

The Honorable Nancy Lee Johnson
U.S. Representative of Connecticut (1983–2007)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Women Members in Leadership

Representative Johnson relays her thoughts on women as policy makers and the value of a collaborative approach.

Interview recorded December 3, 2015

They were very good Members, but they were seen as the women's representative in leadership. And that's not where the real power was. It was better than not having anyone in leadership. But, and there were women with real power. But it takes a certain kind of person to be in leadership and speak up, man or a woman. You don't see the men speaking up either, you know, outside of the top leader. And you don't see many women in the leadership's mini-circle, you know, of close friends. And I daresay if women were in leadership offices, they, they would have more of a mix, but because as a gross generalization, men are better at the strategy of politics and women are better at the policy and see society from a more—approach things in a more collaborative way and men get to say, "Well, this is what I want to do. And if you want to do this with me, fine, if you'd want to do this with me"—some of them are harder to get into a collaborative position and most legislation requires not only a number of provisions and the melding of ideas at the federal level.