

Women of the Senate Oral History Project

KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON
United States Senator from Texas, 1993–2013

Oral History Interview
January 6, 2017

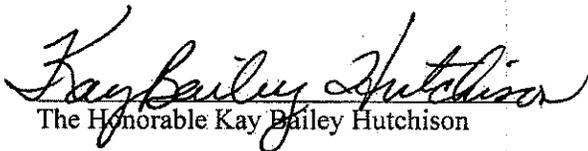
Senate Historical Office
Washington, D.C.

**AGREEMENT AND RELEASE
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
U.S. SENATE HISTORICAL OFFICE**

I, **Kay Bailey Hutchison**, agree to participate in the Women of the Senate Oral History Project and understand that the physical audio/video recordings and transcripts of my interviews are and will remain the property of the United States Senate.

In entering into this agreement, I understand that all or portions of my oral history may be made available to the public in an online feature on the Senate website, may be made available to researchers and may be quoted from, published, or broadcast in any other medium (consisting of all forms of print or electronic media, including the Internet or other emerging, future technologies that may be developed) that the Senate Historical Office may deem appropriate. I also approve the deposit of the recordings and transcripts at the Library of Congress, the National Archives, and any other institution that the Senate Historical Office may deem appropriate.

In consideration for my inclusion in this project, I understand I am entitled to receive a copy of the transcripts of my interviews. While I hereby relinquish any intellectual property rights or interests I may hold in the content of my interviews, I acknowledge that the Senate has the discretion to decide whether or not to make all or any part of my oral history available to the public.


The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison

Dated: November 9, 2020

I, Betty K. Koed, accept the interview of the Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison for inclusion into the Oral History Project of the U.S. Senate Historical Office.


Betty K. Koed, U.S. Senate Historian

Dated: Nov. 9, 2020

Introduction

Kathryn “Kay” Bailey was born in Galveston and graduated from the University of Texas, Austin. She earned a law degree from UT School of Law in 1967. Frustrated by the fact that few law firms were hiring women, Bailey turned to broadcasting instead, becoming the first female reporter for a Houston television station where she covered state politics. That spurred an interest in public service, leading to her election to the Texas state legislature in 1972. In 1978 she married Texas attorney and legislator Ray Hutchison. She ran for Texas state treasurer in 1990 and won—the only Republican to win statewide office that year. Elected to the U.S. Senate in a special election in 1993, Hutchison was reelected three times and served until 2013. The first Republican woman since 1973 to hold a leadership position, Hutchison served as vice-chair of the Republican Conference (2000–2007) and chaired the Republican Policy Committee (2007–2009). In this interview, Hutchison discusses the strong bonds she forged with her female colleagues as they broke down institutional barriers, as well as collaboration with colleagues on legislative priorities, including the Title IX same sex education amendment and the Spousal IRA.

About the Interviewer: Betty K. Koed is the U.S. Senate Historian and Director of the Senate Historical Office. Koed earned her Ph.D. in political and public history at the University of California, Santa Barbara, before joining the Historical Office in 1998. In 2016 Koed was awarded UCSB's Distinguished Alumni Award. Appointed Senate Historian in 2015, Koed supervises all historical and archival projects, provides talks and presentations to senators, staff, and the public on wide-ranging topics of Senate history, and conducts oral history interviews with former senators and staff. She oversees more than 10,000 pages of historical material on the Senate website, is senior editor of the Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress, and provides research and reference assistance to the Senate community, the public, and the media. She is a former officer of the Society for History in the Federal Government and has served on the Editorial Board of the *Public Historian*.

Women of the Senate Oral History Project
Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison
Texas (1993–2013)

January 6, 2017

BETTY K. KOED: Well, thank you for being here. This is Betty Koed, and I'm interviewing Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison. We're in room 201 of the Hart Senate Office Building, the Senate Historical Office, and today is January 6, 2017.

The purpose of today's interview is to focus on the role of women in the Senate and your personal history as a female senator. Let me begin by asking you, before you became a senator, as a child and as a young adult, did you have any particular female role models or someone who was a sort of guiding spirit for you as you moved ahead?

KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON: As a child, no. It never occurred to me, when I was growing up, that a woman would be a senator or a governor or a president. It just never crossed my mind. In fact, I have to say, when I was growing up I never thought of myself as being a professional in any way. I just kind of assumed that I would go to college and graduate. That was assumed in my family, but not that I would have a profession.

KOED: At what point did you decide to pursue a professional career?

HUTCHISON: Well, I think the first thing that I did, that was a little beginning, was when I was in college, most of my college friends, girls, majored in elementary education. They were going to be teachers so that they would have something before they got married or after they got married. I didn't really have that in mind. I wasn't going with anyone that I was getting ready to marry. And I was just thinking—I think probably John Kennedy's election, which had happened right as I was going into college and he was killed when I was in college. I remember it vividly. I was in Austin, but it happened in Dallas. That was my first spark of interest [in politics]. You know, the Kennedys were so attractive. So I started thinking, when I was in my junior year of college, that maybe I wanted to go to law school. I didn't have any lawyers in my family. If there was anything in my family, it was doctors but not lawyers. And I, for some reason, decided that I wanted to go to law school. So I did. I actually skipped my senior year of college and went straight to law school after that.

KOED: At UT Austin?

HUTCHISON: At UT. And so that was sort of my first beginning. At the time, law firms didn't hire women in Texas. There was not one in any of the major law firms in Dallas or Houston. I looked for a job after I graduated. I moved to Houston, because it was closest to my hometown, which was in Galveston County, La Marque, a small town. I had grown up going to Houston, and I was in the Houston Youth Symphony Ballet, and so I was connected

to Houston. So I went back to Houston and started looking for a job. And after four months of—I call it my first brick wall of life. I just hit the brick wall. I mean, I couldn't get a job. Law firms didn't hire women. I had a number of interviews, but they were all very disappointing. And so I began to think about looking for something other than a law firm. I decided to stop at a television station in Houston that was near my apartment. It turned out to be the NBC affiliate. I just walked in and asked for a job. And I became a television news reporter. And so I did that, which then led me into the political life. I was assigned to cover the state legislature, and after a session, the Republican Party chair asked me to run for the legislature. By then, I had name identification, mainly because I was the first woman news reporter in Houston.

KOED: No kidding?

