

**Rochelle Dornatt**  
Chief of Staff, Representative Sam Farr of California

## **Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress**

### **“Any Good Chief Knows Their District”**

Rochelle Dornatt discusses her leadership strategies as chief of staff.  
*Interview recorded January 18, 2017*

Well, any good chief, you know, knows their district. So I made sure that I got out to California as often as I could. And we had some very big issues to start with. We had the biggest military base in the continental U.S. shut down. Was—it was in our district. And that had huge economic ripples. So I made sure I, I would go out there often, at—when I first came to work for Mr. Farr, to get everything rolling for him, because this was a, a big issue. So BRAC became—you know, base closure—became one of his big issues. I, I tried to make sure that staff, whether they were in Washington or in the district, always had the power to speak for the Congressman, and, and I think that is something that actually creates good staff, because you give them a, a sense of responsibility, and, and they then are—if they, if it's a good fit, they feel obligated to act on that responsibility, and they do the right thing. It's only when you start questioning your staff that they start messing up, because then they don't know if they're doing what's right.