

MAKERS

WOMEN IN POLITICS

OVERVIEW:

MAKERS: Women in Politics profiles the long, slow fight for female political representation over the last century, from the first woman elected to Congress in 1916 to a young woman running for Detroit City Council in 2013. Trailblazing leaders like Hillary Clinton, Senator Barbara Mikulski, Olympia Snowe, the youngest Republican woman ever elected to the House of Representatives, and Shirley Chisholm, the first African-American woman to serve in Congress, provide a backdrop for younger women like Rashida Tlaib, the first Muslim-American woman elected to the Michigan House. Today's leaders in Washington, including Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), the first female Senator from Massachusetts, Susan Collins (R-ME), who led the Senate in shaping a deal to end the government shutdown, and Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI), currently the youngest woman serving in Congress, are also represented. Produced by Rory Kennedy with Producer/Director Grace Lee. Narrated by Alfre Woodard.

Expanding on the critically acclaimed PBS documentary *MAKERS: Women Who Make America*, which told the story of the modern American women's movement, each documentary in this six-part PBS series examines the impact of the women's movement on six fields once largely closed to women: business, space, Hollywood, comedy, war and politics. In each field, women have pried open, and profoundly reshaped, the central institutions of American life and culture. In the last half-century, women have fought their way into nearly every sphere of American life, from the battlefield to the comedy club, the soundstage to the Senate. Through intimate interviews with trailblazing women known and unknown, viewers are given a rare glimpse—sometimes funny, sometimes sad, and always candid—of what it was like to be pioneers in their fields. Directed by some of the country's leading independent filmmakers, *MAKERS* brings to life new and unforgettable stories that every woman, man, girl and boy should know. Other documentaries in this series include *Women in Comedy*, *Women in Business*, *Women in Space*, *Women in War*, and *Women in Hollywood*.

MAKERS is also a growing archive of women's stories. At makers.com you can meet over 250 Makers. For more *MAKERS* in Politics:

Kay Bailey Hutchison was the first Republican woman to be elected to the Texas House of Representatives. In 1993, she became the first female United States Senator from the state of Texas and has served continuously since then.

Tammy Baldwin served a decade in the U.S. House of Representatives, before winning her current seat in the U.S. Senate. She is the first openly gay U.S. Senator and first female from Wisconsin to serve in Congress.

Elaine Chao was the first Asian Pacific woman on the U.S. Cabinet and was the longest-serving Secretary of Labor since WWII. During her tenure, she promoted women and immigrants in the workforce.

Sandra Day O'Connor became the first woman appointed to the United States Supreme Court. O'Connor retired in 2006 and currently serves as Chair of the Board for iCivics.org, a nonprofit she founded that is dedicated to teaching students about civics.

Gabrielle Giffords represented Arizona in the U.S. House of Representatives from 2007 until she retired in 2012. Giffords was shot in the head and suffered from severe brain injuries following a 2011 local shooting. Thanks to a remarkable, ongoing recovery, she is a leading voice against gun violence in the United States today.

Mazie Hirono currently serves as a United States Senator from Hawaii. She is the first Asian-American woman, the first Buddhist, and the first woman from Hawaii to be elected to the United States Senate.

Eleanor Holmes Norton is on her twelfth term as Congresswoman for the District of Columbia. She is currently the ranking member of the House Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management, and also is a tenured professor of law at Georgetown University.

Condoleezza Rice was the first woman to hold the position of National Security Advisor, and later became the first African American woman to serve in the post of Secretary of State. She currently teaches at Stanford and runs her own international consulting business.

Hillary Rodham Clinton was First Lady from 1993-2001, and later became a distinguished senator from New York, a groundbreaking 2008 Presidential candidate, and the 67th Secretary of State.

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen was the first Cuban-American and the first Latina to join the US House of Representatives. She was one of only 15 House Republicans to support the repeal of "Don't Ask Don't Tell" and is the first GOP member to support the repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act.

