

Linda Steele

Deputy Chief of Staff, Representative Bob Michel of Illinois

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

The Importance of Seniority

Linda Steele describes her work on the Committee on Committees.

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I devised my own record-keeping systems. And, and you discover things along the way, like, you know, minor things can affect seniority. So, I had to keep track of every Republican Member's seniority. It's not like you were first elected to the 100th Congress together. Somebody might have come in two or three days early, when a prior Member resigned, just so that his successor could get—because it becomes important in many instances, not the least of which is room selection, when it comes time for Members to select their office suites. You know, you've got two Members, and they want the same suite, the one that has the more seniority gets it. That's when party affiliation means nothing. So, and on, on, likewise on committee assignments, if you got people come, being appointed to the same committee at the same time, it, it has to be done by—their replacement on the hierarchy within the committee has to be by seniority, and it has to be correct. And I mean, sometimes it was—I know I had to talk to the Parliamentarian a couple times. I said, "How am I going to resolve this one?" Because it was like really—well, I don't know, maybe a less than 24-hour period kind of thing, you know.