HUTCHISON: Yeah. There were no women on the air, so people remembered me. So I thought about it for a bit, and I thought, "You know, I could do it." I was a lawyer. And so I ran and won. I was 29 years old when I won, so I started a whole different career path. And you know, that was really just about six years after I didn't even think of having a career.

KOED: (laughs) Life just takes you in unusual ways sometimes.

HUTCHISON: Yeah.

KOED: As you became active at the state politics level, were there particular issues that you became active in, or were there particular legislative issues that you pursued?

HUTCHISON: Well, yes. I represented a district from Houston, and I was generally pro-business, Republican. At the time, that was unusual, because—

KOED: I was going to say that it was mostly a Democratic South yet.

HUTCHISON: There were not many Republicans. Out of 150 members of the House, there were 13 Republicans.

KOED: Wow!

HUTCHISON: So that was 1972, and I was in a very small, you know, chummy group of Republicans. (laughs) I was conservative, pro-business. I ended up also passing, with a Democratic woman, the first bill to give victims of rape the equal treatment, as a victim, that they deserved. And it turned out that was one of my significant achievements. The bill that we wrote and fought very hard to pass, and finally did pass, was a bill that became the model for the nation in treatment of rape victims. Before our bill passed, no other states—there was one other state that had a law for rape victims, but two out of 50. They would treat rape victims with shorter statutes of limitation. There was no evidence rule that

didn't allow someone to bring up something totally irrelevant about a person's reputation, as if she were the criminal and not the victim. And so we straightened it out with a great law, and it became a model for the whole country to treat rape victims as victims. That became really one of my significant contributions in the state legislature.

KOED: That's remarkable. How long did you stay in the state legislature?

HUTCHISON: I served two terms and was appointed at the end of my second term, by President [Gerald] Ford, to be vice chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board.

KOED: Oh, okay.

HUTCHISON: So I left the legislature in the—I'm trying to think. I had been there, I think, two terms, but it was right at the end of, I think, my second term.

KOED: So it's probably 1975 or '76, towards the end of his presidency. And then you went on to be state treasurer, correct?

HUTCHISON: Yes, but that was years later. It was the '70s that I was with President Ford. And then I came home. I married one of the 13 Republicans. (laughs) He was a representative elected from Dallas, Ray Hutchison.

KOED: Oh, that's right.

HUTCHISON: And I had met him there and admired him. He was a great legislator. And he became Republican state chairman. And so I was in Washington, and we started going out. I married him and moved back—you know, got married and moved to Dallas from Houston, which was my base, and really started a whole other life. We got married in 1978. And then I just started in business. I became general counsel of the largest bank holding company in Texas, Republic Bank Corporation, and I really stayed in the business sector. He was state chairman, and we were active politically, but not running. And then, in 1982, I ran for Congress from Dallas, because they had had redistricting and they had added a new Republican district. But the federal judges, during the election process, took away the extra Republican district and turned it back into a Democratic district, based on a lawsuit over the redistricting lines. So I lost the new primary. It was very confusing, but anyway, I lost that. That was 1982. So, I just kept on doing my bank work and the other things.

In 1990 the state Republican chairman decided to put together a statewide ticket. Again, we had no state officeholders, except for John Tower, who was in the Senate, and we had a Republican governor who had been elected in the late '70s—Bill Clements. But we'd had no other statewide elected offices. So the state chairman decided to put together a ticket. I ended up running for state treasurer. And so we had this whole ticket. It turns out, in 1990, the whole top of the ticket lost. Ann Richards was elected governor as a Democrat and on

down the line. Except I won. Down the ballot, I won the state treasurer's race, mainly I think because I had a Houston base and a Dallas base. That was very unusual, because that was probably 25 percent of the vote in Texas, and so I was able to win. I was surprised, and everyone else was, too, but I did, and I became state treasurer. Well then, in 1992 President [William] Clinton was elected, and he selected Lloyd Bentsen to be his secretary of the treasury.

KOED: Right, so there was a vacancy.

HUTCHISON: Yes, and so Senator Bentsen became secretary of the treasury, and that left a special election for the Senate. I was the highest-ranking statewide Republican, so I was asked and again—you know, my phone started ringing off the wall. "You should run for the Senate," which I had never intended to do. I really had thought I would run for governor someday, but I ran for the Senate. In that election—it was 1993 now—there were two Republican congressmen. Because it was a special election, they didn't have to give up their seats, so Jack Fields and Joe Barton ran, myself, and the incumbent Democrat who was appointed to the office, Bob Krueger.

KOED: Right, filled the seat.

HUTCHISON: Yes, and then there were, well, 21 candidates. It was the state treasurer, two Republican congressmen, a Democratic congressman at the time, I believe—I'm trying to remember his name, but he was a Democratic congressman from Houston—and then Krueger. So I had 20 opponents, and because it was a special election, there was just one election, there was not a primary. So it was one election. And it was really funny, because all of the Washington interests supported one of the other three candidates. It would either be the two congressmen, who were going to be there even if they lost, and then Krueger. And nobody knew who I was. (laughs) And so, after this first election, no one got 50 percent, but I came in first, even above Krueger. All of a sudden, there was this—I mean, it was unbelievable the attention that I got from all these Washington interests who had never paid attention to me, not for two minutes. It was so funny. (laughs) But anyway, I was Cinderella at the ball. Then it was so clear, when I came in first with all of that group against me, it was clear I was going to win the runoff election, so I did get support. In fact, when I won that race against Krueger, when I came in first, though he was very close behind me, then all the power kind of came to me. When I beat Krueger, it was the largest margin against an incumbent in the history of the Senate.

KOED: Wow! Good for you! (laughs)

HUTCHISON: Well, it was fraught with a lot of agony.

KOED: Yeah, I'm sure it was not an easy task.

HUTCHISON: Yeah.

KOED: And you became, then, the first female senator from Texas.

HUTCHISON: Right, I did.

KOED: Well, do you think gender played any role in that campaign against Krueger and the 19 other candidates? I assume they were all male, other than you.

HUTCHISON: Well, there may have been one other woman. I'm trying to remember. I believe there was one more, but I'm not sure. It was very much an also-ran type thing, but the four main candidates were the four of us; Krueger, me, Jack Fields, and Joe Barton. There may have been a woman.

