The Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues: An Inside Perspective on Lawmaking by and for Women

Julia L. Ernst
Georgetown University Law Center

Follow this and additional works at: https://repository.law.umich.edu/mjgl

Part of the Law and Politics Commons, and the Legislation Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://repository.law.umich.edu/mjgl/vol12/iss2/1

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at University of Michigan Law School Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Michigan Journal of Gender and Law by an authorized editor of University of Michigan Law School Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact mlawrepository@umich.edu.
THE CONGRESSIONAL CAUCUS FOR WOMEN’S ISSUES: AN INSIDE PERSPECTIVE ON LAWMAKING
BY AND FOR WOMEN

Julia L. Ernst*

I. INTRODUCTION • 190
II. THE DYNAMIC HISTORY OF THE WOMEN’S CAUCUS • 192
III. INSIDE MECHANICS: HOW THE WOMEN’S CAUCUS WORKED IN THE 108TH CONGRESS • 201
   A. People Involved in the Women’s Caucus • 201
      1. Women’s Caucus Leaders • 202
      2. Women’s Caucus Membership • 205
      3. Women’s Caucus Staffers • 215
   B. Mechanisms for Action within the Women’s Caucus • 218
      1. Women’s Caucus Action Newsletter • 218
      2. Women’s Caucus Website • 220
      3. Whipping • 223
      4. Meetings with Government Officials • 225
      5. Press Releases, Press Conferences and the Media • 227
      6. Briefings, Receptions and Ceremonies • 228
      7. Speeches • 229
      8. Sign-on Letters • 230
      9. Partnership with Women's Policy, Inc. and Other Women's Organizations • 231
      10. CODELs • 232
      11. Informal Gatherings in the Lindy Boggs Room • 233
      12. Report of the Women’s Caucus Accomplishments • 233
IV. PRIORITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE WOMEN’S CAUCUS IN THE 108TH CONGRESS • 234
   A. Legislative Campaigns and Victories • 236
      1. Sexual Assault of Women in the Military • 238
      2. The United Nations Development Fund for Women • 242
      3. Honoring “Rosie the Riveter” • 243

* Julia L. Ernst served as co-director of the bipartisan Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues (“Women’s Caucus”) from December 2003–January 2005 during her tenure as Legislative Counsel for Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY), who co-chaired the Women’s Caucus in the 108th Congress. The author currently serves as Executive Director of the Women’s Law and Public Policy Fellowship Program at the Georgetown University Law Center (www.wlppfp.org). See Appendix A for acknowledgements.
I. Introduction

This Article is written to inform constituencies who seek to advance the status of women through the federal legislative process—including lawmakers, Congressional staff, women's organizations, and interested individuals of the general public—about the inner workings of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues during the 108th Congress, particularly in the second session. Historians and academics studying women and the law may also find this Article useful. Commonly known as the Women's Caucus, this bipartisan group consists of women Representatives who work together to advance women's issues.
through raising awareness of and taking action on federal legislation and policy particularly affecting women.

Currently, the Women's Caucus is comprised of the women Members of the U.S. House of Representatives. Its declared purposes include promoting women's leadership within Congress and serving as a venue through which Members can advance women's issues both in the United States and throughout the world. The Women's Caucus is at its most powerful when caucus leadership and Members use the organization as a legislative vehicle through which to enact bills into law, to attain increases in federal funding for programs affecting women, and to take other measures that have concrete and lasting impacts upon women's lives. Less tangible, yet significant, benefits include the fostering of informal networks through relationships and friendships that are developed, particularly across the aisle where few opportunities currently exist for nonpartisan collegiality.

Like all organizations, the impact and influence of the Women's Caucus has ebbed and flowed throughout the years since it was founded in 1977. Its successes have been affected both by internal factors (the personalities and charisma of its various leaders, the changing political perspectives of its Members, organizational structure, etc.) and by external factors (whether or not the House leadership has permitted the caucus to have an official staff, office space and budget, the political and partisan climate within Congress and the Administration, etc.). It is the author's hope that by making information available about how the Women's Caucus functioned in the 108th Congress, in the future interested parties will be better enabled to make use of the Women's Caucus to promote women's issues, will obtain ideas about proven legislative strategies from the examples outlined in this Article, and will help strengthen the power and effectiveness of the Women's Caucus.


2. Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues Bylaws, Article I, § 2 (on file with the author) [hereinafter Bylaws]. See Appendix B for a listing of the purposes of the Women's Caucus according to its bylaws.


4. GERTZOG I, supra note 3; see generally IRWIN N. GERTZOG, CONGRESSIONAL WOMEN: THEIR RECRUITMENT, INTEGRATION AND BEHAVIOR (1995) [hereinafter GERTZOG II] (a comprehensive history of the Women's Caucus) (these are highly recommended books for anyone interested in the Women's Caucus).
II. The Dynamic History of the Women’s Caucus

Prior to the launch of the Women’s Caucus in 1977, women serving in the U.S. House of Representatives had been instrumental in passing some of the most significant landmark legislation affecting women and girls up to that time. For example, women Members of Congress were instrumental in securing passage of the 1963 Equal Pay Act, requiring equal pay for equal work; including women within the protections of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; enacting Title IX of the 1972 Education Act, mandating non-discrimination against women and girls in federally supported educational, vocational, and school-based athletic opportunities; and passing the Equal Rights Amendment, which would have guaranteed equality for women in the U.S. Constitution, but died just three states short of ratification. The Congresswomen often met informally over lunch in the Members’ Dining Room to maintain interpersonal relationships, as well as to work on legislative strategies to help promote each other’s bills. They finally arrived at the conclusion that establishing a formal caucus comprised of the women Members of Congress would help bring greater credibility and strength to their joint efforts.

The Women’s Caucus, then known as the “Congresswomen’s Caucus,” was founded in April 1977 by a group of fifteen women Members of the House of Representatives to bring greater legislative attention to issues particularly affecting women. That year, eighteen women were serving in the House (4% of the total). The Caucus soon hired Betty

6. Foerstel, supra note 5, at 106.
7. Foerstel, supra note 5, at 106.
9. The eighteen women serving in the House of Representatives were: Corinne C. (Lindy) Boggs (D-LA), Yvonne Brathwaite Burke (D-CA), Shirley Anita Chisholm (D-NY), Cardiss Collins (D-IL), Millicent Fenwick (R-NJ), Margaret M. Heckler (R-MA), Marjorie S. Holt (R-MD), Elizabeth Holtzman (D-NY), Barbara C. Jordan (D-TX), Martha Elizabeth Keys (D-KS), Marilyn Lloyd (D-TN), Helen Stevenson Meyner (D-NJ), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Mary Rose Oakar (D-OH), Shirley N.
Dooley as its first Executive Director and Susan Scanlan as its Deputy Director. The Caucus leaders also established the Congresswomen's Caucus Corporation (CCC), a separate non-profit organization to assist in supporting the goals of the Caucus, which subsequently became the Women's Research and Educational Institute.

