

**The Honorable Sue W. Kelly**  
U.S. Representative of New York (1995–2007)

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

**“It was a Horrible Feeling”**

Representative Kelly shares her memories of returning to New York City after the attacks on September 11, 2001.

*Interview recorded June 23, 2016*

I tried to get home, and when I got up as far as Newark, New Jersey. The roads into, through New York were all closed, but I could see how bad it was with the towers. And that's when the real work began because I, not only did I lose friends but there were—it was going to require an enormous input of federal funding to try to put New York City back together. And so that was interesting too, because about two weeks into it, I got a call from Hal Rogers' staff. Hal was the chairman of the Appropriations Committee for the Transportation. And I was on that Transportation Committee. So, Hal decided he, we, we would go into New York and go down in the subway system under the burning towers as far as we could go to examine the situation and see how much damage there was and what, what, kind of try to figure out what was going on. That trip in—we went in by—I went in—you could only get in to a certain—New York City—up to a certain point. After that you had to go down by boat. We went down on a, on a Coast Guard tug, and they dropped us off at the World Yacht Center. We walked up through ashes that were shin-high, and I kept, as I walked, I kept thinking, “These could be my friends that are down here I'm walking around on.” It was a horrible feeling. And the smell of the burning building, the sound of the building itself—the building was groaning, groaning as things would settle and move, you could hear these screeches and screams and groans coming out of the pit.