But did gender play a role? You know, less so than—maybe it did—but less than it had before. When I ran for the legislature, that early race in 1972, gender was a factor. I mean, gosh, it was like, “Oh no, is she really tough enough?” You know, that kind of thing. And I ended up being the only woman Republican of the 13. In fact, I was the first Republican woman ever elected to the state legislature, because we didn't have any Republicans until—I can't remember when the first one was elected—but it was very rare.

KOED: It would have been the late '60s, at the earliest, I would think.

HUTCHISON: No, it would have been like the '80s.

KOED: The '80s? That late?

HUTCHISON: Well, no, because I was elected in '72. At that time, there were 13, but before that time there were only two, so in 1970, after the census, we got single-member districts. Before that, there were two Republicans, one from Dallas and one from Midland, and before the Dallas representative was elected, there was only one from Midland. That was maybe in the—you're right, it might have been the late '60s.

KOED: Late '60s would be my guess.

HUTCHISON: They might have had one Republican in the whole house. Once we got single member districts, we grew to the enormous number of 13, and that was probably six from Dallas and six from Houston, and one from Midland, or something like that.

KOED: Okay.

HUTCHISON: So gender played a big role in that first legislative election, because people just didn't think I would be conservative, because all the women had been liberal before that, and they thought I'd be kind of squishy. I kind of proved myself then and ran for treasurer. When I ran for treasurer, my opponent was a woman, and she was the county

treasurer of Harris County, which was Houston, and so gender wasn't an issue. And I won because, you know, I did have enough of a Houston base and I even got the *Houston Chronicle* endorsement over the Harris County Treasurer. There were two newspapers then, and one endorsed her, but the main, bigger one endorsed me. So I really had that advantage over the other Republicans on the ticket. So gender wasn't an issue, but by the time I ran for the Senate, I think I had proven myself enough because I had a good track record as state treasurer. I had introduced to the legislature a bill to curb state debt and that was successful. I had stood up against a state income tax, which Governor Ann Richards and Lieutenant Governor Bob Bullock were supporting and promoting. I stood against them as the only Republican in the statewide officeholder group. So I had a good track record then, and I think that was more important than the gender thing.

KOED: Okay. When you arrived in the Senate, how many women senators were there, when you came in '93?

HUTCHISON: I believe there had just been elected seven and maybe I was number eight, because I remember Dianne [Feinstein] had run and because there were only four women, she had a little slogan when she ran. That group was elected in '92 in that regular election.

KOED: "The year of the woman." (laughs)

HUTCHISON: Yes. I think it was Patty Murray and Dianne—

KOED: Carol Moseley Braun.

HUTCHISON: Carol Moseley Braun and—

KOED: Barbara Boxer.

HUTCHISON: And I think—it must have been four.

KOED: So, those four joined Nancy Kassebaum and Barbara Mikulski.

HUTCHISON: Well, Nancy Kassebaum. Yes, that's right.

KOED: So, there were those six.

HUTCHISON: Six, okay.

KOED: You might have been number seven at that point. Unless I'm forgetting somebody else.

HUTCHISON: I think you're right. I think you're exactly right. Because seven was sticking in my mind, but I was thinking that there were seven there, but Nancy was the only

Republican when I came in, and then there were those four. I don't think there was another one. So I think I was number seven.

KOED: Correct, right. And was there like a women's caucus? Was there collegiality? Was there a cohesive group of women senators?

HUTCHISON: Very much. Very much.

KOED: There was, even early on?

HUTCHISON: It was not a caucus. Fortunately, from the very beginning it was clear that the women were not—we represented such different states. Nancy from Kansas. Me from Houston, I mean from Dallas, or Texas. And then you had the liberals—

KOED: Washington, Illinois, California.

HUTCHISON: Yeah, so no one expected us to be a caucus where we would all be in lockstep, but we did have a collegiality which formed really—not exactly at that time, although we did ban together on women's health issues. This was back when Hillary [Clinton] was the point person for the Clinton administration, as First Lady, and she was trying to do healthcare. It was the precursor to Obamacare. I remember coming into a hearing and the Democratic women and myself were all on this panel. I came in late, because I had had a primary and I came in after my primary. And I was late for the hearing and I walked in—I hadn't heard any of the testimony before and I think it was Barbara Mikulski, but I could be wrong, who was presiding. And she said, "Would you like to say anything?" And I said, "Yes, I do. I want to say that I think the provision to limit mammograms to women who are over 40 is wrong and that would be a terrible thing for the women of our country," or something like that. And the others started laughing, because every one of them had said the same thing. (laughs) I didn't know it, but it was just like we are together here.

KOED: You're in sync.

HUTCHISON: And so that was the beginning. But then after that first election, I ran again in '94. I had to finish Lloyd Bentsen's term and then run again. When I came back, Barbara and I—Nancy was gone and I was the only Republican woman and Barbara Mikulski was the senior Democrat, and she had a little coffee in her office and kind of brought all the women together. So we started getting to know each other. And then Barbara asked the women to come in. We were asked to meet with the women of Northern Ireland, from the different factions in Northern Ireland, to just encourage them to continue to be leaders for peace. This was when the IRA was still killing people. We started sharing our stories of all the obstacles that we'd overcome. You know, our different stories. And it became so interesting that I said to Barbara, "You know, we should write a book, because every one of us is different. We represent different states, but every one of us has a great

story about the obstacles that we've overcome." And so we're sitting there. There are seven of us now—*Nine and Counting*.

KOED: That's what became *Nine and Counting*.

HUTCHISON: That's what became *Nine and Counting*. So we had that, and I guess by the time we had gotten to that point, we were nine, so that was after that next election, probably when Olympia [Snowe] came in and maybe Susan [Collins].

KOED: Yeah, and maybe Susan Collins, '94 and '96. Blanche Lincoln, '98.

HUTCHISON: Oh yes, Blanche. Yeah, I'd forgotten about that. So that started that, and then we decided to start having dinner about every month or two.

KOED: Oh, okay, so that's when that tradition began?

HUTCHISON: That started. And it came from that first meeting with the Irish women, and then the *Nine and Counting* book, and then Barbara Mikulski started having a coffee after every election when a new woman came in. So by the time that we finished, when Hillary came in [2001], there was a sequel to the book where we had the picture on the back with Hillary and maybe one other.¹ So we started having dinners. We never, ever formed a caucus, because we never expected people to vote together, but when we did come together, we always won. The women did. That would be on a women's issue like healthcare, or we did a bill on mammogram technology.

KOED: You did the women's IRA.

