

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

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

**Unique Responsibility**

Representative Schneider remembers balancing her personal values with her party's policy positions.  
*Interview recorded January 20, 2015*

I knew that it was unique for me to be elected as a woman. And I remember sometimes the Republican Leadership saying, you know, "You have—we really need you for the party." And if it was contrary to women's interests, then I was introspective, thinking, you know, "First I'm a woman. And I'm going to advocate what is in the best interest of a woman. And you know what else? I am an environmentalist before I am a Republican. So, I'm going to advocate what's good for the health of the individual, the health of the planet, because they are inextricably intertwined." And it was real clear to me that, yes, I had an extra responsibility as a woman in a position of power to help all women. And so, I take that responsibility very seriously.