

The Honorable Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
U.S. Representative of California (1973–1979)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Role of the Women's Caucus

Representative Burke discusses the motivation behind creating a women's caucus in the House.
Interview recorded July 22, 2015

First of all, the creation of the Women's Caucus for the first time said to women of every ethnicity and every political party that there was a place for women in the process. And I can't remember the name, but there was a Republican woman from Connecticut who was older, which was very important. She had been, I think, a fashion model or something, or been involved in fashion in some way. She provided a, you know, example for older women to say, "There's a role for women." And she was a Republican. She was—and there were other women who were Republicans who were involved, and who provided an example, as well as some of us, who were kind of, you know, advocates and are considered people who were rabble-rousers a little bit, you know. Even if we weren't rabble-rousing, we were still, that's how people looked at us. We were feminists, but we brought together women who weren't necessarily feminists. And I think that it had an impact on bringing more women to the House and the Senate.