HUTCHISON: Oh, the homemaker IRA. That was mine, with Barbara Mikulski. We did and we got great support on that. Spousal IRA is what it was. Those were the kinds of things that bonded us. And I assume—I'm sure that they still would be. I don't know who's taken over as kind of the lead, if Dianne has, or—because Barbara was the ringleader.

KOED: Right. We've wondered, too, when Senator Mikulski leaves, who would sort of become the leader of the group. I met with the whole group six months or so ago to talk about this project and others, and I sort of got the sense that maybe Senator Collins might be the one that would move into that position, but I don't really know. It would be interesting to know, but they're still meeting regularly and that camaraderie has continued on.

HUTCHISON: Well, that's good. Well, I can ask one of them. I never have. I'm actually going to have dinner with Dianne tonight. I'll ask her.

¹ Barbara Boxer, Susan Collins, Dianne Feinstein, and Catherine Whitney, *Nine and Counting: The Women of the Senate* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001).

KOED: Yeah, ask her if there's a leader. It would be interesting to know.

HUTCHISON: It would likely be, now that Barbara is gone—

KOED: Dianne Feinstein would be a likely candidate. No?

HUTCHISON: You know, I don't think she is as focused on that. Susan would be more likely than—or Patty [Murray], maybe.

KOED: That's right, Senator Murray would be another good choice.

HUTCHISON: Yeah, because those two would probably be—they're certainly the seniors, too.

KOED: Yes. Well, with Nancy Kassebaum, and I'm hoping to interview her this summer, actually.

HUTCHISON: Oh, good. You should get to her pretty quick, because I bet she's getting up there.

KOED: I've heard from her a couple of times. Yes, she's in her 80s, but her health seems to be holding on pretty well.

HUTCHISON: Good.

KOED: And after Senator [Howard] Baker died, I think that took a real toll, of course, but she seems to be doing pretty well, but she doesn't leave Kansas very much anymore. So I have to get back to Kansas to interview her. I'm hoping to do that in the spring or summer.

HUTCHISON: That would be good.

KOED: Yeah, I think it's really important to get her into this project.

HUTCHISON: I do, too.

KOED: Did she have any sort of leadership role when you came in? Was she—

HUTCHISON: You know, not—

KOED: Of the women or in any other way? I mean, did she appear to be sort of the leader of the women at the time? She was kind of a low-key personality.

HUTCHISON: Yeah, very. She was very friendly and she was very supportive of me when I came in, but she wasn't a leader in the conference. I'm trying to remember—

KOED: She had been committee chair and that type of thing, but I don't think she had gone into the leadership ranks of the party, as I remember.

HUTCHISON: You know, oddly enough, I think the only other woman on the Republican side who's been in actual leadership was Margaret—

KOED: Margaret Chase Smith. She was conference chair for a while, and you eventually sort of followed in those footsteps.

HUTCHISON: Yeah, I was policy chair. But there hasn't been another one.

KOED: There hasn't been much on the Republican side.

HUTCHISON: I thought that by now there would have been, but there isn't.

KOED: There are no women in the current ranks of Republican leadership. We'll have to keep waiting for that. Well, as you came to the Senate, tell me a little bit about the early part of your Senate career, in terms of just getting your office set up. Was gender an issue in that at all? Did you look for female staff, for instance? Or did that matter to you? And what kind of welcoming did you get from the Senate community, which at that time was 93 percent male?

HUTCHISON: Well, first of all, because I came in June and everybody was already in place, I was putting together a staff but most of the staff people were taken. I mean, you know, it was June and everybody else had started in January.

KOED: That's right.

HUTCHISON: So I had a lot of help from Phil Gramm. Phil and I were great partners. He and I got along so well, and we were really good friends. Our spouses were really good friends. So he helped me. In fact, when I walked in the door after I was sworn in, my whole staff was Phil Gramm volunteers.

KOED: Oh, no kidding?

HUTCHISON: They came over from his office and they were answering the phone. And he had a staffer who he just designated to be my chief of staff while I was looking for staff, and that staffer helped me interview for a chief of staff. I mean, I was just clueless. So Phil was a great help. And then everybody was helpful and nice. The women not so much, because I didn't know any of them at the time. I just came in and really my biggest obstacle was that it was June, not that I was a woman or anything like that.

KOED: Yeah, you had to jump in mid-stream.

HUTCHISON: Yes. And so I lived with Phil's volunteer staff until I could get my own and get up and going, but everybody was friendly. Bob Dole was very helpful. He was the leader. He had to really negotiate kind of hard for me to get the committees that I wanted, because I wanted Armed Services and he was getting pushback on that because there was that slight difference in number in the committee makeup.

KOED: The ratio, yes.

HUTCHISON: Yeah, and so, you know, the Democrats basically said, "Well, not Armed Services. That's not one that you get a new person on." And Bob stood his ground, because I really wanted Armed Services. So I got that. And Dole was great, he really, really was. He's a wonderful man. Just extraordinary. He was helpful and everybody was. I mean, really, I was totally welcomed by the Republicans and the Democrats were great. Back then, it was much more collegial, honestly. Sam Nunn—

KOED: The Senate as a whole was more collegial?

HUTCHISON: Yes, and Sam Nunn was very welcoming. Once the negotiation had been made to have a new Republican on the [Armed Services] committee, Sam Nunn was great. So everybody was good. I would just say that everybody—I felt like I had no discrimination because I was a woman. I think they treated me the way they would treat any newcomer.

KOED: Interesting. You know, Carol Moseley Braun told me that when she came to the Senate in '93, she had some problems with individual members, but as a whole, she said, "I became one of a hundred." And so it wasn't so much you were the female, or you were the African American, or whatever, it was you were one of a hundred. And I thought that's an interesting way of looking at the Senate. It sees things in a different way. And so you're part of a group of one hundred.

HUTCHISON: You are, I agree with that. I was number—I always made a joke—"You know, it's great to be number 100 out of 100, because you know where you are." (laughs) But one out of a hundred is okay in the Senate. You have the same vote and you have the privileges. I didn't feel that I was ever, in any way, left out of anything, because everything is seniority or—and it's done by the book. I mean, it's fair and it's seniority. And you know, when it came time for hideaway [offices], that was seniority. Everything is—in our conference, committees are seniority too—and so I felt like I was one of a hundred, and everybody was one of a hundred.