Discussion Guide:

Questions to ask before *and* then after watching *MAKERS: Women in Politics*:

- A. How many women currently serve in the US Senate?
 - B. What woman ran for president in 1972?
 - C. What is the Gender Gap?
 - D. Who was the 1984 Vice Presidential Candidate?
 - E. Who denounced McCarthyism?
- (*See Answers)

Barbara Boxer notes that her biggest initial obstacle to running for office was fundraising. Men didn't want to give her money and women had to ask their husbands before they could give her money. Do you think this is still true today?

Have you ever given money to a political candidate? What motivated you? If not, after watching *MAKERS Women in Politics*, will you be more compelled to contribute to political campaigns? Why/why not is investing in women politicians important?

Looking back at the fight for suffrage in America, that struggle was spurred by watching vast numbers of people slip into extreme poverty. Women no longer wanted to observe that happening without having a voice to change it. Are there issues today that women seem particularly compelled by?

The film makes the point that women wanted a political voice to make a difference in society – was that achieved? Would politics look different if women weren't a part of it? How/how not?

Women had been confined to "the licking and the sticking" – but weren't running campaigns. What changed – or has it changed? As we see more female candidates, do we also see more women leading campaigns?

Historically most women first entered politics as widows more than as candidates; filling out the terms of their dead husbands. Why was that any more acceptable than a woman running on her own?

Elizabeth Warren, among others, expresses the sentiment that politics chose her more than she chose politics. She identifies it as a fight she has to fight. Is there something in your life you feel chose you?

Margaret Chase Smith was the first woman to serve in both houses. Who else has served in both houses?

Susan Collins notes that she left Smith's office and thought: Women could do anything. Have you ever had a moment where you felt that way?

When Patricia Schroeder fought for a seat on the Armed Services Committee, she was only offered half a seat; to be shared with Representative Ron Dellums, who was then a newly elected African American Congressman.

Representative Patricia Schroeder was one of many to argue for women going into space. Does it seem that only women can point out where women are being left out? Is that changing?

“It mattered less that Geraldine Ferraro lost; it mattered that she tried.” Tammy Baldwin was one of many who remembers watching Geraldine and thinking “I can aspire to anything.” Have you ever been moved to run for office or to serve the public? What was the motivation? What was the result?

The House silenced Representative Rosa DeLauro – and her female colleagues reacted. What other moments were women silenced and they came back loud and clear?

An ultimate realization was that if there was to be a Senate that reflected America, America needed more women in the Senate. Why have we been so slow to realize and then work to achieve that?

When Nancy Pelosi became Speaker of the House, that moment showed that women could assume higher levels of leadership. Did you remember that happening? What was your reaction?

Definitions of leadership are often associated with men. When you think of leaders who do you think of? And what qualities do you think of?

Is a woman assuming the presidency still a big deal?

Sarah Palin, in her bid for the Vice Presidency, embraced motherhood in a way that no other female politician had done before. Did this make a long term difference on female politicians being able to be mothers and elected officials? Why do we never ask men if they are fathers?

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand notes that women are better positioned to move legislation because women tend to care less if their name is on it or not. Is that a fair assessment? Why would men care more?

Elizabeth Warren notes that *seeing is believing*, a sentiment expressed throughout MAKERS. What other things do we see now that once seemed impossible? What else can we imagine?

*Answers

- A. 20 women in Senate 78 in house
- B. Shirley Chisholm
- C. Gender Gap typically defined as the difference in vote turnout between women and men. The term came into popular usage by the early 1980s when pollsters starting noting that women’s participation in elections could make the different to one candidate over another.
- D. Geraldine Ferraro
- E. Margaret Chase Smith

More women in politics:

Margaret Chase Smith was a member of the Republican Party and served as a U.S. Representative (1940-1949) and U.S. Senator (1949-1973) from Maine, making her the first woman to serve in both houses of Congress and the first woman from the state of Maine to serve in either. In 1964, Smith was the first woman to be placed in nomination for the presidency at a major party’s convention. Though she lost the Republican nomination, she continued her career and became the longest-serving female Senator until Barbara Mikulski was sworn in for a fifth term in 2011. She died in 1995 at the age of 97.

