

**Rochelle Dornatt**  
Chief of Staff, Representative Sam Farr of California

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

### **Americans with Disabilities Act**

Rochelle Dornatt recalls her role in crafting the Americans with Disabilities Act.  
*Interview recorded January 18, 2017*

When I was in the Whip Office, I was given the task of being the lead staffer on that. I wasn't the only staffer, but I was the lead staffer, and it meant having to juggle a lot of different issues, because you, you not only had the business community that was opposed to this bill, because they thought it was going to cost them money, you had disability activists who wanted probably more than we could deliver, and then you had Members who had jurisdiction over the different parts of this bill who wanted to make a, a play of their own. They wanted to be known for doing something on civil rights for persons with disabilities. So you were dealing with, with all sorts of, of politics, and trying, trying to negotiate—and then you had the White House. And the White House was—George Bush was there at the time, so you had a Republican White House. So you had all these different politics going on, and, and, and different demands. So, so part of my, my job was to try to corral all that and find agreement, so that we could actually get this bill done.