

## womenwinning's 31st Annual Luncheon Address

Former United States Senator Olympia Snowe†

Thank you very much, Senator Klobuchar, for that exceptional introduction, and thank you all for that warm welcome.

I want to express how incredibly fortunate you are to have Senator Amy Klobuchar as your United States Senator. I first met Amy in 2007, when, as I mention in my book, I was privileged to become her mentor under the system of mentorships that exists for incoming Senators. Although, I'll let you in on a little secret that probably won't surprise you. She was already well-prepared to hit the ground running, and did she ever!

As I don't have to tell you, Amy is truly a woman of many "firsts"—not the least of which is the first woman to have been elected to the United States Senate from Minnesota.<sup>1</sup> And I have a feeling we haven't seen the last of her "firsts," either.

Throughout the entire six years we served together, I witnessed firsthand Amy's "can do" tenaciousness and how she works across the political aisle to get things done. Because, as you well know, much like your organization that lent enormous support to her candidacy, Amy isn't about labels, she's about results. She's about Minnesota. She's about doing what's right for the right reasons and in the right way, and you should be immensely proud of Senator Amy Klobuchar.

Indeed, Minnesotans' keen judgment was on abundant display last year when you rewarded Amy for her dedication to the best interests of our nation over the best interests of politics—by re-electing her by an overwhelming margin and deservedly so.<sup>2</sup>

---

†. Former U.S. Senator, Maine. Senior Fellow, Bipartisan Policy Center. Address given at the Annual womenwinning Luncheon in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on June 4, 2013.

1. *About Amy*, U.S. SENATOR AMY KLOBUCHAR: WORKING FOR THE PEOPLE OF MINNESOTA, <http://www.klobuchar.senate.gov/public/about-amy> (last visited Nov. 15, 2013, 3:16 PM).

2. See Alex Friedrich et al., *Klobuchar Easily Wins Second Term*, MPRNEWS (Nov. 6, 2012), <http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2012/11/06/politics/senate-klobuchar-bills>.

While so much of Washington is serially detached from reality, Amy is connected with your world. That's why she tackles the big issues, whether it's bolstering our long-term economic growth,<sup>3</sup> or creating jobs,<sup>4</sup> or protecting America's consumers.<sup>5</sup> It's why Amy collaborates with others regardless of party when circumstances demand it—as when she and I sponsored legislation to track harmful greenhouse gas emissions,<sup>6</sup> or a measure to prevent carbon monoxide deaths,<sup>7</sup> or a bill to help our returning veterans turn their skills into good paying jobs.

As one editorial stated last fall, “[o]ur nation’s capital is broken, and needs bipartisan lawmakers to fix it. [Amy] Klobuchar fits that bill.”<sup>8</sup> And if all of that’s not enough for you, among Amy’s myriad achievements, she is raising a wonderful and impressive young woman, her daughter, Abigail!

So I couldn’t be more pleased to be here with Amy, and with all of you here in the beautiful twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. To your impressive, and not to mention expansive, group of candidates here—congratulations on your willingness to get involved, and I wish you all every success. And allow me to recognize your former Secretary of State, Joan Grove, once again for her well-earned lifetime achievement award.<sup>9</sup>

3. See *News Releases: Klobuchar Statement on Minnesota Job Gains*, U.S. SENATOR AMY KLOBUCHAR: WORKING FOR THE PEOPLE OF MINNESOTA, <http://www.klobuchar.senate.gov/public/news-releases?ID=4972329c-f92c-45a9-a99e-dfa08c3c8f52> (last visited Nov. 15, 2013, 3:28 PM) (outlining Klobuchar’s work on creating jobs for Minnesotans and the state’s economic gains).

4. See *id.*

5. See, e.g., Site Editor, *Klobuchar, Lee to Hold Hearing Examining Efforts to Fight Price-Fixing Cartels*, HOMETOWNSOURCE.COM (Nov. 13, 2013, 3:21 PM), <http://hometownsource.com/2013/11/13/klobuchar-lee-hold-hearing-examining-efforts-fight-price-fixing-cartels/> (describing Senator Klobuchar’s efforts to question members of the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation on “how effective government and private enforcement efforts have been to combat price fixing, as well as the impact on consumers and the economy”).

