

The Honorable Melissa A. Hart
U.S. Representative of Pennsylvania (2001–2007)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

“Watching the Television” on September 11th

Representative Hart shares her experience at the Capitol on September 11, 2001.

Interview recorded September 30, 2019

The Hill had not yet been evacuated. Trying to remember what—it was before 10. So we—I don’t know, I wasn’t in my office very long. I was trying to account for my staff who were just—some of them weren’t even there yet. And make sure everyone was where they needed to be because we knew, of course, what was going on. And the Capitol Police shortly thereafter evacuated the Hill and so they came to the office. And of course, by then the Pentagon had been struck and, you know, if you live in Virginia you know that getting from Capitol Hill to Virginia, you couldn’t go that day. That wasn’t happening. The Pentagon was on fire, bridge was closed. My staff came to my apartment, which was approximately this big, and I’m not kidding. Shoebox. Above a one car garage in one of the little townhomes—behind, one of the little townhomes behind the Library of Congress. You know those little old, very old—so it was a carriage house, I guess, that I lived in, above. And there was enough room for all of them to line up and sit on the daybed watching the television. And that’s what we did for the rest of the day pretty much.