Bipartisanship and pluralism were the hallmarks established by the two women who founded and served as the first co-chairs of the Women's Caucus, Margaret Heckler (R-MA) and Elizabeth Holtzman (D-NY). They established a policy that no action would be taken in the name of the Caucus as a whole unless all Members of the Caucus

Pettis (R-CA), Patricia S. Schroeder (D-CO), Virginia Smith (R-NE), and Gladys Noon Spellman (D-MD). Mildred L. Amer, Women in the United States Congress: 1917–2004, Congressional Research Service, July 1 2004, at 76 [hereinafter CRS Women in Congress Report]. Very few women had served in Congress up to that point. In 1916 Jeannette Rankin (R-MT) became the first woman to be elected the House of Representatives. Appointed in 1922, Rebecca Latimer Felton (D-GA) was the first women Senator, and served for just one day. By 1977, only sixty-nine women had ever served in the House of Representatives. Id.

10. GERTZOG II, supra note 4, at 193.

11. Id. at 194–195. The CCC (later re-named WREI) was originally housed in the same office space as the staff of the Congresswomen's Caucus. Id. at 205. Betty Dooley became the first Executive Director of the CCC and Susan Scanlan became the Executive Director of the Caucus. Id. at 194. Ann Charnley Smith became the Caucus Executive Director in 1980, when Susan Scanlan moved to WREI. Id. at 205. Betty Dooley served as President of WREI from 1982 until 1999. Although Susan Scanlan left WREI in 1989, she returned in 1999 and assumed the position of president in 2000. WREI coordinates the Congressional Fellowships on Women and Public Policy and publishes the book series called The American Woman, in addition to numerous other projects and publications. See WREI website at http://www.wrei.org/about/dooley.htm; http://www.wrei.org/about/staff.htm.

12. GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 9–10. See also WOMEN AND ELECTIVE OFFICE: PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE 134 (Sue Thomas and Clyde Wilcox, eds., 1998) [hereinafter Thomas and Wilcox]; and Thompson, supra note 8, at 17. Political analysts have concluded that both Republican and Democratic women are more likely to focus on women's issues than men from either party. MARIE C. WILSON, CLOSING THE LEADERSHIP GAP: WHY WOMEN CAN AND MUST HELP RUN THE WORLD 10 (2004) [hereinafter WILSON]. The other Members of the first Executive Committee included Yvonne Braithwaite Burke (D-CA), an African American lawyer who was named Treasurer of the Women's Caucus; Shirley Pettis (R-CA), a conservative Member allied with the Republican leadership; Shirley Chisholm (D-NY), the first African-American Congresswoman; and Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), who had a close relationship with the House leadership and with women's organizations. The emphasis on bipartisanship was continued and solidified under the leadership of co-chairs Olympia Snowe (R-ME) and Patricia Schroeder (D-CO). GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 29–30. The co-chairs of the Women's Caucus have always consisted of one Republican and one Democrat (see Appendix C for a list of the co-chairs). WPI website, supra note 8, http://www.womenspolicy.org/caucus/leadership.html; GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 21; CRS Women in Congress Report, supra note 9, at 30.
were in agreement. The founders also agreed to keep the issue of abortion off the table, since the two co-chairs as well as other Members had differing views about this issue. Of course, Members were free to pursue any issue outside of the Caucus, independently, whenever the Caucus did not have unanimous agreement upon an issue. These principles continued to guide the workings of the Women's Caucus in the 108th Congress.

Members discussed domestic violence during their first official Congresswomen's Caucus meeting on April 19, 1977, in the Congresswomen's Reading Room. Throughout the 95th Congress, the women Members met weekly, with about nine to fifteen Members attending each meeting, where they "broached pressing issues, shared concerns about problems women faced, requested support or co-sponsorship of legislative proposals, and speculated about parliamentary strategies they might employ." The Members discussed issues ranging from childcare and job training for women on welfare to Social Security and private pension reform, from violence against women to government contracts for women-owned businesses. They also invited prominent officials

13. GERTZOG I, supra note 3, 10-11.
14. Id. at 11. Although the Women's Caucus changed this policy for a brief time in the early 1990s, it shortly thereafter changed back to embrace neutrality on the issue of abortion, and Members who supported women's reproductive rights joined the Bipartisan Congressional Pro-Choice Caucus. GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at p. 39, 128. See also, MICHELE L. SWERS, THE DIFFERENCE WOMEN MAKE: THE POLICY IMPACT OF WOMEN IN CONGRESS 168 (2002) [hereinafter SWERS]. See also Thompson, supra note 8, at 12.
15. GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 13.
16. WPI website, supra note 8; Rep. Carolyn Maloney's website, at www.house.gov/maloney/issues/womenscaucus/history.html [hereinafter MALONEY WEBSITE]; GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 13. This room, located directly off Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol Building (H-235), is now known as the "Corinne 'Lindy' Boggs Congressional Women's Reading Room," or less formally as the Lindy Boggs Room. The dedication of this small, elegant hideaway as the Lindy Boggs Congressional Women's Reading Room commemorated the long service of Caucus Secretary Lindy Boggs (D-LA). See United States Capital Historical Society, Congressional Resolution Honors Lindy Boggs, available at http://www.uschs.org/01_society/subs/subs_a/005_b.html, H. Con. Res. 439 (July 24, 2002). Lindy Boggs' husband was Majority Leader Hale Boggs of Louisiana. Her daughter, famous in her own right, is Cokie Roberts, senior news analyst for National Public Radio. Id. See Thompson, supra note, 8, at 28, endnote 20. The Lindy Boggs Room is available to women Members of Congress only; and only occasionally are exceptions made for guests of the women Members, such as U.S. Supreme Court Justices Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg.
17. GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 13.
18. See MALONEY WEBSITE, supra note 16.
within the Administration to discuss issues concerning women. The meetings tended to be informal, fast-paced, free-flowing exchanges of ideas, with individual Members agreeing to take the lead on various initiatives. In later Congresses, under the leadership of co-chairs Olympia Snowe (R-ME) and Patricia Schroeder (D-CO), for example, the Women's Caucus instituted less frequent Member meetings, which were also well-attended. Part of the appeal of participating in Women's Caucus meetings and events is the camaraderie that the Members develop with one another, and the Members enjoy getting together and discussing personal issues such as women balancing work and family. In more recent years, Members have gathered for specific events and meetings focused on particular topics rather than regularly scheduled member meetings.

