

Kathy Gille

Executive Floor Assistant, Representative David Bonior of Michigan

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

The Whip Operation

Kathy Gille describes the steps involved in a successful Whip operation.

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I supervised a staff of people who worked on the floor and including people who, staff people who reached out to the regional Whips at the staff level to—the first thing you do is send out a question and ask whether you're going to support the—describe the bill and ask whether they're going to support the bill. There is a certain kind of messaging even that goes on in that. I always supervised everything related to communications, national policy, and the floor operations for David, so I would be involved in helping them craft that question that went out. Other staff people would send it out. They would compile this spreadsheet that tells where the votes are. I mean, I, I would keep track of where Members were. I would often have an instinct about who could talk to who, but some of this, especially on a big vote like that, when you've got the President on the phone in the, in the cloakroom, a lot of the persuasion is happening at a higher level. But messaging is always really important. And one of the things that I developed is that every time we took a big bill to the floor, we had a, a flyer that would be basically your bumper sticker message about what this bill is about. And it might be even on individual votes we would have that. So people always had a very clear, simple, succinct phrasing of what we thought was the most powerful way to describe this bill and I usually supervised that as well.