

**The Honorable Linda Smith**  
U.S. Representative of Washington (1995–1999)

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

**Spontaneous Candidacy**

Representative Smith recalls the spontaneous nature of her 1994 write-in campaign for Congress.  
*Interview recorded September 18, 2019*

Well, when I came back we were driving into town and I saw a sheet on the top of a building up on the freeway and it said, "Write-in Linda Smith." It had spontaneously started. People were starting to make their own signs, put them in their cars, in their yards, and on the roofs. And the first thing I thought was, "Who's that?" I really could not think of it being me. Got back and found out that a small group of people had taken their postage machines, their copy machines, and they made a simple mailing that folded into quarters or thirds and taped it and they'd over the weekend they had all been spending 30-some-thousand-piece mailing, they had been spending that, the top voters. Now, who had the vote on this were both Democrats and Republicans. They had to write, "Linda Smith Republican for Congress" and many of these old Democrats just couldn't do it. But they could because they saw my husband and I, who was a blue-collar engineer on the railroad, they saw us more like them. And I think at that point when they saw us more like them than our party we started getting people that moved over on their various beliefs and versus partisanship.