6. 153 CONG. REC. 15,768 (2007).

7. See Site Editor, *Klobuchar’s Bipartisan Provision to Prevent Drug Shortages Headed to President’s Desk*, HOMETOWNSOURCE.COM (June 27, 2012), <http://hometownsource.com/2012/06/27/klobuchars-bipartisan-provisions-to-prevent-drug-shortages-headed-to-presidents-desk/> (“U.S. Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Olympia J. Snowe (R-ME) . . . introduced legislation to help prevent carbon monoxide-related deaths.”).

8. See *Endorsements: Klobuchar Deserves Second Term*, U.S. SENATOR AMY KLOBUCHAR: WORKING FOR THE PEOPLE OF MINNESOTA (October 31, 2012), <http://www.amyklobuchar.com/endorsements/klobuchar-deserves-second-term> (publishing an excerpt from a St. Cloud Times article).

9. See MNwomenwinning, *Joan Grove Tribute Video*, YouTube (June. 5, 2013), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMZDuFLorqY>.

I am enormously gratified to speak today to this stellar organization that is both multi-partisan and pro-choice.<sup>10</sup> You're my kind of group! And apparently that is true for a tremendous number of Minnesotans considering today's remarkable turnout!

I understand many of you were actually participants at the founding thirty-one years ago—nearly as long as I was in Congress.<sup>11</sup> And I want to applaud you for the crucial work you've done—as women and as men—to promote and elect women from all parties and at all levels of government. Now, if we could just bottle your philosophy that “we are stronger together” and ship it off to Washington—and frankly elect more people like Amy Klobuchar, we'd really be onto something, don't you think?

The reality is, there are countless women who are interested in serving in public office,<sup>12</sup> and they would make incalculable contributions on the local, state, and national levels. And let me say this—many of them are Republican and they are also pro-choice,<sup>13</sup> and, maybe I'm just biased, but the two are most definitely not mutually exclusive.

And you have a tangible track record of making a very real difference with your commitment not only to recruit candidates, but to then working hand-in-glove with them every step of the way. You don't endorse nearly 100 pro-choice women in the last election and have seventy percent of them win by accident—and your formula is one I encourage you to pursue relentlessly and, please, keep up the phenomenal work!

The fact is, there will continue to be hardships and obstacles for women on the path to public service—which is why all of you are so crucial.

But in my experience, there are many more good times than bad—and the ability to improve people's lives is worth every

10. See *About Us*, MNWOMENWINNING, [http://www.womenwinning.org/about\\_us](http://www.womenwinning.org/about_us) (last visited Nov. 15, 2013) (“womenwinning is the only non-partisan, pro-choice women's organization with both a State and Federal Political Action Committee (PAC) in the state of MN.”).

11. *Id.* (“womenwinning was established in 1982 by [twenty-five] non-partisan pro-choice women who wanted to increase the number of women in public office.”).

12. *Contra* Kay Steiger, *There Aren't Enough Women Even Considering Running for Public Office*, THE ATLANTIC (Mar. 29, 2013, 8:10 AM), <http://www.theatlantic.com/sexes/archive/2013/03/there-arent-enough-women-even-considering-running-for-public-office/274462/> (reporting that young women lag behind males in “the likelihood to think about running for office someday”).

13. See, e.g., Katie McDonough, *Yes, Pro-Choice Republicans Are Real!*, SALON (Aug. 12, 2013, 9:08 AM), [http://www.salon.com/2013/08/12/yes\\_pro\\_choice\\_republicans\\_are\\_real/](http://www.salon.com/2013/08/12/yes_pro_choice_republicans_are_real/) (describing Kathy Hawken's (R-Fargo) commitment to women's reproductive rights despite North Dakota's traditional anti-choice representatives).

moment. And to echo the incredibly apt theme for this conference, I have witnessed throughout my nearly forty years in elected office how it does take all of us not only to make history, but to change history, and to ensure that, when it comes to those chapters in which women were not treated equitably, that history is not repeated.