KOED: And did you see institutional barriers in any way? I'm thinking of the famous story of the women's bathroom off the Senate Chamber, and you finally got a bathroom in '93 because you had enough women to call for it. And being able to wear slacks on the floor of the Senate. Not having to wear a dress. That kind of stuff. All of that is sort of changing

right in the time period that you come to the Senate. Were you a part of that process at all or do you remember that?

HUTCHISON: You know, Barbara Mikulski and I did form a little cabal to get an exercise room, because the men's gym was off limits to women. So we got Chris Dodd to give us a separate room. It was in the Hart—no, it was in the Dirksen Building, I think. It was one of the two. We got our own treadmill. It clearly had been probably a restroom, because it had showers and so forth. Barbara Mikulski and I did that. And then later, I didn't get involved in this, but I think it was some of the later women—maybe the Murray/Cantwell kind of group—that started lobbying for being able to swim and all that. I was not a part of that because I wasn't going to use it, but it's much nicer now. I mean, you do have a nice room. And they also, I just noticed that they expanded the women's restroom.

KOED: They did.

HUTCHISON: And it's so much nicer.

KOED: It's quite nice now, yeah.

HUTCHISON: It is nice. They had their little personalized boxes to store incidentals, which we never had.

KOED: That's fairly recent. So that's good. Well, you know, there are all these things that are not part of Senate rules, or official parts of an institution, but they're just long lingering traditions or barriers. It takes time to break down. These types of things are part of that.

HUTCHISON: Well, and it's just that there were not enough numbers to make a big deal of it.

KOED: Yeah.

HUTCHISON: And as we did increase in numbers, then when it got to be 20, then you needed a bigger restroom. And they got one. And it's real nice. And I guess—is it still 20?

KOED: We're at 21 now. We gained one with this election.

HUTCHISON: We gained one?

KOED: Yeah, we tend to notch up about one with each election.

HUTCHISON: Yeah, well and that's because Boxer retired, but she was replaced.

KOED: That's right, she was replaced by a woman.

HUTCHISON: And the same with [Kelly] Ayotte.

KOED: That's right. Even though we had, for the first time, a majority of the incoming class—four of the seven were females this time—but because we lost a couple of females, we only got one net gain. So, we have 21 now. Up to 21 percent. (laughs)

Did you find that—this is sort of a two-part question. When you came into the Senate, was it expected that you would work on particular issues? That you would work on female issues or women's issues? You fought to get on the Armed Services Committee, which of course Margaret Chase Smith had done many years before as well, which sort of took her out of the stereotypical role of female. As I was reading through some information from our file on you, I came across this news article from '93, after you got elected. And it just struck me that it introduces you as the former treasurer of Texas, but also it says that you were a former cheerleader.

HUTCHISON: At the University of Texas.

KOED: Yeah, University of Texas cheerleader.

HUTCHISON: I'd forgotten about this.

KOED: And she even asked you if you remembered some of the old cheers. And you said, "Well, no not really. I don't want to do that," or something. And we thought, that is very telling. First of all, it's a female reporter, but secondly that, even in '93, despite the long career you had, what they were focusing on was the fact that you had once been a cheerleader.

HUTCHISON: Uh huh.

KOED: That must have been infuriating to deal with things like that. And did any of that carry into the early years in the Senate? I mean, was there that kind of media bias and that kind of media attention that you dealt with?

HUTCHISON: You know, no, not really. I mean, it's always been kind of an aside thing—the cheerleader thing. And it probably was earlier in the career, because there was more of a media bias, I guess, at the time I ran for the legislature and then Congress. I remember a reporter riding with me to an event. I combed my hair and, you know, put on my lipstick while I was talking to him, and he wrote the story and said, "And she was primping and fretting about the next event." And I thought, you know, if it had been a man, what would he have said if he had straightened his tie and combed his hair in the car? Nothing.

KOED: No.

HUTCHISON: He wouldn't have mentioned it.

KOED: Right.

HUTCHISON: But that was, you know, in the '70s and '80s. By the time I ran for the Senate, really it was never—I never felt like there was a gender thing. I'd forgotten about that, but the cheerleader thing comes up from time to time. But almost in an “interesting point,” but not a—

KOED: Not as a “major qualification.”

HUTCHISON: Yeah, well, not as a major mention either.

KOED: Good.

HUTCHISON: I think that by the time I was running for the Senate, I didn't feel that there was a gender bias at all. I think I had proved myself in the state treasurer's office. Every time I ran for the Senate, it wasn't—I wasn't running as a woman senator, and it wasn't even mentioned that I was a woman senator. I was a Texas senator.

KOED: Yes.

HUTCHISON: And I don't think people even thought of me as a woman senator. I didn't do women's issues, except spousal IRA—things that I had experienced, which is one of the reasons why I say it's so important to have women in the process, because you do bring a different experience to the table. It wasn't that—nobody was against spousal IRAs, having an equal opportunity to have retirement options as people who work outside the home. No one was against it, but nobody had the experience that I had, which was that I was single, I started an IRA, I got married, I wasn't working right after I moved to Dallas, and I was told I couldn't put money into the IRA, except \$500. And I said, “This is outrageous.” I mean, women are the ones who need that retirement security.

So I took that experience and introduced the bill. I got Barbara Mikulski to cosponsor it. And Barbara told the story on the Senate floor about when my staff had called her staff to say that I wanted to meet with her to talk about an idea that I had, and her staff was saying, “Oh, I don't think you'd want to do anything with her, she's a conservative Republican.” And Barbara said, “Well, what is the idea?” And they said, “Well, we don't know.” And she said, “Well, how about if we listen?”

KOED: (laughs) There's an idea.

HUTCHISON: Yeah. And so Barbara—she told the story on the Senate floor. When she met with me, she said, “That's a great idea. Of course, I'll cosponsor it.” And I tried—and this says so much about Barbara, I adore her—I said, “Look, this is a Democratic Congress, you be the lead sponsor, I'll be the cosponsor. It will be Mikulski-Hutchison.” And she said, “No way, this is your idea. And I'm going to support it, and it's going to be

Hutchison-Mikulski.” And then she did the legislation to name it for me. It’s the Kay Bailey Hutchison Spousal IRA. You know, that was so Barbara. That’s why people love her. But it was just that bonding and getting that experience that we had. So that was a woman’s issue, but it’s spousal and it was just from my experience. But I didn’t do women’s issues generally. I did what was important for Texas.

