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Special Exhibit: Women in Congress

Support from Speaker O'Neill

Muftiah McCartin shares a personal memory of Speaker Tip O'Neill of Massachusetts, who refused her resignation.

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I mean, I can't say enough about Tip O'Neill. I—you know, because I wouldn't be sitting here today without him. Without all of his support and—I think I told you that—you know, that story. So, when—you know, when I got pregnant, you know, the tide had been turning clearly, this wasn't like—you know, I wasn't going to get fired from my job or anything. But the tide hadn't turned so much that I didn't feel like I shouldn't go in and resign, and—or offer to resign. And I mentioned that to Bill Brown, and I said, I—you know, and then of course, Bill was always so supportive of me. And he—but he—you know, Bill was, you know, sort of older-school. He said, "Yeah, that's probably—you know, because you're—" You know, we shared an office with the Speaker. I'm sitting at the front desk. You know, I'm—you know, as people are coming in, I'm greeting them, you know, for the Speaker. He said, "Yes, you know, you probably should." And so, that was really quite an amazing experience, because of course, he would hear none of it. You know, there—absolutely none of it, and offered 100 percent support. And I think that that may have been sort of one of the reasons, like, when he saw me kind of struggling and going back to school, and trying to get out of being, you know, in an administrative position for the rest of my life, I think that—you know, I think he really took, like, a personal—really personal interest in me. And he—you know, and, and it's so funny because, you know, we talk about this, because he would always—you know, he would call people "doll," and "darling," and "beautiful lady," and this and that. You know, which maybe today might seem a little sexist, but at the time, that's just what it was. But, you know, I think if you interviewed any of the women who worked for him over the years, that they would say the same thing. You know, how incredibly supportive he was in ensuring that, that everybody could grow professionally, women and men.