

The Honorable Helen Delich Bentley
U.S. Representative of Maryland (1985–1995)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Importance of Constituent Service

Representative Bentley recalls how her time as the Federal Maritime Commissioner (FMC) prepared her for being a Member of Congress and managing constituent service.

Interview recorded March 21, 2016

When I went into the FMC, I really had never managed anything. I'd been a key person on the *Sun* paper staff at that time, but you know that was me and I had two assistants. But all of that prepared me to run a respectable and honorable office. And I, I'm often—it's often quoted that my constituent service was second to none because I knew what the constituents were calling in about because I asked for every case at the end of every day, and I followed up on that—made sure my staff was following because in my opinion at that time—and I told my staff—the largest part of the constituency didn't really care about my votes over here. But they did care if I responded to a constituent's request. And that's what we had to pay attention to.