

Gwendolyn Mink

Daughter of the Honorable Patsy Takemoto Mink of Hawaii

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

The 1975 Vote to Preserve Title IX

Gwendolyn Mink describes the accident that caused her mother to leave the floor before casting a vote on an amendment to an education appropriations bill in 1975.

Interview recorded March 14, 2016

She, you know, she was absolutely committed to making sure that a robust Title IX would be possible. But, just before the vote, or as the vote was beginning to transpire, just as, you know, as the—whoever was in the Speaker's Chair said the Clerk shall call the roll, my mother was pulled off the floor with an emergency phone call telling her that I had been in a terrible automobile accident in Ithaca, New York, where I was in graduate school. And so, she left without voting, encouraged by her colleagues, you know, "Go, go, go, you know, go take care of your daughter." So, she ran out of the Capitol and grabbed my father, and they caught a plane to Ithaca. And the result of that was that the people who wanted to veto the regulations, the robust regulations, won by one vote. And so, that was like the beginning of the end of the kind of scope of equality that Title IX eventually came to promise. And luckily, the kindness of Speaker Albert, the, I don't know, sort of pressures, perhaps, from other quarters in, in the House, invited the House of Representatives to cast a re-vote on the issue when my mother was able to leave the hospital and return to her duties in Washington, D.C. So, a re-vote was called. And after some people got up and said things like, "Oh, she's such a nice daughter," as their explanation for changing their vote, the good guys won on the second vote by like, I don't know, nine or 10, or a dozen votes.