

The Honorable Sue Myrick
U.S. Representative of North Carolina (1995–2013)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

"Nobody Wants to Work Together"

Representative Myrick discusses the changing sense of bipartisanship in modern politics.
Interview recorded March 14, 2016

We had a group of women who had met for quite a long time, informally for dinner, no politics, just get together and laugh and have a glass of wine, have a good time, you know, Democrats, Republicans, always. And it started to kind of die out. And so, right before I left, I went to one of my Democrat friends who had been involved and I said, "Let's get people together again, before the end of the session." She said, "Great idea." I said, "Well, I'll get nine and you get nine," knowing we wouldn't have that many, but we'd have a decent group. So, a week before, I hadn't heard anything from her and I, I said, I went over to her and said to her, "How many people do you have?" And she said, "It's just me." She said, "It's so divisive right now that nobody wants to do this." And that, all that did was solidify, for me, I made the right decision to leave, but it made me very, very sad because I always tried to work behind the scenes. I'm, I wasn't an out-front person, but working behind the scenes and, and talking to people and, and pulling people together to get something done and, and make a bill move because you could get enough people on both sides of the aisle, that's what doesn't happen anymore. And, I mean, I hear that at home all the time, you know? "Nobody wants to work together." And it's kind of like it's based on power because whoever has the power wants to keep it, and whoever doesn't have it wants to get it. And so, instead of being, working together so you could make the country move forward, you've got this standoff, which has been for quite a few years now. And, consequently, that's why you see the anger you do out there today. People are saying, "Nobody gets anything done, you know?" Well, it's very obvious why. And it's not the, I mean, politics has always been about compromise. People hate that word, but it's been about compromise.