

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

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

**Lessons Learned**

Representative Smith reveals some of the lessons she learned from her service in the Washington state legislature.

*Interview recorded September 18, 2019*

So, I was first in the minority, so understanding what it is to work from the minority, you end up working really smart. If you're going to accomplish anything you've got to do two things. You're going to watch for opportunity and you're going to build coalitions. You're going to build friendships, you're going to watch those friendships, and you're going to back your friends. So, figuring that out really quick was important to me. Making sure that I understood how much power I had and when I used it. I was called "the woman that didn't blink" by the Republican Leadership. You've probably seen that.