

The Honorable Elizabeth Furse
U.S. Representative of Oregon (1993–1999)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

“Learn to Listen”

Representative Furse offers advice to people considering running for public office.
Interview recorded June 8, 2017

Well it's the sort of advice that I now give to young, younger people who might be interested. The first thing is be totally straightforward. Don't fudge what you might or might not be, let people know exactly who you are. The second one is, and this sounds a little sweet, but the second one is never lie. If you lie, you're going to get caught, people will think that, and I didn't want to lie anyway. And, the third thing that I think I learned very much was to learn to listen because this is a very diverse district, and I was a liberal Democrat with “a funny accent,” as somebody once said—and I had to listen, to hear what people whose lives were very different from mine. We have fishers, we have farmers, we have timber, we have high tech, we have business, we have all that in this district and I had to learn to do that, and that's what I say to people who are running; listen. Don't tell them always what you, you are about, let's hear what they are about. And I think that's what one should do in life anyway.