

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

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

A Woman's Perspective on Committee Work

Representative Molinari remembers debating Representative John Boehner of Ohio during a committee hearing.

Interview recorded January 8, 2016

I was on Education and Labor, and we were debating family and medical leave. And I was one of the proponents of it in the Republican Party. And I remember John Boehner at the time, who served on it, you know, was eloquently waxing on how government should not be telling businesses, you know, what to do. And that this was up to the, you know, the boards and the, you know, the chairmen of the boards, and, you know, they should be able to make their own policies. And "he," and "he," and "he" should be able to—and so he just, you know, went on, and I responded and I said, "I totally agree with you, that, you know, that in a perfect world, that the boards and the businesses should be able to make these own decisions, but just based on your own discussion, where you consistently referred to the people in power as "he," I think until then, we have to help out a bit." And the whole place went raucous! And good for Boehner because he did not get mad at me. He took it, he took it as, in the spirit in which it was intended. But, you know, that was one of those moments when you said, "I'm not sure anybody, and I'm not sure any other man on this dais is hearing what I'm hearing."