KOED: And were there other legislative issues where you formed a really strong bond or working relationship with another senator, whether it be female or male? In this case, with Mikulski, but were there other cases when you really worked hand in hand with another member to get a bill passed?

HUTCHISON: Yeah, Lamar Alexander. I worked with him on the America Competes Act. We had to really fight to finish that bill, because it was being held up by the senator from Oklahoma, Tom—

KOED: Tom Coburn?

HUTCHISON: Tom Coburn. He was holding it up because it had a spending authorization. And Lamar and I went and made a plea to him to let it out. [Jay] Rockefeller was the chairman of the Commerce Committee, and he agreed. So we worked—in fact, Jay Rockefeller and I had a great relationship. Jay was chairman of Commerce and I was ranking, and we worked together on NASA. In fact, Bill Nelson and I worked together a lot on NASA.

KOED: Oh, okay, well that would make sense.

HUTCHISON: Yeah, in fact, Bill and I cobbled together the NASA reauthorization, which nobody said we could do, and we did a great bill that accommodated the new private sector competition but kept NASA whole. So we fought hard for that and we won that. Rockefeller and I worked on some things for the—it was a Commerce thing—allowing public safety and public entities to have part of the bandwidth when we were redoing the whole technology regulation. Barbara and I—I was ranking when she was chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Science—and we worked together on NASA and got appropriations for NASA, because she had an issue for Maryland for the science.

KOED: Yeah, she has Goddard and others there as well.

HUTCHISON: So we had a great relationship. We actually had to fight against the Obama administration for the support for NASA, but we did. She stuck with me. I stuck with her. And we got a really solid appropriation. So you know, different alliances. Dianne and I worked on an Amber Alert bill and an anti-stalking bill to go across state lines. Dianne and I had to work to pass those. Ted Kennedy and I worked on a cancer bill that ended up being part of the overall big cancer effort.

KOED: Did you find a difference between working with male members and female members, in terms of the way it works?

HUTCHISON: Not at all.

KOED: Interesting.

HUTCHISON: When we were together on a cause—well, Hillary and I passed the single gender public school option that was a huge change.

KOED: Oh, that’s right. I forgot about that.

HUTCHISON: So now there are girls’ school and boys’ school, and it’s a public education option that we had to fight for. And we fought Ted Kennedy together, because some of the women’s groups, like AAUW—American Association of University Women—they were against it.

KOED: Really?

HUTCHISON: Because they said separate can’t be equal, so they basically said, you know, “You’ll have boys’ schools that get the funding, but not the girls’ schools,” and that kind of thing. But Hillary and I stood firm. And Barbara Mikulski and Susan Collins were our cosponsors. We fought hard for that, because we had to fight Ted, who was formidable.

KOED: A powerhorse, or powerhouse.

HUTCHISON: He was a horse, for sure. So we got that through and it has been a huge success.

KOED: And did you have to write into that legislation, then, language to avoid discrimination like getting more support for boys’ schools than girls’ schools?

HUTCHISON: Well, we didn’t write the—Title Nine that does that, but we did have language that assured that there would be equal treatment, or if there was a single-sex school, that there would be an equal opportunity for the other sex. I can’t remember the exact language, but yes, we did assure that it wouldn’t be just all boys’ schools, that there would be an equal opportunity for girls’ schools.

KOED: And sometimes—to go onto a slightly different topic—I hear female members from time to time talk about balancing family and professional life, which, of course, all members have to do. But sometimes women have a stronger responsibility in terms of family life and that kind of stuff.

HUTCHISON: Oh, no doubt about it.

KOED: I know you adopted two children while you were in the Senate. What was your experience with that, in terms of trying to balance the needs of the two worlds?

HUTCHISON: Well, that was one of the bonding points for the women senators, because if anyone tells you that men and women are equal partners in parenting, they've never been a parent. Women have the major responsibility for children, and so therefore we bonded over talking about what we did. You know, how did we handle it? And there was always a discussion about which is better, keeping your family at home and you commuting, or keeping your family here and going back. That was a discussion. Nobody ever tried to say this one's better for everybody, because we knew that sometimes you have a more supportive spouse or you have a more professionally tied-down spouse, so your spouse isn't going to be able to transfer to Washington. And, of course, our spouse situation is different from a man's, because almost all of our spouses had professional positions.

KOED: Right.

HUTCHISON: And so they had to be able to do that. We talked about that a lot at our dinners and especially when the new women came in. You know, they would be asking about that big issue, and then, if they were going to stay here, how did you get help? Where did you live? Was it better to live in the District, or Virginia, or Maryland? You know, all of those things. I mean, it's the biggest thing that we face and by far the hardest. So the balance—you know, you're never sure if you've done it right.

In the beginning when my children were really little babies and just growing up, I commuted and left them at home with my husband and we had a great caregiver, so that worked out well. I would bring them up and I put them in the Senate daycare. That was great. When they started school, then it became harder. I decided to bring them here. And, oh gosh, I sold the house right here on the Hill and moved out to Virginia, put them in school, and then I didn't get to see them as much because by the time I commuted home, it was eight or nine o'clock and they were going to bed. It was hard. So I ended up, after a year of school in Virginia, I ended up taking them back home where they had infrastructure and put them in school there.

KOED: Oh, no kidding?

HUTCHISON: And then I commuted back and forth. And it was hard.

KOED: Yes, that puts a lot of pressure on you, schedule-wise, emotionally, in every way.

HUTCHISON: In every way.

KOED: But it also means that you're pulled between having to be in Washington and having to be at home taking care of your family.

HUTCHISON: Yeah, it was hard, and when I ended up going the other way and commuting, I missed a lot of things here, because I was on that last plane Thursday, and I came back Monday morning. So you miss the things that happen on weekends, where, you know, there's more relaxation, more doing things together.

KOED: That's right, and I was going to ask you about that. One of the complaints that I hear about the Senate today from members is that there's so little opportunity for them to have the less stressful times when they can be together on weekends and stuff. That would be even harder if you have small children at home that you're trying to get home to. But did you see a change in that over time while you were in the Senate, or was that pattern established?

HUTCHISON: I saw a change, but I know from talking to previous senators—and I remember Lady Bird Johnson saying what it was like when Lyndon was in the Senate, and she said, "You know, we were so bonded, and across party lines, because you would come to Washington for six months and you basically wouldn't go home."