Rep. Patricia Schroeder became co-chair of the Caucus in 1981, and Rep. Olympia Snowe became co-chair in 1983. Both retained these positions for over a decade, up to 1994. In 1981 the Caucus underwent a re-organization, in part in response to the new Reagan Administration and more conservative national climate, and in part because of changes in House rules concerning financial support for caucuses. Membership in the Caucus was opened to male Representatives who had an interest in advancing women's interests, and the Caucus changed its name to the "Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues." Male Members had associate status in the Caucus, and only women Members served on the executive committee, which drafted legislative policy and elected the officers of the Caucus. Numerous men joined the Caucus, enabling them to receive the weekly newsletters and

---

19. For example, "During the 95th Congress, the caucus met with Commerce Secretary Juanita Kreps, HEW Secretary Joseph Califano twice, Attorney General Griffen Bell twice, Labor Secretary Marshall, and Bert Lance and James McIntyre, successive Directors of the Office of Management and the Budget." GERTZOG II, supra note 4, at 186.
21. Id. at 29. See also Thompson, supra note 8, at 28; GERTZOG II, supra note 4, at 211.
22. FOERSTEL, supra note 5, at 113–118; GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 120; Thompson, supra note 8, at 5–6; GERTZOG II, supra note 4, at 211.
24. FOERSTEL, supra note 5, at 107.
25. FOERSTEL, supra note 5, at 106; Thompson, supra note 8, at 4.
26. FOERSTEL, supra note 5, at 106; GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 23; Thompson, supra note 8, at 1.
27. FOERSTEL, supra note 5, at p. 108; Thompson, supra note 8, at 4; GERTZOG II, supra note 4, at 211.
policy briefings as well as tout their membership to their constituents.\textsuperscript{28} During this period, the Economic Equity Act, which was an omnibus package of measures intended to create greater economic equality for women, became a signature piece of legislation supported by the Caucus.\textsuperscript{29} The Women's Caucus hosted a reception in July 1983 for Sally Ride, the first woman astronaut, garnering articles in \textit{The New York Times} and \textit{The Washington Post}.\textsuperscript{30} The new size of the caucus, reaching 127 Members including Speaker Tip O'Neill (D-MA), enabled it to become even more influential and useful as a consensus-building mechanism.\textsuperscript{31}

Due to the 1992 election nearly doubling the number of women in the House of Representatives, with twenty-four new women elected to Congress, twenty-two of whom joined the Women's Caucus, this became known as the "Year of the Woman."\textsuperscript{32} For the first time, a woman Member was appointed to serve on every House committee.\textsuperscript{33} In the 103rd Congress (spanning 1993 through 1994), the Women's Caucus leadership established several task forces, including one on women's health led by Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-NY), one on violence against women led by Rep. Connie Morella (R-MD), and one on economic and educational equity led by Rep. Patsy Mink (D-HI).\textsuperscript{34} The Women's Caucus was highly successful during 103rd Congress, nearly doubling the number of measures it helped enact (sixty-six Caucus-sponsored laws were enacted between 1993-1994, including landmark proposals addressing violence against women, women's health, working women, education and families).\textsuperscript{35} Representative Olympia Snowe hailed: "For

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{28} \textsc{Foerstel}, \textit{supra} note 5, at 108; Thompson, \textit{supra} note 8, at 4. (By 1994, 120 men and 45 women were Members of the Caucus.). \textsc{Foerstel}, \textit{supra} note 5, at 108; \textsc{Gertzog II}, \textit{supra} note 4, at 211.
\item \textsuperscript{29} \textsc{Foerstel}, \textit{supra} note 5, p. 106-07. Economic issues addressed by the Women's Caucus included "pension rights for elderly women, child support for divorced women, and equal pay for work of comparable value . . . and such issues as Individual Retirement Accounts for homemakers and survivor pension rights." Thompson, \textit{supra} note 8, at 13, 19-21.
\item \textsuperscript{30} \textit{See} Thompson, \textit{supra} note 8, at 23.
\item \textsuperscript{31} \textit{Id.} at 1.
\item \textsuperscript{32} \textsc{Gertzog I}, \textit{supra} note 3, at 35; \textsc{Gertzog II}, \textit{supra} note 4, at 78.
\item \textsuperscript{33} \textsc{Gertzog I}, \textit{supra} note 3, at 38.
\item \textsuperscript{34} \textsc{Gertzog I}, \textit{supra} note 3, at 4, 39. \textit{See infra} Appendix D for a listing of the task forces and chairs.
\item \textsuperscript{35} \textsc{Swers}, \textit{supra} note 14, at 29; \textsc{Gertzog I}, \textit{supra} note 3, at 35. These measures included the Family and Medical Leave Act, the Violence Against Women Act, large increases in funding for breast cancer research, equity for women and minorities in National Institute of Health (NIH) research, and the elimination of statutory discrimination against women's service in the Armed Forces. \textsc{Foerstel}, \textit{supra} note 5, at 127-128. \textit{See also} Thomas and Wilcox, \textit{supra} note 12, at 11.
\end{itemize}
families with new babies or elderly parents who need care, for women who are afraid to walk down to their cars at night, for all who fear that breast cancer will deprive them of a mother, sister or daughter, this Congress has made a difference.\(^3\)

The strength of the Women's Caucus has been largely credited for these and prior victories on legislation affecting women.\(^3\)

Like other specialized caucuses known as legislative service organizations (LSOs),\(^3\) the Women's Caucus grew in size and stature, and gained its own office (though hidden away in room 2471 of the Rayburn House Office Building), its own dedicated personnel (an executive director, five full-time staff, and college and legal interns, including several young lawyers provided through the Women's Law and Public Policy Fellowship Program at the Georgetown University Law Center), and funding for staff from Members' employee allowances.\(^3\)

The Caucus went from a staff of one in the 1970s to six full-time staffers in the mid-1990s.\(^4\)

In 1994, Reps. Olympia Snowe and Patricia Schroeder, who had chaired the Women's Caucus for over a decade, decided to give up their positions in order to move on to other responsibilities.\(^4\)

Therefore, the Caucus Members decided to revise the bylaws, establishing two-year terms for co-chairs and establishing new vice-chair positions with the same term limits.\(^4\)

The change in political leadership within the House of Representatives to the Republican Party in 1995 brought about another set of changes to the Women's Caucus. The new Republican leadership in the House was determined to abolish all funding, offices and staffs of all LSOs, including the Women's Caucus, despite the efforts of Members like Connie Morella to prevent the Women's Caucus from being undercut by the new policy.\(^4\)

