

## **Linda Melconian**

**Assistant Counsel and Legislative Assistant, Speaker Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill, Jr., of Massachusetts**

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

#### **Women Staff Members in the 1970s**

Linda Melconian explains the lack of opportunities and pay disparities facing women staff in the 1970s.  
*Interview recorded June 7, 2018*

We were paid—female legislative assistants were paid, probably, \$10 to \$15,000 less than their male counterparts for doing the same amount of work. And administrative assistants, which today would be called chiefs of staff, were paid maybe, maybe \$20,000 less—if there were any. There were a few, maybe, legislative assistants, and as, as the '70s rolled on, there became some women who were administrative assistants. You had fewer positions in offices, in the House offices then, and the congressional offices, than you do today. Today, you have the legislative director, the overall director. Then you have the legislative assistant, you have the legislative correspondent, you have the chief of staff, you have a communications or press person, and you may have an outreach person. So it's, it's very different today—but you had smaller staffs then and with more responsibilities. And the two professional positions were the legislative assistant and the administrative assistant, in my day, and very, very few women were in those positions.