

**The Honorable Claudine Schneider**  
U.S. Representative of Rhode Island (1981–1991)

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

**Unsuccessful Committee Bid**

Representative Schneider describes her attempt to get on the Energy and Commerce Committee.  
*Interview recorded January 20, 2015*

I wanted to be on the Energy and Commerce Committee because I knew that I wanted to focus on energy. The reason being is that energy is the foundation of every economy. If you go to the developing world, and you see women trying to earn a living sewing, working a sewing machine, they need electricity. You need power to run industry. And so, I thought, "Well, I foresee that there is a different energy future that fossil fuels are not going to be around forever. They're a limited resource." So, even then, I was aware that that's where I wanted to be, at the center of action on energy. When I said I wanted to be on that committee I was told, "Oh, no, no, no. That's a really important committee." So, you know, "You're from Rhode Island, and the way the system works is that if you have a delegation—a large delegation—to support you and advocate for you, it's easier to get appointed to a key committee." So, Energy and Commerce was considered a primary committee, Science, Research and Technology a secondary committee. So, I thought, "Well, okay, you know, I like science and research, and that's fine." So, I figured I would maximize my agenda in that committee in whatever way I could. But, sure, I was disappointed, but, you know, pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and move on.