My own journey began when I first ran for office in my mid-twenties. My first husband was serving in the Maine House of Representatives, but was killed in a car accident on his way back from a session of the legislature—and at twenty-six years old I was left to build a life for myself.<sup>14</sup>

In the following weeks, friends and political leaders began urging me to run in the special election for my husband's seat. And while I hadn't exactly been considering undertaking an election in the midst of all the emotional turmoil, I realized I had arrived at a crossroads—where I could either withdraw from the world, or determine how to make a positive out of a terrible negative.

I had the virtue of having earned a political science degree, combined with a strong passion for serving others that had developed out of my own earlier experiences and hardships, having lost both of my parents by the time I was nine years old.<sup>15</sup> Also, even at that time, the Maine legislature had a somewhat higher percentage of women compared to other state legislatures and certainly the Congress—yet another example of the urgency of ensuring we elect more women to state legislatures today.

And I was an inheritor of the legacy of Maine's own trailblazing Margaret Chase Smith, who was also a woman of many firsts—including the first woman elected to both the U.S. House and Senate, and the first to be submitted for nomination for President by either of the two major parties.<sup>16</sup>

But she was best remembered for the moment in only her second year in the Senate when, with courage and principled

---

14. See Lindsay Tice, *Olympia Snowe Named Auburn Citizen of the Year*, LEWISTON-AUBURN SUN J. (Apr. 26, 2013, 8:00 PM), <http://www.sunjournal.com/news/lewiston-auburn/2013/04/26/olympia-snowe-named-auburn-citizen-year/1354601> (“[Snowe] began her public service career in 1973 when she took over her late-husband’s seat in the Maine House of Representatives.”).

15. *After Leaving Senate, Snowe Is Still Fighting for ‘Common Ground.’* NPR (May 13, 2013, 2:59 AM), <http://www.npr.org/2013/05/13/182640887/after-leaving-senate-snowe-is-still-fighting-for-common-ground> (“[W]hen she was [eight], [Snowe] lost her mother, and a year later, her father died of a heart attack.”).

16. NICHOLA D. GUTOLD, *PAVING THE WAY FOR MADAM PRESIDENT* 37 (2006).

independence, she telegraphed the truth about McCarthyism in the 1950s with her renowned “Declaration of Conscience” speech on the Senate floor.<sup>17</sup> In fifteen minutes, she had done what ninety-four of her colleagues—male colleagues, I might add—had not dared to do, and in so doing, slayed a giant of demagoguery—prompting American financier Bernard Baruch to say that, “[i]f a man had made [that] speech, he would have been the next President of the United States.”<sup>18</sup>

So, ultimately, I decided to run—even as the result was by no means a foregone conclusion. In fact, one man stood up after I addressed the Republican City Committee to make the case why I should be nominated, and he asked if I was “up to it,” given the circumstances. Well, I didn’t like the inference. I don’t think it was a comment made out of loving care, let’s put it that way. So I replied that I was well aware what I was getting into. And ultimately, I won.<sup>19</sup>

But as I talk about in my book, something else had happened, while I was struggling through my own grief. It occurred to me, what do other young widows do, especially those who have children?

I had at least been fortunate that my first husband had been fastidious about making sure I was taken care of. What about those less fortunate with families to care for? And that realization became the driving force behind my early legislative focus in Congress and fueled my sense of responsibility to champion issues vital to women.<sup>20</sup>

The point is, undeniably, women do make a difference for other women in applying their own experiences to lawmaking. And in my thirty-four years of experience in the U.S. House and Senate, I can tell you unequivocally your efforts to elect more women will make a difference for the entire country. Because women also provide an ideal template for the kind of bipartisanship that is central to Congress achieving great things.<sup>21</sup>

---

17. *Id.* at 46.