KOED: Yeah, they stayed here.

HUTCHISON: Stayed here for six months, and then you went home for six months. And so they had much more of a close relationship. And when I got here, it was more collegial, because you did do things. It was just more—you did things more—because people would spend some weekends here, but they would also do things at night as couples. But during the 20 years that I was here, it got to be more and more that people commuted and left Thursday and came back Monday.

KOED: Definitely.

HUTCHISON: And I think we lost a lot of the collegiality at that point.

KOED: When you would meet in the regular meetings with the other women senators, was it mostly this kind of stuff, then, that you discussed? These weren't policy discussions, were they? These were discussions about how to survive the Senate?

HUTCHISON: A lot of it was that. A lot of it was how to survive the Senate. You know, how to do the juggling and the balancing. We didn't have policy discussions about anything that was controversial. You know, I don't ever remember us having a serious [debate] where we really debated a policy issue, because you kind of know what people's positions are and their state requirements and that kind of thing. So we might have—you know, there might be a general gripe session about the president, and generally (laughs) the

hardest thing, of course, is to be a senator when your president is in the White House. It's much easier to be the opposition.

KOED: Yeah, it's easier to oppose.

HUTCHISON: Oh, yeah. So you know, there would be a general gripe session. If it was a Democrat, there would be a gripe about the Democrat in the White House. And if it was a Republican, there would be the gripe about the Republican in the White House. And it would be the Republicans griping about the Republican and the Democrats griping about the Democrat, not the Republicans about the Democrat. (laughs) So that was kind of the way that you would have that kind of thing. But nobody ever—you didn't talk about it. That was our rule. You didn't talk outside about anything that was said.

KOED: Okay, yeah.

HUTCHISON: And you know, you might have a discussion about how you could pass something, but it would be something that was important to your state. It wouldn't be a controversial budget issue, or abortion, or something like that. It would be, "Oh gosh, yeah, I'm having trouble with passing some kind of an education amendment." You know?

KOED: Right.

HUTCHISON: And you might talk about that.

KOED: "What are your suggestions for that?"

HUTCHISON: Yeah.

KOED: Interesting. Well, you know, one of the most important questions, but hardest questions to answer, I think, about the role of women in the Senate, is what has been the impact? What difference does it make? You know, we've gone from one senator, Margaret Chase Smith, to two, and then we get to '93 and all of a sudden we have seven female senators, and now we're at 21. If I ask you what difference does it make to have 20 women senators versus one female senator, how would you answer that question?

HUTCHISON: Well, first of all, I think that the first thing is that having a good number is important so that the difference in life experiences is covered, which makes a better piece of legislation for all Americans. But having said that, whether it's seven or 20, I think as long as there's some number where, when you're together on an issue, it's powerful. I don't know that 20 would be—once you get to 20, then there's more diversity in your group. So in the beginning it was kind of the Republican women representing Republican states and the Democratic women Democratic states, but now you've got a Democratic woman in North Dakota. You've got a Democratic woman in—it becomes less cohesive—

when all the Republicans and all the Democrats were together, the consensus is you're going to pass what you wanted as a group.

KOED: Right.

HUTCHISON: But then, when you start diversifying within the group, I don't know that 20 is going to be as powerful or any more powerful than nine of us when we were on the same trajectory. I'm not saying it's not as good. It's probably better. But I don't think it's as much of a factor once you have a nugget. I would say from one to seven or nine or 12, you know, then you've got probably your—whatever you're going to be able to do, you have enough to do it, if you're going to do something that's important like spousal IRA. We did it with, I don't know, seven or nine. Probably nine. So would it have been more likely at 20? No, I think we could do it with nine. I think now it's what your views are that are important, and where America is. I don't think there's a discrimination, in any way, for a woman to be elected to the Senate. We've got them. They've been successful. They've done everything from chair committees, being in leadership, passing bills. They've done it all. You know, Barbara was chairman for a while of Appropriations. I mean, you can't get any stronger than that. So I don't feel that today anybody would say, "I'm not voting for a woman to represent my state." That just would never happen. And you know what? If there's any percentage of people who would say that, there'd be the opposite percentage that would say, "Well, I'm voting because I want a woman."

KOED: Yes.

HUTCHISON: So, it kind of balances. I don't think it's a factor. Hillary [Clinton] just lost, and I don't think her being a woman was a factor. I think she lost because there was a kind of an uprising in America that was based on a feeling, and they weren't thinking, "Oh, we'll have a woman president." They were thinking, "I don't want the kind of economy we have right now," and that kind of thing.

KOED: Are there parts of the Senate, as an institution, that you see have changed because it's had female members?

HUTCHISON: I don't know.

KOED: You know, the Senate of the '50s and '60s was considered very much like an "old boys' club." Do you think that's disappeared now?

HUTCHISON: I think so. I do think it's not considered an "old boys' club." And it used to be kind of the feeling that it was the house of cardinals, you know, it was the greatest debating club in the world.

KOED: The great deliberative body, yeah.

HUTCHISON: Yeah. But I don't sense that now. Maybe people still feel like the Senate is still an elite club, but not an old boys' club.

KOED: I just have one last question to ask you, and that is, are there particular stories or anecdotes from your time in the Senate, particularly dealing with other women, or when gender was an issue, that you'd like to record, that you'd like us to hear about?

HUTCHISON: Well, one thing we were just talking about, I had lunch with my former chief of staff and he was talking about it, because I think our women are bonded, and maybe when there are more women, maybe there won't be a bonding.

KOED: Yeah, we've wondered about that, actually.

HUTCHISON: Yeah, I'm wondering, because we bonded because we're this little group that's had many of the similar experiences, even though we're very different, of overcoming obstacles and of having these issues that are unique to us, meaning our family responsibilities are great and balancing. When there are 25 women, are they going to have that same bonding? I don't know. But because we did—do you remember when there was the, I'm trying to remember the name of the powder that was found in some of the Senate—

KOED: Oh, the anthrax?

HUTCHISON: Anthrax. When we had that anthrax scare and they had to clear out many of those Hart—

KOED: Yeah, the Hart Building was closed for three months.

HUTCHISON: Yes. We set Dianne Feinstein up in our conference room, and she officed there for over a month. We just turned it over to her. My chief of staff was saying that her chief of staff said, "Well, where can we print things?" And my chief of staff said, "You use our printer. You use our mailroom. You use our refrigerator. Whatever you want. I mean, this is your office." And he said, "Really? I mean, you don't worry that we're going to"—

KOED: "You trust us?"

