

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

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

**Working on Ways and Means**

Representative Hart provides a behind-the-scenes description of her time on the Ways and Means Committee.

*Interview recorded September 30, 2019*

I think most of the general public isn't aware that Ways and Means is an "A" committee you if you have Ways and Means you only have one committee. And the reason is because Ways and Means touches basically every aspect of the government. And, and so you have to know a lot and you have to spend a lot of time and the subcommittees are really busy and there's just so much to do. But like I said, I was really, because of the—my background and experience and interests from, of course, home—being interested in trade issues even though agreements were all voted on on the other side of the Capitol. We had input and had a lot to do. But the taxation balance, entitlements, a lot of the health care issues that became—they came to the forefront really while I was in the state but they percolated quite a bit while I was a Member here—they also touched us. You know, when, when you're dealing with entitlements, whether it's cash or whether it's health care or any other kind of assistance, you know, you're in Ways and Means. So I think, I think the, I think the way to get on a committee—I don't think it's just Ways and Means—I think is to, is to show that you will be a good Member. And how do you do that? I think it was because I did go down to the floor when I could, I did stay on top of their issues, I did talk to the chairman. I mean ongoing, not just once, you know. I was in his face. He probably got annoyed with me after a while. But, you know, if you have an enthusiastic member of your committee I think as a chairman it's something that you want.