18. *Id.* at 37.

19. See Tice, *supra* note 14.

20. See, e.g., Olympia J. Snowe, *Sen. Olympia Snowe on How the GOP Can Mend its Image Among Women*, WASH. POST (Aug. 24, 2012), [http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-08-24/opinions/35492298\\_1\\_romney-ryan-mitt-romney-gop-platform](http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-08-24/opinions/35492298_1_romney-ryan-mitt-romney-gop-platform) (arguing that the Republican Party needs to offer solutions to challenges faced by women, especially in the area of employment).

21. See, e.g., Amanda Kaster, *Setting the Example, Women Politicians Leading the Way*, BIPARTISAN POL. CTR. (Nov. 7, 2013), <http://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/2013/11/07/setting-example-women-politicians->

When I was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1979, for instance, I was one of only seventeen women in the House and Senate.<sup>22</sup> In fact, I had as one of my campaign slogans, “Not Just One of the Boys.” And I never have been!

And from the outset, it was clear to me, and to each of us, that we were far too few to be divided among ourselves along partisan lines. We recognized that we held not only a tremendous responsibility, but an obligation to “go to bat” for the women of America. We knew full well that our success or our failure rested solely upon our shoulders and that if we didn’t fight for women’s issues, no one would.

So I joined the Congressional Caucus on Women’s Issues, which I co-chaired for more than ten years with Democrat Pat Schroeder.<sup>23</sup> The Caucus had been founded in 1977 by then-Congresswoman Elizabeth Holtzman, a pro-choice Democrat, and then-Congresswoman Margaret Heckler, a pro-life Republican.<sup>24</sup> Because they understood that, despite their differences, they couldn’t afford to draw lines in the sand on issues of importance to women, with women so drastically under-represented in Congress.<sup>25</sup>

So when we spoke on these issues, we spoke as women, not as Republicans or Democrats. That’s what drove our agendas at the Caucus and, together, we started to make a real difference for women. That was a time in America when child support enforcement was viewed as strictly a woman’s problem. A time when pensions were cancelled without a spouse’s approval. A time when family and medical leave wasn’t the law of the land. But working together, across the political aisle, we changed all that.

It was also a time when women’s health was the missing page in America’s medical textbooks, and when women unbelievably were systematically excluded from potentially life-saving clinical medical trials.<sup>26</sup> There was the now-infamous

---

leading-way (attributing the end of the Fall 2013 government shutdown to a small group of female senators committed to a bipartisan solution).

22. See CONG. RESEARCH SERV., WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS, 1917–2013: BIOGRAPHICAL AND COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT INFORMATION, AND LISTINGS BY STATE AND CONGRESS (Sept. 26, 2013), <http://www.fas.org/spp/crs/misc/RL30261.pdf>.

23. See *Olympia Snowe*, BIPARTISAN POL. CTR., <http://bipartisanpolicy.org/about/senior-fellows/olympia-snowe>.

24. See *Congressional Caucus on Women’s Issues*, 105th CONG. H8837 (1997) (statement of Rep. Norton).

25. OLYMPIA SNOWE, FIGHTING FOR COMMON GROUND 100 (2013).

26. See FOR WOMEN ONLY!: YOUR GUIDE TO HEALTH EMPOWERMENT 1432 (Gary Null & Barbara Seaman eds., 1999) (describing how Representatives Snowe and

medical study on breast cancer that examined hundreds of men. Or what about the physician's health study which examined the ability of aspirin to prevent heart attacks that included 22,000 men, and not one woman—even though heart attacks are the leading cause of death in women.<sup>27</sup>

Some even complained that health research could endanger, or would be affected by, a woman's reproductive system.<sup>28</sup> Well, it seemed to us that women had been bearing children for quite some time, and were likely to continue doing so in the future! And you know what? Working together, we produced watershed policy changes that, to this day, are resulting in life-saving medical discoveries for America's women.