Shirley Chisholm was the first African American woman elected to Congress. She served as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives representing New York’s 12th district from 1969-1983, and in 1972 became the first woman to run for the Democratic presidential nomination and the first major-party black candidate. In her first floor speech, Chisholm boldly lashed out against the Vietnam War. Chisholm died in 2005.

Bella Abzug, a former Congresswoman from New York City, was one of the most influential and recognizable female politicians. She turned to politics after a long career as a civil rights lawyer. She was also the first woman to run for the Senate in New York as well as for Mayor in New York City. Among her famous one-liners was her quip: “This woman’s place is in the House – the House of Representatives.” She authored or co-authored several historic bills, including Title IX, banning sex discrimination in educational opportunities, and the first law banning discrimination against women with respect to obtaining credit.

Patsy Mink served in the U.S. House of Representatives, representing Hawaii, for twelve terms (1965-1977 and 1990-2002). Mink was the first woman of color and the first Asian American in Congress. During her tenure, she co-authored the Title IX Amendment of Higher Education Act and spoke out early against the Vietnam War. In 1972, she entered the presidential primary, one of the first women to seek the office. She died in 2002.

Barbara Mikulski is the longest-serving woman in the history of the U.S. Congress. She is a member of the Democratic Party and served in the House of Representatives from 1977 to 1987 and won election to the Senate in 1987, where she continues to represent her home state of Maryland today. Since 2012, Mikulski has chaired the Senate Appropriations Committee, the first woman and Marylander to hold the position.

Ann Richards, former Texas Governor, was as known for her fierce politics as her witty one-liners. "Ginger Rogers did everything Fred Astaire did. She just did it backwards and in heels."

Carol Moseley Braun represented Illinois in the U.S. Senate from 1993 to 1999. She was the first African-American woman to be elected to the U.S. Senate. After leaving office, Moseley Braun was appointed U.S. ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa by President Bill Clinton in 1999.

Susan Collins, a Republican Senator from Maine, is as known for her individual leadership as for her leading bipartisan efforts amidst an often gridlocked Congress.

Barbara Lee, a long serving Congresswoman from California, was also the first and only Congressional rep to denounce US intervention in war in Afghanistan.

Resources:

EMILY's LIST

<http://www.emilyslist.org/>

Emily's List supports and helps pro-choice Democratic women candidates get elected. Find out who

WOMEN's Campaign Fund

<http://www.wcfonline.org/>

WCF is a non-partisan organization dedicated to dramatically increasing the number of women in elected office who support reproductive health choices for all. Sign up for their weekly *MsRepresentation* news brief.

She Should Run

<http://www.sheshouldrun.org/>

WCF's sister organization, She Should Run, is devoted to increasing the number of women in public office. Find great stats and figures and learn more about their programs online.

Women's Campaign School at Yale

<http://www.wcsyale.org/>

This program trains and inspires women interested in running for political office. Sign up for their sessions online.

Emerge America

<http://www.emergeamerica.org/>

Emerge America is an inspirational training program for Democratic women. Apply for a seven-month training program online.

iCivics.org

www.icivics.org

Founded by Sandra Day O'Connor, iCivics is a non-profit organization dedicated to reinvigorating civic learning through interactive and engaging learning resources. Play games, earn points, and donate your points to your favorite student service project!

Bella Abzug Leadership Institute (BALI)

<http://www.abzuginstitute.org/>

BALI helps high school and college age women develop the confidence and skills they need to be effective, dynamic and visionary leaders as well as active and creative participants in civic, political, corporate and community life. Sign up for one of their training programs online!

National Women's Political Caucus

<http://www.nwpc.org/>

NWPC recruits, trains and supports pro-choice women candidates for elected and appointed offices at all levels of government regardless of party affiliation. In addition to financial donations, the Caucus offers campaign training for candidates and campaign managers, as well as technical assistance and advice.