Therefore, the Women's Caucus was forced to restructure

38. E.g., the Republican Study Committee, the Democratic Study Group, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and the Congressional Black Caucus. See FOERSTEL, supra note 5, at 104; and GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 2–3.
39. GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 2–3, 12. Note that the office was converted from a lounge and restroom originally intended for the Congresswomen, since the location in the Rayburn House Office Building was found to be too far from the House chambers in the Capitol Building. Thompson, supra note 8, at 24.
40. GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 4.
41. FOERSTEL, supra note 5, at 107.
42. Id.
43. At the time, twenty-eight legislative service organizations (LSOs) existed, all of which were abolished by the new Republican leadership in the House. FOERSTEL, supra note 5, at 104–105; GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 1; see also SWERS, supra note 14, at 30.
itself into a Congressional Membership Organization (CMO), and staff working in the Caucus leaders' personal offices began to help coordinate Caucus activities and initiatives.\textsuperscript{44} The composition of the Women's Caucus was changed to include only women Members of Congress.\textsuperscript{45} The former staff of the Caucus created a new non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, called Women's Policy, Inc., to continue to provide research and information services on women's issues for Members of Congress.\textsuperscript{46} 

During the last decade, the Women's Caucus has undertaken a variety of initiatives and come up with new strategies for promoting women's issues. For example, the first Women's Caucus hearings were held during the 105th Congress under co-chairs Reps. Nancy Johnson (R-CT) and Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC).\textsuperscript{47} These hearings addressed childcare for preschoolers, breast cancer, contraceptive coverage and opportunities for women-owned businesses to attain contracts through the federal procurement process.\textsuperscript{48} During these hearings, the Members heard testimony from representatives from the National Institutes for Health, the Food and Drug Administration, the Office of Women's Health, the National Cancer Institute, Head Start, state agencies, academia, the business community, and other interested constituencies.\textsuperscript{49} In addition, instead of utilizing the previous "omnibus bill" approach, Reps. Johnson and Norton came up with seven targeted bills, four of which were passed into law.\textsuperscript{50} Instead of using "task forces"
led by a single chair, they developed legislative “teams” lead by two co-chairs—one from each party.  

These teams or task forces have varied during subsequent Congresses.  Although such teams have sometimes existed mainly on paper, some of them have been very effective. The team on Women-Owned Businesses was co-chaired by Reps. Sue Kelly (R-NY) and Juanita Millender-McDonald (D-CA), who both also served on the Small Business Committee, thus strengthening their expertise and influence on these issues.  They convened a Members meeting and a Women’s Caucus hearing on ways in which Members of Congress can help women entrepreneurs secure government contracts.  In addition, they developed a resolution calling upon federal agencies to live up to their commitment under the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act of 1994 to provide greater opportunities for government contracts to women-owned businesses (including the goal of using women and minority-owned businesses for 5% of government contracts). They also sponsored a series of Special Order speeches and a press conference on this issue during International Working Women’s Day, convened a Women’s Business Roundtable, and promoted legislation increasing the Small Business Administration’s funds for Women’s Business Centers.  

Since the structural changes in 1995, the leadership of the Women’s Caucus has included one Republican and one Democratic co-chair, and one Republican and one Democratic vice-chair. The Republican and Democratic leaders are elected by Members of their respective parties. New leaders are elected at the beginning of each Congress (i.e., every two years). Usually the Republican and Democratic vice-chairs are nominated to become the new co-chairs for the next Congress, ensuring that continuity and institutional memory is preserved within the leadership of the next Caucus. The co-chairs are tasked with presenting an annual report to the Caucus Members detailing the activities of the Caucus during the year, which are sometimes combined into a two-year report on

---

51. Id. at 121–22.
52. See infra, Appendix D (for a listing of Women’s Caucus Task Forces or Teams in the 103rd, and 105th through 107th and 109th Congresses).
53. GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 123.
54. Id.
55. Id.
56. Id.
57. WPI website, supra note 8, at http://www.womenspolicy.org/caucus/leadership.html; Bylaws, supra note 2, Article IV, § 2; Art. VII. The Bylaws also provide for the election of a Secretary, but this position has not been filled in recent years.
58. Bylaws, supra note 2, Art. IV §, Section 2.
59. Id. Art. V §, Section 3.
the Women's Caucus throughout the co-chairs' entire term during a Congress. The co-chairs have the authority to create committees or task forces on particular issues, which are charged with carrying out general education activities, developing positions, issuing statements, and making formal endorsements concerning those issues. For example, in 1997, the Title IX Committee of the Women's Caucus, led by Rep. Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick (D-MI), participated in a Women's Caucus hearing celebrating the 25th Anniversary of Title IX.

Throughout its history, Members have seen the Women's Caucus as serving multiple purposes. For example, of the women who founded the Caucus, "[s]ome saw it as exerting a united force to promote unanimously approved agendas, others as a catalyst for processing and refining legislative measures, and still others as simply a forum for exchanging ideas." Unified support by the women Members for a bill signifies the importance of women's concern for the issue and garners press attention on the measure. The Caucus also serves as an "incubator" for ideas whose time had not yet come, to help educate other Members and staff about the problems that women face, and potential legislative solutions to those problems. Over time, such awareness-raising measures undertaken through the Caucus have built a constituency for such legislation, and the Caucus has developed and refined bills addressing those issues.

The Women's Caucus has extended the protections of statutes to previously excluded groups, developed omnibus legislative proposals with the intention of promoting and passing several components each year, and taken advantage of opportunities afforded by sensational developments drawing national public attention, interest and support. Congress-

61. Bylaws, supra note 2, Art. IX, § 2(B); Art. X, §§ 1, 2.
63. GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 8; see also SWERS, supra note 14, at 30.
64. SWERS, supra note 14, at 71.
65. GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 11.
66. See SWERS, supra note 14, at 71.
67. GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 15–16. Examples of the omnibus legislative initiatives include the Women's Health Equity Act first introduced in 1990, and the Economic Equity Act, introduced in the late 1970s up through 1996. Id. at 15.
women also testify before committees on issues of importance to women, contributing significant impetus behind legislative measures addressing those issues, often drawing upon their own experiences as working mothers, breast cancer survivors, objects of sexual harassment or gender discrimination, and caregivers for elderly parents. One of the most significant benefits of membership in the Women's Caucus is the information the Caucus provides about upcoming legislation concerning women. Moreover, the existence of the Caucus has increased the salience of women's issues in general, since more Members began to assign staffers specifically to follow women's issues after the formation of the Women's Caucus. See Appendix E for examples of successful initiatives impacting women's issues that were supported by the Women's Caucus prior to the 108th Congress.

III. Inside Mechanics: How the Women's Caucus Worked in the 108th Congress

This section provides a glimpse into the inner workings of the Women's Caucus, particularly in the second session of the 108th Congress. In part, this section provides a record to supplement institutional memory concerning how the Caucus functions, which is often lost due to high turnover of Congressional staff and the rotation of the Caucus leadership every two years. It can be seen as a "how to" guide describing the mechanics of the Women's Caucus, and can serve as a practical resource for Women's Caucus Members, staff, and others seeking to work with the Women's Caucus to help foster ideas for future projects.

