

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

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Different Styles of Legislating

Representative Kelly observes the different approaches of men and women Members of Congress.
Interview recorded June 23, 2016

I can tell you that I believe that Congresswomen are essential to the furthering of legislation on Capitol Hill. I believe that Congresswomen—I, I know for a fact that if you're talking legislation, that women leave their ego at the door. I know this because I've seen it happen. It's not about ego; it's about getting it right. Women do that. They have that capacity. Most women seem to have that capacity, at any rate, and the ones I worked with seemed to do that. It wasn't about furthering themselves; it was about getting it done, getting it done right. And I think that women push. They will push the men sometimes, while other men will not, will not push maybe as hard. And the reason for that is that women have no—they have—most of the time—even with Nancy Pelosi, as, as the House Speaker, Nancy was respected and treated with deference as the Speaker. But when I was in Congress, it was men. And the men were treated with great deference, especially by the other men. The women, had no, they had nothing, nothing to lose by challenging leadership, nothing at all to lose by challenging the leadership and saying, "We think this should be done. Let's get it done." Or, "We think this is wrong. Let's don't do it." There were—I've, I've, I've watched women manipulate the situation in a way where they just got stuff done.