

**Allyson Y. Schwartz**  
U.S. Representative of Pennsylvania (2005–2015)

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

### **Unique Background**

Representative Schwartz explains how her unique background in social services and health care made it difficult for others to classify her political qualifications.

*Interview recorded April 12, 2017*

I will say that the political writers didn't know what to make of me. They didn't have a category to put me in. I was seen as very much an outsider, and not given a lot of credit for the work I did. We can talk more about it because I also think that human services and health care are not seen as important as someone who worked on jobs. Or, actually, there are a lot of health care jobs, but, you know, it's sort of interesting. That was not seen as important, as hard. You know, it's like, "I don't know, childcare, how hard can that be?" Actually, it's really hard. You know, anyone who's done that, it's hard. How do you handle juvenile delinquency? How do you handle child abuse? These were hard issues. And, but social services, human services, were not seen as—and I think, to this day, are not given the kind of credit they deserve. And, again, the work I did on health care—how does that fit in? It was pretty cutting edge.