

The Honorable Donna F. Edwards
U.S. Representative of Maryland (2008–2017)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

“Arc of History”

Representative Edwards reflects on the historic nature of health care legislation in the House.
Interview recorded June 29, 2018

The presiding officers are chosen by the Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi at the time, and she, she chose four Members to preside, and I was shocked that I was one of them. And I was a freshman and a black woman and that was something special. And also presiding with John Dingell. I remember this one moment and John Dingell came to the floor and I was presiding in the chair and there was John Dingell speaking about the Affordable Care Act and describing how he had introduced health care legislation when he first came into the Congress and that his father had introduced it before him and that there he was standing there to, you know, usher in the passage of the Affordable Care Act. And I remember, you know, being in the, in the chair at the time, and I was standing and listening. I was listening to him and it was the, one of the most powerful moments that I've ever experienced because it was the arc of history right there in the House Chamber. And I have a gavel. I use the gavel that I was, that I was presented with. I had gaveled in the Affordable Care Act, but it's also the gavel that was used to close it out when it came back.