

## **The Honorable Barbara Boxer**

**U.S. Representative of California (1983–1993) and U.S. Senator of California (1993–2017)**

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

#### **Few in Numbers**

The Honorable Barbara Boxer recalls an incident highlighting the prejudice she faced as one of the few women Members in the House during the 1980s.

*Interview recorded November 29, 2018*

But there were so few of us it was pathetic, and we suffered a lot of prejudice. I remember—and I write about it in my book—when I was on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, which no longer exists, I had a bill to protect the baby seals; they were being clubbed to death. And anyway, the good news is that bill passed, became law, but the bad news is during the debate, there was so much sexism. One colleague said, “I want to associate myself with the remarks of my colleague,” which is perfectly appropriate. And then he said, “Well, as a matter of fact, I want to associate with my colleague.” And the chairman chimed in and said, “Me too.” And I turned bright red, and the whole place laughed. It was so awful. And when it was over, I, I went to see the chairman—he was a Democratic chairman from the South—and I said, you know, “I can’t tell you how terrible it was for me, that moment, how embarrassing—” “Oh, we thought we were giving you a compliment.” And I think he was sincere. I mean, it was a time of great change, the early ’80s. And so they, we struck all that from the record because I said I just don’t want any of that in the record.