

The Honorable Elizabeth Holtzman
U.S. Representative of New York (1973–1981)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Encouraging Women to Run for Congress

Representative Holtzman encourages women to run for public office.
Interview recorded March 10, 2016

I mean, the fact that my record lasted for 42 years as the youngest woman elected to Congress is an, is an indictment of our campaign finance system. It's just that young women can't possibly raise the kind of money that's necessary to compete. So, that system has to change. However, I mean, I would encourage young women to run. And I know there's a very bad view that politics is dirty and it's corrupt, and what can you accomplish anyway? And my mom used to say to me, "Why do you want to be in politics? It's such a dirty business." I said, "Mom, you don't have to give up your principles. You don't have to be corrupt, and there's so much you can do." And I never realized that until I actually was in government how much you can do to help people, and what a difference you can make in people's lives in ways that you just would never imagine. And so it's such a great opportunity to do good. And we need people who want to do good. So that's—my advice would be, "Go for it if you can."