

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

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

**Gender as an Advantage**

Representative Holtzman highlights some advantages to being a woman running for Congress in 1972.  
*Interview recorded March 10, 2016*

But I would say gender, I think that, I think actually was helpful in that race. Why was it helpful? One, people remembered meeting me because how many women were campaigning on streets, I mean, for Congress? Nobody had ever met Congresswomen. I still meet today—this is, you know, more than 40 years later—people said, “Liz, don’t you remember meeting me at the Avenue M subway stop? Or, don’t you remember meeting me—I met you at the Avenue J subway stop.” So, that was a big deal for people. They remembered that. And, and I’m not sure as a man, I would have stood out. The second thing is that I was talking about a different kind of politics: honest politics, clean politics, anti-machine politics. And I think women weren’t associated with the backroom, cigar-smoking kind of politics that I was fighting. So, I think that was helpful. I also think that when it comes to a position like Congress—because I’ve served in and run for other positions—there’s not as much of a gender issue there because Congress, people don’t really 100 percent understand it, but they know it involves talking. They figure a woman could do that, too. So, I had a much harder time when I ran for DA, winning that job. But this was, this was much easier. And I think, I would say on the whole, gender was an advantage.