

**The Honorable Shelley Berkley**  
U.S. Representative of Nevada (1999–2013)

**Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress**

**Desire to Serve**

Representative Berkley reflects on her early ambitions to be in public service.  
*Interview recorded July 22, 2019*

I can't remember a time in my life that I wanted to do anything else but public service. It was—and that's for two reasons. One is in order to give something back to this country for having taken my family in. It gave us not only an opportunity to survive but an opportunity to thrive, and we certainly have done that. I also, having been very active in the Jewish youth groups and very active in the secular community as well when I was growing up in Las Vegas, not only did I want to give something back, but I wanted to be in a position that if, God forbid, anything happened like the Holocaust ever again, that I might be in a position to stop it or help stop it. And that's what motivated me to run for public office, a desire to serve and a desire to protect and defend.