A. People Involved in the Women's Caucus

As indicated in part II of this Article, the organization of the Women's Caucus has gone through many changes since its beginning. Moreover, although the Women's Caucus adopted a set of bylaws in 1995, those bylaws have served more as flexible, adaptive guidelines for

---

68. See GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 44–45; see also, Thomas and Wilcox, supra note 12, at 131–32.
69. Thompson, supra note 8, at 6–7.
70. Id. at 8, 29.
71. See Thompson, supra note 8, at 28 endnote 22 (concerning the long history of high staff turnover).
72. Mechanisms that are described in detail in the following section, such as legislation and hearings, are not separately addressed in this section.
caucus functioning rather than a rigid set of rules. In addition, the Caucus has developed an informal culture that is unwritten yet generally understood. For example, the Democrats sometimes take a more public stance on certain issues while their Republican counterparts work the same issues behind-the-scenes. And of course, the culture, organization and functioning of the Women's Caucus during any particular Congress will be largely determined by the individual leadership styles, interests, and investment in the Caucus by the Members who are leading the Caucus, especially the two co-chairs.

1. Women's Caucus Leaders

The Women's Caucus leadership currently consists of four Members: one Democratic and one Republican co-chair, and one Democratic and one Republican vice-chair. The Democratic and Republican leaders are elected by Members of their respective parties. Their term of office consists of one term of Congress (two years, otherwise known as two "sessions" of Congress); therefore, at the beginning of each Congress, a new set of co-chairs and vice-chairs is elected. In general, Members who served as vice-chairs in the previous Congress are elected as the new co-chairs in the next Congress, thus preserving a certain degree of continuity and institutional memory within the Caucus leadership. The Democratic Members have typically been more interested in serving in the Women's Caucus leadership than the Republican Members; as a result, normally the only position that might be con-

73. GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 86.
74. See also id. at 117–19, 174–75.
75. Bylaws, supra note 2, Arts. VI, VII (Although the bylaws also provide for a secretary of the caucus, this position has not been utilized in recent years).
76. Id. Art. IV § 1.
77. See Bylaws, supra note 2, Art. V § 3. This section provides: "'Term' shall consist of one Congressional term. An Executive Committee Member shall not serve in the same office for more than one consecutive term."
78. This may be, in part, due to the fact that there have been more Democratic than Republican women Members serving in Congress, and thus a greater pool of Members who might want to run. It may be, in part, because Republican women Members did not want to be pigeonholed as interested in so-called "soft issues" such as women's issues, which together with education, the environment, health care, children's issues, and similar matters have tended to be perceived as more the focus of the Democratic Party; rather than so-called "hard issues" dealing with defense, taxes, business, the economy, international trade, and the like, which have historically been perceived as more of the focus of the Republican Party. However, both Republicans and Democrats alike in the Women's Caucus have prioritized issues such as women
At the beginning of the 108th Congress, Reps. Slaughter (D-NY) and Capito (R-WV), who were the vice-chairs of the Caucus in the 107th Congress, were the uncontested candidates for co-chair of the Caucus for the upcoming term. Rep. Capito recruited newly-elected freshman Rep. Ginny Brown-Waite (R-FL) to run for the Republican vice-chair position, who also ran unopposed. However, both Rep. Hilda Solis (D-CA) and Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA) sought the position of Democratic vice-chair. Therefore, the mechanics of the elections were somewhat different for Members of the two parties. The Democratic and Republican co-chairs of the outgoing Caucus leadership are tasked with running the elections for the incoming Caucus leaders, since they cannot run for any of the positions and therefore are presumably the most impartial people to handle the logistics of the balloting. Since both Republican Members were uncontested, the Republican co-chair of the 107th Congress, Rep. Judy Biggert (R-IL), simply sent out the ballots via inter-office mail and requested the Republican Members to return their ballots in the same manner. However, since the Democratic vice-chair position was contested, the Democratic co-chair of the 107th Congress, Rep. Juanita Millender-McDonald (D-CA), needed to establish a more formal election procedure. Therefore, the Democratic Members were informed that they could cast their ballots in person during a several hour block of time on a particular date in the Lindy Boggs Room. The Women’s Caucus staffers for both Rep. Millender-McDonald and Rep. Biggert, as well as the staffer for the Democratic co-chair from the preceding Congress (Rep. Maloney), all stayed in the Lindy Boggs Room to oversee the ballot box, to keep track of all of the Members who voted and call the offices of those who had not yet voted toward the end of the allotted time period as a reminder to those Members, and to tally the votes after the election period had ended. The

entrepreneurs and business leaders, issues dealing with women in the military, women’s health issues, and other issues that have cut across party lines.

79. The Republican women who have stepped forward in recent years have tended to be newer Members in more moderate districts, who may have considered that involvement with the Women’s Caucus could help strengthen their standing with their constituents. For example, both Rep. Capito (R-WV) and Rep. Brown-Waite (R-FL) agreed to run for the position of vice-chair at the beginning of their freshman terms. However, the new Republican vice-chair, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), stepped outside of this mold as she was first elected to Congress in 1989, and she has a long record of promoting children’s issues (including as co-chair of the Congressional Children’s Caucus) and many issues dealing with women’s health. Although Rep. Ros-Lehtinen is an active opponent of abortion, she has demonstrated a strong commitment to other issues related to women’s health.
elections resulted in Reps. Capito and Slaughter as the co-chairs and Reps. Brown-Waite and Solis as the vice-chairs of the Women's Caucus in the 108th Congress.

At the end of the 108th Congress, Reps. Capito and Slaughter wanted to make sure that the new leadership was in place as quickly as possible in the 109th Congress so the new leaders could hit the ground running and get the Caucus off to a strong start. Therefore, they each sent out a call for nominations to the Members in their respective parties, including to the newly elected Members of Congress, in December 2004. Reps. Brown-Waite and Solis indicated that they would like to be placed on the ballot to run for the position of co-chair, and Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) and Lois Capps (D-CA) indicated that they were interested in the position of vice-chair. Since each race was uncontested, Reps. Slaughter and Capito then sent out ballots via inter-office mail to each of the Congresswomen in their respective parties, to be returned via inter-office mail in a sealed envelope with their signature across the flap by mid-January 2005. Reps. Slaughter, Capito, Solis and Brown-Waite organized a “pass the gavel” ceremony and celebration on February 2, 2005, to finalize the transition.

