

The Honorable Beverly Barton Butcher Byron
U.S. Representative of Maryland (1979–1993)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

No Assigned Seats

Representative Byron describes the seating arrangement on the House Floor.
Interview recorded June 15, 2016

It's like the floor of the House. If you get on, if you go to the floor, and you're looking to talk to so-and-so, you know about where they're going to be sitting. The House does not have assigned seats. But I, I use the analogy of talking to, to groups on the floor of the House about how when you go to the movies, you usually tend to go down the certain aisle and sit around a certain area. When you go to church on Sunday, you tend to go into the same area. And, and that's true on the House Floor. If, if you're looking for certain person from a district or a legislative issue, you kind of know where they—if they're on the floor, where they're going to be seated because they always tend to sit there. And I, I, you know, I tended to sit with people that I was philosophically in agreement. And yet, I can remember one day we had major piece of legislation on the floor. And Rosty had come to my office to talk about the tax bill. And I said, "Well, basically I am not in favor of it as it currently is. But, I will look at it if it's close." And so, we were on the floor of the House, and they're having a debate. And I feel this great, big hand, paw come over on my shoulder. And this head nestle down in my shoulder. And the voice said, "I just don't have the votes. I just don't have the votes." And it was a very emotional time for him. But, in other words, "Do what you have to do. Don't, I don't need, I don't need to count on you."