So there is a cause and effect when we elect more women—and we certainly cannot stop now. Because as far as women and our issues have progressed in this nation, why do I feel like every time I turn on the news or open the newspaper, it's as if I've stepped into a time warp? How is it we have to continue to fight yesterday's battles?

When we can't even come to an agreement on family planning and contraceptive coverage in the year 2013, you know we're in trouble. That was at least one issue where we found common ground in the past, regardless of where you were on the choice issue.

In fact, when I first ran for Congress in 1978, the Republican Party was so eager to recruit women that they were willing to endorse me as a pro-choice candidate—and they didn't even know who my primary opponent might be. Sometimes I think I ought to submit that one to "Ripley's Believe It or Not."

So I was shocked by the stunningly insensitive statements last year surrounding Georgetown Law student Sandra Fluke, and that she wasn't allowed to testify before a House Committee.<sup>29</sup> It was like some kind of retro-debate from the 1950s. Then, incredibly, we later had those horrific statements on rape by two

---

Henry Waxman instituted hearings encouraging the inclusion of women in clinical studies).

27. CTRS. FOR DISEASE CONTROL & PREVENTION, WOMEN AND HEART DISEASE FACT SHEET (Aug. 2013), [http://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/docs/fs\\_women\\_heart.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/data_statistics/fact_sheets/docs/fs_women_heart.pdf).

28. Olympia Snowe, United States Senator, Speech to the John F. Kennedy School of Government (June 3, 1997), available at <http://gos.sbc.edu/s/snowe.html>.

29. See Ed O'Keefe, *Lawmakers End Quarrel Over Birth Control Hearing—Sort Of*, WASH. POST, Mar. 28, 2012, at A17; Elizabeth Flock, *Birth Control Hearing on Capitol Hill Had Mostly Male Panel of Witnesses*, WASH. POST, Feb. 16, 2012, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/blogpost/post/birth-control-hearing-on-capitol-hill-had-all-male-panel-of-witnesses/2012/02/16/g1QA6BM5HR\\_blog.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/blogpost/post/birth-control-hearing-on-capitol-hill-had-all-male-panel-of-witnesses/2012/02/16/g1QA6BM5HR_blog.html).

Republican candidates for the Senate.<sup>30</sup> And I thought, exactly what millennium are we living in?

So your focus on pro-choice candidates regardless of party is right on point and as important today as ever. And yet, it's not just reproductive freedom that's at stake.

It is unconscionable that the number of military personnel victimized by sexual assault has surged thirty-five percent over the past two years.<sup>31</sup> Sixteen years ago in 1997, just after I had joined the Senate Armed Services Committee, I conducted a number of field hearings in the aftermath of sexual assault scandals at Aberdeen Proving Grounds.<sup>32</sup> And as a result, I introduced and passed a law requiring unit commanders to report incidents within twenty-four hours and conduct a thorough, impartial investigation.

So it is patently unacceptable that something has clearly gone wrong. We have a solemn obligation to ensure that women—and men, for that matter—can train and fight in an environment where they feel safe and are safe. And who do you think is at the vanguard on this urgent matter every single time? It's women. Just over a week ago, what was the headline on the front page of the *Washington Post*? It was "Women Leading on Issue of Abuse."<sup>33</sup>

In fact, last December Senator Klobuchar and I teamed up to author a bipartisan amendment that was passed into law to improve tracking and review of sexual assault claims in the

30. Richard Mourdock, the Republican Senate candidate in Indiana and presumed winner of the race, stated during a candidate debate that "even when life begins in that horrible situation of rape, it is something that God intended to happen." Karen Tumulty, *Murdock Brings Social Issues to Fore Again*, WASH. POST, Oct. 25, 2012, at A5. Tom Smith, a Republican candidate for Senate from Pennsylvania, compared a rape victim who gets pregnant to a family member who had a child out of wedlock and said that both situations have a "similar" effect on their fathers. Irin Carmon, *Tom Smith: Meet the New Todd Akin*, SALON (Aug. 27, 2012), [http://www.salon.com/2012/08/27/tom\\_smith\\_meet\\_the\\_new\\_todd\\_akin/](http://www.salon.com/2012/08/27/tom_smith_meet_the_new_todd_akin/).

