

The Honorable Barbara Bailey Kennelly
U.S. Representative of Connecticut (1982–1999)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

The Intelligence Committee

Representative Kennelly describes becoming a member of the Intelligence Committee.
Interview recorded September 9, 2015

So I went to Tip and I said, "Tip, you know, Intelligence Committee addresses life and death, war and peace." And I said, "There's no woman up there." And he looked at me and he said, "Barbara, are you never satisfied?" I mean, he just couldn't believe it. And I said, "No, I think a woman should be up there." So, he didn't appoint me. And then when Jim Wright, I said the same thing. And he said, "Barbara, I think you've been an exemplary Congresswoman. Yes, I will appoint you." Danny Rostenkowski was furious. He said, "How would you do that? You're only supposed to be on one committee, on Ways and Means, it's Ways—when you're on Ways and Means." But you could get an exception for, for a select committee and he was not happy. He was not happy. I loved it. I just loved it. It was just great. I learned so much about the world.