In January, Reps. Solis and

80. Reps. Slaughter and Capito wanted to wait until a sufficient period after the November elections to send out the call for nominations in order to give the newly elected women Members a chance to settle in and nominate themselves or be recruited for nomination to a leadership position if they so chose. This practice had been done in the past, since both Reps. Capito and Brown-Waite had been elected to vice-chair of the caucus as freshmen.

81. The Members often nominate themselves for these positions, rather than asking another Member to submit a nomination on their behalf. This process has the advantage of ensuring that the nominee truly wants the position, and eliminates an unnecessary step of needing to find another Member to submit the nomination form. However, the candidates for vice-chair are sometimes recruited by the candidates for co-chair of their respective parties.

82. Approximately thirty Congresswomen attended the “pass the gavel” ceremony and reception, an extremely large turnout considering the Members’ busy schedules. It was held in a banquet room of the Rayburn House Office Building from 5:30–7:30 on the evening of the Presidential State of the Union address (which was at 9:00 p.m.), which probably helped ensure a good turnout since all of the Members were on Capitol Hill that evening. It was organized in conjunction with Lifetime Television for Women and Oxygen, and prominent individuals in the women’s community in Washington, D.C. were invited to attend. The Women’s Caucus leaders arranged for the House photographer to take an official photograph of all of the Women’s Caucus Members and the incoming and outgoing Caucus leaders. The outgoing co-chairs presented each other and the new incoming leaders with tokens of appreciation and flowers, and the incoming co-chairs presented the outgoing co-chairs with framed Congressional Record statements honoring them for their strong leadership of the Women’s Caucus in the 108th Congress. Since they did not have a gavel at the ceremony, the outgoing co-chairs humorously used a borrowed pair of high-heeled
Brown-Waite had already begun developing a survey to poll the Women’s Caucus Members about what they would like to work on through the Caucus in the 109th Congress and to help organize new task forces for the Caucus, which they sent out soon after they were installed into office in February. The Women’s Caucus staffers of Reps. Slaughter and Capito also worked closely with the staffers of Reps. Solis and Brown-Waite in order to ensure a smooth transition, sharing information and files on various Caucus initiatives. Everyone understood that it was imperative to get the new Caucus leadership up and running as quickly as possible, in order to provide a strong start for the Caucus to maximize its effectiveness in the 109th Congress.83

2. Women’s Caucus Membership

Currently, all women Representatives are considered to be Members of the Women’s Caucus unless they take the initiative to opt out of the Caucus.84 Either way, all women Members and their staff receive all communications, newsletters, invitations, and other materials regarding any Caucus initiatives. Despite the name “Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues,” which might seem to imply participation by Members of both Congressional chambers, the Caucus is limited only to women shoes to pass along to their incoming counterparts, resulting in a number of light-hearted jokes (including Rep. Brown-Waite announcing her intention to use the shoes to help break the glass ceiling).

83. A delay in transitioning to new leadership and establishing the caucus organizational structure can significantly impair its effectiveness. According to GERTZOG, previously “[m]onths of delay in organizing, while recruiting new Members and establishing teams [task forces], slowed formulation of [the Caucus] agenda and postponed opportunities to reach out to the [House leadership].” GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 139.

84. Members of each party used to be recruited by their respective co-chairs at the beginning of every Congress, who would solicit confirmation from each Member individually that they would re-join (or join for the first time) the Women’s Caucus. This process was extremely time-consuming and slowed down the momentum of the Caucus at the beginning of every Congress, a point at which the Caucus should be focusing its energies on establishing and initiating its agenda and priority action items. See, GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 164. Therefore, Reps. Slaughter (D-NY) and Capito (R-WV) at the beginning of the 108th Congress decided to deem that every woman Member in the House of Representatives would be considered to be a part of the Women’s Caucus unless she explicitly opted out. In the 108th Congress only two Members opted to do so: Rep. Jo Ann Emerson (R-MO) and Rep. Ann Northup (R-KY). However, the Caucus leaders still included Reps. Emerson and Northup in all Caucus communications, and the two also joined certain Caucus initiatives, such as the Rosie the Riveter resolution, which all women Members joined as co-sponsors.
Members of the House of Representatives. As noted above, although at one point in the past men were allowed to become non-voting Members of the Caucus, when it was a Legislative Service Organization (LSO) instead of a Congressional Member Organization (CMO), that policy was changed when LSOs were abolished and the caucus reorganized into a CMO for women Members. In 2002, Rep. Dale Kildee (D-MI) attempted to join the Caucus, but the Caucus policy of consisting of only women Members remained in place.

Membership in the Women's Caucus can provide distinct advantages. For example, the Women's Caucus can be utilized to promote the goals and effectiveness of individual Members of Congress related to women's issues. Members are "encouraged to air their priorities, discuss pending measures, and propose new initiatives. While doing so, they could benefit from the positive reinforcement of other congresswomen, enlist cosponsors, receive pointers on how to improve their product, gain insights about how better to market the product, be alerted to unintended consequences of their initiatives, and develop a parliamentary strategy best suited to securing congressional approval. By working with a group of sympathetic colleagues, congresswomen could more effectively (and more confidently) promote their women's agenda."

85. Although Senator Nancy Kassebaum (R-KS) joined the Congresswomen's Caucus in 1978, the Caucus membership later consisted of only Representatives. GERTZOG II, supra note 4, at 197.

86. Allison Stevens, "Male House Member Seeks to Join Women's Caucus," Women's E-News, Oct. 11, 2002. The staff of the Women's Caucus co-chairs received numerous requests from staffers of male Members of Congress to be added to the Women's Caucus listserv so that they could receive the Women's Caucus Action newsletter and other invitations, announcements and information. The Women's Caucus co-chairs in the 108th Congress determined to limit the Women's Caucus listserv to Women's Caucus Members. As such, each of these requests was respectfully declined. This decision was based on the rationale that invitations to numerous events were limited to Women's Caucus Members and their staff, which would be more difficult to regulate if the invitations were distributed more widely. However, future Caucus co-chairs may want to reconsider this policy, since wider distribution of the newsletter—or even re-opening Caucus membership to men—may lead to greater influence and efficacy. See Thompson, supra note 8, at 16.

87. GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 11. Members also benefited in other ways from their affiliation with the Women's Caucus:

Sustained realization of its strategic goals was not the only reason the caucus retained its viability. Membership satisfaction was another . . . . [Congresswomen enjoyed palpable advantages from affiliation with [the Women's Caucus]. For one thing, they became better informed about women's issues. Meetings among themselves and with cabinet officials allowed them to exchange specialized information economically. Administration officials provided current data on scores of women-related programs they oversaw, and sent Caucus Members additional material
Members have used their affiliation with the Women's Caucus to boost their political credibility and appeal to women constituents, as well as to enhance their party's image among women voters.\footnote{GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 120; FOERSTEL, supra note 5, at 108; Thompson, supra note 8, at 9.} A leadership position in the Women's Caucus can also help prepare Congresswomen for leadership positions on subcommittees and full committees.\footnote{FOERSTEL, supra note 5, at 108.}

a. Agenda and Priorities

Ideas for Caucus initiatives come from a wide variety of sources. Often organizations working on women's issues will approach the Caucus to invite its leadership and Members to participate in an initiative such as a briefing (like The White House Project's briefing in conjunction with Reps. Capito and Slaughter launching the "Vote, Run, Lead" initiative), a reception (such as the Women's Policy, Inc. holiday reception), a resolution (such as the resolution honoring "Rosie the Riveter," which was initiated by the National Park Service in conjunction with Ford Motor Company), or a sign-on letter (such as the letter by Reps. Slaughter and Capito, joined by other Congresswomen, to the President of South Africa urging greater availability of post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) to prevent rape victims from acquiring HIV/AIDS, which was initiated by Physicians for Human Rights). Sometimes Members will read about an issue in the newspaper or hear about it on television and decide to take action on it, such as Rep. Slaughter’s interest in the issue of sexual assault of women in the military. Members of the Caucus may bring an issue to the attention of the Caucus leadership, such as the letter to the Bureau of Labor Statistics that Reps. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) asked Reps. Slaughter and Capito to join them in signing and encouraging other Members to join.\footnote{As a result of this letter, Reps. Capito and Slaughter were featured in a Washington Post article covering this issue. Nell Henderson, Job Gender Surveys May End: Agency when discussions pointed up information gaps and ambiguities. Ideas Members exchanged with one another, often touching on measures being considered by their respective committees, were also valuable. These exchanges provided an early warning signal about proposals in the pipeline, a perspective on breaking developments, and an assessment of the consequences legislative proposals could have for women. The bipartisan character of these meetings also allowed participants to learn about attitudes on the other side of the aisle.}

\textit{Id.} at 32.
The Women's Caucus co-chairs receive literally hundreds of requests by interested parties to participate with the caucus in specific activities or projects, such as organizations working on women's issues, corporations, individuals, and other Members of Congress. In addition, the Women's Caucus leaders and their staff receive dozens of requests for meetings with parties who are interested in sharing information with them (such as Dell Corporation, who shared information about its initiatives promoting women and minorities within the company, as well as its project to provide free computers and technological training to low-income youth, focusing on girls and minorities). Other groups request meetings to learn more about the Women's Caucus (such as female parliamentarians from Turkey and businesswomen from Belarus). Organizations also ask Members or their staff to give more formal presentations about the Caucus to larger audiences (such as the staffers for Reps. Capito and Slaughter giving an address about the Women's Caucus to American Political Science Association Fellows during their annual training program).

Because of the tremendous numbers of requests, the Women's Caucus leaders and their staff must triage each request and carefully decide which to accept, which to refer to another Member, which to defer until a later date, and which to respectfully decline. It is important for the Caucus leaders to prioritize the issues on which they would like to spend the most time and effort during their term in office. Otherwise, they might become involved in so many different issues that they are not able to take a lead role on major initiatives, causing the Caucus agenda to become diffuse and unfocused. The general feeling of the Caucus leadership in the 108th Congress was that it is better to do a few things well than try to do everything and spread the Caucus too thin, becoming primarily reactive and less effective. For example, the Caucus leadership conscientiously did not want to become the "disease of the week caucus," to the exclusion of other women's issues—a trap that they could easily have fallen into since so many groups wanted to work on myriad women's health issues.

Also, the Caucus leadership took pains to ensure that they were not perceived to be promoting the specific business activities and interests of corporations, who might simply be trying to use the Caucus to promote their products and services. Therefore, the Caucus generally stayed away from undertaking any activities in conjunction with corporations, other for-profit entities, or trade associations, particularly if they concerned a

product or service that would be in the financial interest for such an entity to promote.

There are numerous ways in which the Caucus leadership can set an agenda emphasizing priority issues for the Caucus. For example, the co-chairs and vice-chairs could discuss what they feel are priority women's issues based on informal conversations with Members of the Women's Caucus, primary concerns that they are hearing from their constituents, women's issues that are currently on the national scene, and women's issues in which they have a particular expertise (e.g., as a microbiologist, Rep. Slaughter (D-NY) has an interest in women's health; and as a founder of a battered women's shelter, Rep. Brown-Waite (R-FL) has an interest in violence against women). They could then come up with an agreed-upon list of agenda items for the Caucus based on these considerations. As another method of agenda-setting, Reps. Solis, Brown-Waite, Capps, and Ros-Lehtinen at the beginning of the 109th Congress distributed a survey to all Congresswomen asking for their input in determining the Caucus agenda, as well as their interest in serving on various task forces addressing particular issues. There is often a continuity of bipartisan issues that the Caucus has tended to keep on the agenda over the years, e.g., women's health, violence against women, international women's issues, and women and education, among others. In addition, the Caucus has developed a series of annual events that are placed on its calendar of initiatives each year, such as the wreath laying ceremony honoring U.S. servicewomen at Arlington National Cemetery around Memorial Day, and the “Stop Violence Against Women Week” held in March every year.

91. This could either occur at an in-person meeting by the Caucus leadership, or through meetings of their staff, who put together a draft agenda for consideration, revisions, and finally unanimous approval by their bosses. Either way, the staffers jointly prepare a draft agenda or list of priorities for consideration by the Caucus leaders. For example, in setting the Women's Caucus agenda for the second session of the 108th Congress, the staffers of the Caucus leaders held numerous meetings with each other, as well as with staffers of other Women's Caucus Members who were particularly active in the Caucus to obtain additional ideas, in order to help determine what their bosses would like to focus on for the remainder of their term in office. They then grouped the priority issues into broad categories, which became the framework for their agenda throughout the session, listed below:

- Education, Athletics and Title IX
- International Women's Issues
- Violence Against Women
- Women's Health
- Women's History and Heritage
- Women in the Military
- Women in the Workplace, Business and Employment
In the 108th Congress, determining whether something would be undertaken as a Caucus leadership initiative was made with respect to several criteria:

1) Was it an issue of particular significance to women? Rep. Slaughter had numerous requests by Members of Congress or outside groups to use Caucus mechanisms to promote issues with no particular relevance to women (e.g., dealing with the environment or taxes but not focusing on a specific women’s angle concerning those matters. If they had focused on a women’s angle, then it would have been within the purview of the Caucus). Since these were outside the jurisdiction of the Women’s Caucus, the Women’s Caucus staff would indicate that the issue was not within the scope of the Caucus, often with suggestions as to other caucuses, Members, or resources that might be useful to the person making the request.

