general, what implications do you think your work with innovative, creative and entrepreneurial approaches to social policy have for social work education, research and practice?

[00:41:19] Across these three areas, I think there are implications. For social work education, for example, I think one of the biggest things that my experience across the public and private sectors has taught me is that I really need to look at my own pedagogy to be able to look at how I am able to translate this knowledge and experience to my students and to be much more student oriented in my teaching and student oriented in terms of what learning outcomes should be for our students and the area of a practice and experience that I bring into the classroom is unique, but it's also just one piece of macro practice. I really am interested in looking at macro level curriculum and seeing how we are able to as educators provide students with the variety of opportunities that they have to engage in macro practice. Whether you engage in it primarily as a direct practitioner or all the way through to becoming a policy practitioner, that my argument is that there is so much between those two areas that social workers are engaged in and have the potential to be engaged in, that we should as educators we should be providing them with all those opportunities and choices. In terms of research, I think that the research I am starting to do now with this collaborative that I was telling you about is really about engaging people in more participatory methodologies, and getting people involved in evaluation. I think that's really important that in terms of giving people agency, I remember when I was a doctoral student going into communities and community members saying "we've had universities come in here all the time to do research. What do we get from it?" And it really to me was an indication of people wanting to have choice in the decision and to participate, not to have outside entities come in and look at them under a microscope and then leave. So I

think we really have to look at how do we involve and engage people in participating in research as well as in organizing and in development of programs and services that they will receive in their own communities. And lastly I think obviously with practice, I think my takeaway from my experience to this point is that again, I think I am beginning to get a handle on and to demonstrate the blending of micro and macro practice. When I first started teaching, my goal was to convert every single social work student into a macro practitioner and I realized that not only is that futile, but also does a disservice to our profession because as I mentioned before, there are so many opportunities in a creative, innovative profession like social work to be able to plot your own course, to be able to develop a unique brand for yourself as a professional social worker and to create that professional identity which involves both macro and micro level practice. And I think that's what we really should be working towards as educators and as practitioners in helping to define and develop the full social worker. Not the social worker who's micro or the social worker who's macro but the consummate social worker who incorporates all of the best of our history and our knowledge and our values into their practice.

[00:44:37] Thank you again for your valuable inputs. And one last little question if I may. So to all the MSW students and potential MSW students, what would you tell them to increase them to think about running for political office?

[00:44:53] Well I have been very grateful, I'm grateful for having had the opportunity of people over the years to give me their similar encouragement and motivation to run for office. And what I would say whenever I'm in a class eventually during the semester I ask how many of you have thought about running for office, and out of a class of 25 or 30 maybe one or two will raise their hands. You have to have the desire, obviously, so if any of you who are listening have thought about it then you can go further. The second piece is if you want to run for office decide where you want to run for office, what level you want to start. And I would suggest that you start at the local level because it's the easiest place to engage and to get involved. And if it's in your city, for example if you want to look at where you live, then the next thing I would do if you want to run for city council in the city where you live, the next thing I would do is make yourself known. Get involved in what's happening in your city. Join a Rotary Club or join one of those organizations that service organizations in your community. Get involved in your church or your mosque or your synagogue in the community. Engage with the Chamber of Commerce. You have to get to know people and people have to be able to see you as someone who is a professional and someone who wants to serve the community. Those are what people are looking for in terms of elected officials. So get out in the community, make yourself known, make a lot of people get to know you and then when you're ready to develop those contacts, do your networking and then when you're ready to run make sure you start well ahead of time and let people know and then contact me, because I'll give you the rest. That's even before you even start officially running for office. There's a lot of legwork that you have to do and a lot of work in your community to put yourself in the position to be a successful candidate. I think that would be it.

[00:46:38] Thank you again so much for your time Dr. Manalo. It's been a pleasure talking to you.

[00:46:42] Thank you so much. Pleasure was mine.

[00:46:45] You've been listening to Dr. Victor Manalo discuss social workers and politics on inSocialWork.

[00:46:59] Hi I'm Nancy Smyth, professor and Dean of the University at Buffalo School of Social Work. Thanks for listening to our podcast. We look forward to your continued support of the series. For more information about who we are as a school, our history, our online and on the ground degree and continuing education programs, we invite you to visit our website at www.socialwork.buffalo.edu. And while you're there check out our Technology and Social Work Resource Center. You'll find it under the Community Resources menu.