

The Honorable Jill Lynette Long Thompson
U.S. Representative of Indiana (1989–1995)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Uphill Battle for Women Members

Representative Long Thompson explains the extra scrutiny and pressure women Members faced to prove their worth in Congress.

Interview recorded June 15, 2017

They did comment on how we looked, how we dressed, but here is something else that I discovered, and this is more serious. They would cover us in a more critical way in terms of our work, than they would a, a white man. And, for example, I had to prove to—and I know this story would have been planted by the other party—you know, “What is she accomplishing? Yes, she’s in Congress but what has she accomplished in her two terms?” And then you’d have to provide the list of everything that you had accomplished. And, and, I had a predecessor that really had, had nothing to speak of to his name and you’d never see a story like that. And, so yes, they commented on how we looked, what our personalities were like, and, but then substantively, you had to constantly prove that you were getting things done.