31. See Craig Whitlock, *Obama Delivers Blunt Message on Sexual Assaults in Military*, WASH. POST (May 7, 2013), [http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-05-07/world/39078504\\_1\\_sexual-assault-offenders-kirsten-gillibrand](http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-05-07/world/39078504_1_sexual-assault-offenders-kirsten-gillibrand).

32. See SUZANNE O'DEA SHENKEN, FROM SUFFRAGE TO THE SENATE: AN ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN WOMEN IN POLITICS 440 (1999) ("In 1996, the Army revealed that a captain and two sergeants training auto mechanics had coerced young recruits into having sex. . . . U.S. senator Olympia Snowe (R-ME) said that 'women in the armed services today deserve to know that this problem is going to be taken care of' and that sexual harassment in the military 'is absolutely a failure of leadership.'").

33. Craig Whitlock & Ed O'Keefe, *Women Leading on Issue of Abuse*, WASH. POST, May 25, 2013.



military and to ensure justice for victims.<sup>34</sup> And the *Post* reported that, and I quote, “uniformed military leaders . . . are getting grilled by women unwilling to accept their explanations . . . .”<sup>35</sup> And they should be grilled.

And when it comes to another longstanding issue—equitable salaries for women—I stood with President Obama as he signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act,<sup>36</sup> which Senator Klobuchar also co-sponsored, and that changed the previously inequitable statute of limitations for bringing an equal-pay lawsuit. After all, there shouldn’t be a 180-day statute of limitations on discrimination!

Yet, today, a woman’s average annual earnings are still just seventy-seven cents for every dollar a man receives.<sup>37</sup> I think we all know it’s going to take more women to finally win that battle, too.

So yes, we have forged progress. But we must be ever vigilant and vigorous—or women and issues that are critical to us will be relegated to the sidelines, and the gains we have secured will be excised and eroded.

As Sheryl Sandberg said at her Washington party I attended for her book, *Lean In*, our nation requires more women in leadership positions, whether in public or private institutions. As has been widely reported, today, women comprise 51% of the population, and 47% of the workforce, but only 4% are CEO’s and 17% are members of corporate boards of directors.<sup>38</sup> And she went on to say that people go around talking about the 20 women out of 100 who are now in the Senate as if they were some kind of majority.

So the message couldn’t be more clear: we still have a lot of catching up to do. But thanks to organizations like yours, I’m convinced we will make it happen. And it will undeniably make a

34. Klobuchar, *Snowe Amendments to Help Fight Sexual Assault in the Military Pass Senate*, HIGHBEAM RESEARCH (Dec. 3, 2012), <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-310737670.html>.

35. Craig Whitlock & Ed O’Keefe, *Female Lawmakers Leading Push to Crack Down on Military Sex Crimes*, WASH. POST (May 24, 2013), [http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-05-24/world/39499423\\_1\\_sexual-assaults-female-lawmakers-military](http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-05-24/world/39499423_1_sexual-assaults-female-lawmakers-military).

36. Lilly Ledbetter won a verdict of over \$3 million in federal court for a gender pay discrimination suit, but the decision was reversed by the Supreme Court. The Court’s decision was nullified when President Obama signed the Act. *The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act* (2011), <http://www.lillyledbetter.com/>.

37. INST. FOR WOMEN’S POLICY RESEARCH, PAY EQUITY & DISCRIMINATION (2010), <http://www.iwpr.org/initiatives/pay-equity-and-discrimination>.

