

**The Honorable Elizabeth Holtzman**  
**U.S. Representative of New York (1973–1981)**

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

**Congressional Delegation to Cambodia**

Representative Holtzman recalls making a humanitarian visit to Cambodia with other women Members.  
*Interview recorded March 10, 2016*

It wasn't formally a caucus issue, we took a trip as Congresswomen to Cambodia. A humanitarian, we took a humanitarian mission to Cambodia because there were refugees on the south, and tens of thousands of refugees on the border that were not being fed. And, you know, so the children with matchstick bodies, and it was really horrible. And we thought—I thought and some other Congresswomen thought—that if we went as a women's mission, just humanitarian, that maybe we could appeal to the Cambodian government to allow food to come in and to allow the refugees to be fed. And it worked amazingly. I don't think all the Congresswomen went, but a lot—it was a bipartisan group. And we met with the then-foreign minister of Cambodia, who was about 19. And he said, "What do you want?" And we said, "We want food to come into the country." That was, like, his first question, "What do you want?" We explained it to him. And he said, "Oh, no problem." And then people started to talk to him, and some of, and some of us were kicking other people under the table about what we'd gotten our—we've gotten our answer. We'd gotten what we want. We want to get out of here. But that was a very important mission. And we invited women from other countries to join with us. And actually, two women from Australia from two different parties joined with us on this mission. So, that was another thing that was accomplished. So we did things domestically, and we did things abroad. We were successful, and it created a very good, strong foundation for the future.