

The Honorable Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
U.S. Representative of California (1973–1979)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

"No Facilities for Women"

Representative Burke recalls Representative Bella Abzug using the men's pool.
Interview recorded July 22, 2015

The women had, as far as a—they had a gym, which was like a room, and they had a person who sat there, but there were no facilities for women. And, of course, I'm sure, Bella—you know about Bella—she insisted she had a right to swim in the men's gym. So, they'd clear it out in the morning. She had to come in the morning. They'd clear it out and let her go in and swim. And they always gave us the excuse that we couldn't go to the men's facilities because they walked around with no clothes on. And I said, "How can they all be walking around with no clothes?" But that's what the excuse. So, we were never allowed to utilize the facilities.