HUTCHISON: Yeah, I mean, he basically said that. "You don't mind where we go?" He said, "Are you kidding? Of course not." Because Dianne and I were such friends, and we are such friends even today. And so, you know, it was just our little team and their little team, and it all worked out really well. And we gave them our hideaway. You know, those kinds of things that, because I knew her so well and we were such friends and I would have done it for somebody that was a really good friend. So you know, those kinds of things. And like Barbara Mikulski, I don't have a better friend than Barbara.

KOED: I remember when you gave your farewell address to the Senate and Barbara Mikulski came to the floor. I was watching that and it was a wonderful exchange that really showed the bond and the camaraderie that the two of you had built up through the years.

HUTCHISON: Yeah.

KOED: And I think that's a wonderful thing to see.

HUTCHISON: Yeah. Barbara was wonderful. You know, I understand totally why she would want to leave after being really in Congress her whole life, but she was very special. And Barbara and Dianne are two of my very best friends. And Dianne and I, you know, are just—I've never done this, but she has said, "Anytime you come to Washington, you can stay in my house, whether I'm here or not." You know, that kind of thing. And I don't think I've done it because I just haven't needed to, but I would. I'm having dinner with her tonight and we're just friends.

KOED: So, as you look back on your Senate career, are those the things that you take away with you the most—the friendships?

HUTCHISON: Oh, definitely. The best part of the Senate is—and this is the clubbiness—but no one can really understand what you go through and all the issues that you face and how hard it is sometimes to vote a certain way or not vote with your friends. I mean, when your constituents are 50-50 split, all these pressures that you have, there's just nobody else who understands it except somebody who's been in that position. So you do have that. If there is a club, it's that. And Phil Gramm is one of my best friends, and I'm having lunch with him and his wife Wendy on Tuesday in San Antonio, because I'm going to be there. When my husband died, I called Phil. He was in New York. He called me right back. I said, "Phil, I want you to give a eulogy at Ray's funeral." And he said, "I'll be there. I don't have any idea what my schedule says. I'll be there." And he gave a wonderful eulogy to him, talking about the fact that we were such good friends, which is so unusual in the Senate where two people from the same state generally are competitors.

KOED: That's usually not the case.

HUTCHISON: Yeah. He said that Ray was the best Senate spouse that he met in his entire 20 years in the Senate. And you know, that is an experience that you just can't duplicate.

KOED: Yeah, it's the club of having the election certificate, essentially.

HUTCHISON: It is. That's the club.

KOED: And no one else can understand it beyond that.

HUTCHISON: Yeah, that's it. That's the club. And it's not that it's rarified or elite or anything like that. I mean, no two people could be more different than Patty Murray and me, but we've been through that. I mean, she was the little lady in tennis shoes and I was the Longhorn cheerleader. (laughs) I mean, you know, you have faced that and you know what it's like and you've faced the trivialization, and so you do bond. In many ways, you bond with the whole Senate, but especially that women factor. But would 20 be different from seven or nine? I don't know.

KOED: Yeah, we've wondered, too, if when they get to 25 or 30 or 40, what will happen? Will it break down the camaraderie that they have? Will it become more partisan? We don't know. We'll have to wait and see.

HUTCHISON: Yeah. I think it's a question.

KOED: It is a good question. Any final thoughts you'd like to add to this before we wrap up today?

HUTCHISON: I think you've been great.

KOED: Okay, thank you.

HUTCHISON: Thank you.

[End of Interview]

Index

- Alexander, Lamar (R-TN), 15
- America Competes Act (2007), 15
- Anthrax incident, Senate, 21
- Armed Services Committee, Senate, 11
- Barton, Joe L., 4
- Bentsen, Lloyd Millard, Jr. (D-TX), 4
- Boxer, Barbara (D-CA), 6
- Campaigning
 - House of Representatives (1982), 3
 - Texas House of Representatives (1972), 5
 - Texas state treasurer (1990), 3–4, 5–6
 - U.S. Senate (1992), 4–6
- Clements, William P., Jr. “Bill,” 3
- Clinton, Hillary Rodham (D-NY), 7, 16, 20
- Clinton, William Jefferson “Bill,” 4
- Coburn, Thomas A. (R-OK), 15
- Collins, Susan M. (R-ME), 8, 9, 16
- Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, Senate, 15
- Dole, Robert J. (R-KS), 11
- Feinstein, Dianne (D-CA), 6, 8–9, 21–22
- Fields, Jack M., Jr., 4
- Gramm, W. Philip “Phil” (R-TX), 10–11, 22
- Healthcare, 7
- Hutchison, Ray, 3, 22
- Johnson, Claudia A. “Lady Bird,” 18
- Kassebaum, Nancy L. (R-KS), 6–7, 9–10
- Kennedy Edward M. “Ted” (D-MA), 16
- Kennedy, John F., 1
- Krueger, Robert C. “Bob” (D-TX), 4
- Leadership, Republican women in, 9–10
- Lincoln, Blanche L. (D-AR), 8
- Mikulski, Barbara A. (D-MD), 6, 8–9, 14–15, 16, 20, 21–22
- Moseley Braun, Carol (D-IL), 6, 11
- Murray, Patty (D-WA), 6, 9, 23
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), 15
- National Transportation Safety Board, 3
- Nelson, Clarence William “Bill” (D-FL), 15
- Nunn, Samuel A. (D-GA), 11
- Rape victims, laws to protect, 2–3
- Richards, Ann, 3
- Rockefeller, John Davidson IV “Jay” (D-WV), 15
- Senate, U.S.
 - bipartisan women's group, 7–8, 17–19
 - gym, 11–12
 - leadership, Republican women in, 9–10
 - women's restroom in the Capitol, 11–12
- Sex discrimination, 1–2
- Sexism, 5, 13–14, 20–21, 23
- Smith, Margaret Chase (R-ME), 13
- Snowe, Olympia J. (R-ME), 8
- Spousal IRA Act, Kay Bailey Hutchison, 8, 14–15
- Texas
 - House of Representatives, 2–3
 - state treasurer, 3–4, 5–6
- Title IX single-sex education amendment, 16
- Tower, John G. (R-TX), 3
- University of Texas, 1, 13
- Work-life balance, 16–18
- “Year of the Woman,” 6