

The Honorable Susan Molinari
U.S. Representative of New York (1990–1997)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

"How Do We Help?"

Representative Molinari recalls working across party lines in the Congresswomen's Caucus.
Interview recorded January 8, 2016

Well, we would meet in the Lindy Boggs Room, off Statuary Hall. It was a smaller group then, so we all fit. We would talk about some of those issues that—you know, an example is I remember there was an issue surrounding the efficacy of breast implants, and one of our female Members had breast cancer and was talking about reconstruction. And the FDA Commissioner at the time, we felt, was a bit cavalier and not understanding the discussion that was taking place, as opposed to just being purely cosmetic. And we all kind of rallied around this one Member to say, "Okay, how do we help? How do we expand this conversation?" When there were some disagreements over the Violence Against Women Act, you know, we would meet to say, "Okay, here's, here's how we're going to handle this, you know. We're going to move this through and we're going to try to do these things. You guys have to stand down and not call us right-wing extremists for a few days." We would have those sort of conversations that would allow us to actually acknowledge the difficulties, at any given time, of our political parties. And where we agreed to disagree, those conversations did not come up.