38. See LEAN IN, WOMEN, WORK, AND THE WILL TO LEAD, SHERYL SANDBERG 16 (Random House ed., 2013) (discussing the leadership ambition gap between men and women).

difference. Let me just read you a few lines from my own book, *Fighting for Common Ground*, that I think really sum up what women can bring to the legislative process:

A woman often brings a different perspective to decision-making in government. We all have our own backgrounds and view-points, of course, but I believe that, in general, women are more relationship-oriented and more collaborative. Perhaps it's because many of the skills women develop in life are particularly applicable to an institution like the Senate, where collaboration is required to achieve results.

....

... [Or], [p]erhaps because we have always been an underrepresented group, women in Congress have more often than not been more resistant to partisanship than our male colleagues. We do have disagreements over policy, but if I approached a female colleague to garner her support or asked her to join me as a partner on an issue, I would invariably find a willing participant and an active listener, someone who would help construct a viable solution.<sup>39</sup>

And as I go on to detail in the book, that spirit is encapsulated in the ritual the women Senators have of gathering on a monthly basis for dinner:

The beauty of these dinners is that we always kept them light, informal, and off the record—what we said there, stayed there. There is no set agenda or planned strategy sessions. Instead, we share thoughts on everything from our families, to issues we're working on, to what might be happening in our respective states.<sup>40</sup>

So I was especially looking forward to the final time that I joined the group along with Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, who was also retiring<sup>41</sup>—even as we had to limit it to just a brief reception. Why? Because we had to leave early to attend the Republican dinner for departing Republican Senators. The Democrat dinner had been held the night before.

Now, it used to be that those events were held jointly. And I couldn't help but think that, even the act of leaving the Senate has become partisan. Yet by contrast, our women's dinners were always a free-flowing discussion in an environment of mutual respect, which is fertile ground for future collaboration on legislation.

That's the power that bipartisanship can have, and that women can wield. And I remain confident that women will

---

39. SNOWE, *supra* note 25, at 100–01.

40. *Id.* at 119.

41. *See id.*

continue to offer a model for how bipartisanship can produce good and necessary legislation.

And that's where all of you come in—not only with your support for outstanding women candidates, but also by refusing to accept as the “new norm” the current hyper-partisanship in Congress that I write about in detail in my book.<sup>42</sup> And I completed it in such a short timeframe, because it was critical to release it while there is still a window of opportunity in Congress for addressing those issues that are key to our economic and fiscal well-being, before the crucible of the 2014 election.

I have also become a Senior Fellow at the Bipartisan Policy Center.<sup>43</sup> And in conjunction with my book, we've launched what we call “Citizens for Political Reform,” to galvanize a new movement of citizens working as a team to demand bipartisanship.<sup>44</sup> The problem is there are already plenty of incentives for incendiary rhetoric and thwarting action, so we must take charge to alter those incentives and support people trying to fix problems, and I urge you to visit the website at [bipartisanpolicy.org](http://bipartisanpolicy.org).<sup>45</sup>

The fact is, we live in a representative democracy, and we get the government we demand. If we insist on and value bipartisanship, we'll get it. And that's why I have also established [olympiaslist.org](http://olympiaslist.org). Olympia's List will fund elected officials and candidates who will strive for bipartisan solutions, and provide a political reward at the ballot box for those who do.<sup>46</sup> After all, as the late-Senator Warren Rudman once said, “Politics is too important to be left to politicians!”<sup>47</sup>

So I hope that you will join me in the bipartisanship cause. And once again, please accept my most profound appreciation for all you do, your indispensable efforts, and your extraordinary commitment to ensure that women can take their rightful place in their rightful numbers at all levels of elective office. Thank you all very much.

---

42. See, e.g., *id.* at 192 (arguing that a greater focus on job creation rather than health care would have engendered bipartisanship during the recession in the late 2000s).

43. See *id.* at 250.

44. See *Citizens for Political Reform*, BIPARTISAN POLICY CTR., <http://bipartisanpolicy.org/projects/political-reform/citizens>.

45. *Id.*

46. See <http://www.olympiaslist.org/>.

47. *Can We Change Congress?*, OLYMPIA'S BLOG (May 21, 2013), <http://www.olympiaslist.org/?p=1551>.

