

The Honorable Elizabeth J. Patterson
U.S. Representative of South Carolina (1987–1993)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

“So, I Just Decided to Run”

Representative Patterson explains how she decided to run for Congress in 1986.
Interview recorded April 3, 2017

Well, first of all, it was an open seat. And open seats make it easier. And it was that same old thing, federal government telling the states and local governments what they've got to do and then not giving us money. So when I saw it was an open seat, and I saw that nobody really was coming forth to run, I said, "You know, I bet I can do this." So, I just decided to run. Matter of fact, we were up here at something, I can't remember what, we were in Washington for something, and I decided to run. I went home and announced first to my husband. He says I never tell him things until later. But I decided to run, and as it worked out, I ran without opposition in the Democratic primary. And that helps.