2) Was it a bipartisan or non-partisan issue, which would not be used to promote a partisan agenda? If it were a Democratic issue (e.g., something that would be used to oppose a Bush Administration policy affecting women), then the Democratic Members may take up the issue (and vice versa for a Republican issue), but it would not be appropriate for the Women’s Caucus as a whole. It was extremely important to frame the issues in a manner that would be palatable and appealing to Members of both parties, as well as being non-threatening, non-partisan, and not used for political purposes. Moreover, Republican Members were key players in working behind the scenes—often relying on their Democratic counterparts to carry the water with the public message while the Republicans work quietly with the leaders in their party and the White House, e.g., on issues such as Title IX or women in the military.92

3) Was it a priority of one or more of the Caucus leaders, so they would be willing to devote time and resources to the issue? For example, Rep. Slaughter was very interested in issues related to Title IX and women and girls in athletics, as well as issues pertaining to women in the military, which helped formulate her focus during the 108th Congress.93 If a request concerned an issue that was not a top priority for the Caucus leadership, they might agree to work on it anyway if they had

92. GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 174–75.
93. Similarly, considering Rep. Solis’ (D-CA) strong interest in issues pertaining to health, violence against women globally, the environment, and women of color; and Rep. Brown-Waite’s (R-FL) strong interest in issues pertaining to the elderly, veterans, and violence against women; it is likely that these issues will help shape the Caucus priorities in the 109th Congress. The personal interests of the individual Women’s Caucus leaders largely inform the Caucus priorities during their tenure.
the time available, or they might refer it to another Women’s Caucus Member who might be interested in taking the lead on the project.

4) Was the issue one of national significance, for example, did it receive extensive coverage in the national media? If so, then the Women’s Caucus leaders may be asked to comment on the issue by the press, or be asked to take up the issue by women’s organizations as well as their constituents. Although this was not a definitive factor, since the Caucus leadership frequently addressed issues even though they had not garnered national attention, this may be a persuasive factor in favor of taking up an issue.

If someone brought a women’s issue to the Caucus leaders’ attention and for some reason the leaders could not take up that issue (if the calendar were already too full, for example), then they would suggest another Member of the Women’s Caucus who had an interest in the issue and might be willing to take the lead. The Caucus leadership developed a list of Members and staff who were willing to take the lead on projects, such as putting together briefings at the request of women’s organizations. If called upon, that Member could agree to be the point person in organizing the briefing, and then the four Caucus leaders would often then add their names onto “Dear Colleague” letters and invitations to encourage the Caucus Members to participate. This system worked as a looser version of the task forces that are sometimes utilized by the Caucus to help spread the work of the Caucus among its Members instead of primarily falling upon the leaders’ offices.

Once the Caucus leaders determined that the issue was one they wanted to pursue, then they, along with their staff, would determine what mechanism would be best and would have the most impact for the least amount of work, due to limited resources and tremendous time constraints placed on the caucus. The Women’s Caucus leadership in the 108th Congress did not start out with a set list of priority issues, as cochairs in previous Congresses had done. However, throughout the course of their term, a group of issues emerged upon which they focused most of their efforts, which evolved into their priority issues:

- Education, Athletics and Title IX
- International Women’s Issues
- Violence Against Women
- Women’s Health
- Women’s History and Heritage
- Women in the Military
- Women in the Workplace, Business and the Economy
The Women's Caucus staffers frequently received questions from scholars, activists, journalists, and other Women's Caucus Members and staff concerning the list of Women's Caucus priority issues for the 108th Congress, so the development of this list was quite useful in responding to those inquiries.

Issues were most often undertaken by the Caucus leadership in their capacity as the co-chairs and vice-chairs. They did not presume to speak for everyone in the Caucus due to the wide diversity of interests and priorities of the Members. Caucus leaders and Members are generally respectful about not speaking on behalf of the Caucus as a whole, particularly on issues where consensus has not been determined. However, the Caucus leaders can certainly speak on behalf of themselves in their capacity as the elected officers of the Caucus. For example, they might begin a letter, "As the leaders of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, we are concerned . . ." or something to that effect. For a broader sign-on letter, it may be worded, "As leaders and Members of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, we would like to highlight . . ." or similar language. However, they would generally stay away from phrases like, "The Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues urges you to . . ." unless every woman Member of Congress has indicated her support. In addition, in the 108th Congress the Caucus leaders made a concerted effort to have both co-chairs and vice-chairs involved with initiatives, such as all four leaders on Dear Colleagues or invitations. However, when necessary the co-chairs undertook some initiatives as a pair, such as urgent matters when there was no time to contact the vice-chairs, or on matters where the vice-chairs had less of an interest but the co-chairs still felt the matter was important.

b. Member Meetings

Although regularly scheduled Member meetings were common in previous Congresses, the Women's Caucus did not hold regular Member meetings during the 108th Congress. Instead, they tended to communicate primarily through their staff and through the Women's Caucus Action newsletter (discussed below). There are numerous benefits of holding in-person meetings, such as the ability for Members to get to know each other face-to-face, to develop relationships with each other, and to bounce ideas off one another. However, Members were often too busy to attend regular business meetings, particularly general meetings that were not focused on a specific issue. Therefore, electronic communication was more reliable and efficient (since it reaches all Members
instead of just those who are able to attend an in-person meeting). The Members relied upon Women's Caucus events and receptions to develop their relationships and friendships more so than Member meetings in the 108th Congress.

The Women's Caucus did hold a few Member meetings focusing on specific issues during the 108th Congress. For example, the Women's Caucus held a Members-only meeting with former Representative Tillie Fowler (R-FL), who subsequently served as chair of a task force investigating the reports of sexual assault against women at the U.S. Air Force Academy, to discuss the issue of sexual assault of women in the military. They also held a Women's Caucus Members-only meeting with Brigadier-General K.C. McClain, who was spearheading the Pentagon's task force to address this issue. These private venues enabled Members to speak more frankly with their guests than would have been the case if others had been present (such as the media or advocacy groups).

The Women's Caucus Members also gathered for other events, such as the caucus hearings on sexual assault in the military, and on women and girls in athletics and Title IX; the receptions held for the female U.S. Olympic athletes, for the "Rosie the Riveters," and for U.S. Supreme Court Justices Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg; for the wreath-laying ceremony honoring U.S. servicewomen; and for the "pass the gavel" ceremony at the beginning of the new Congress. The Members seemed genuinely to enjoy these venues through which to come together with each other. Since they revolved around a specific issue or event, the Members who were especially interested could make an effort to arrange their schedules so that they could attend. Moreover, when appropriate, the Women's Caucus leaders would arrange for an official photographer to memorialize the event, which the Members especially appreciated, and frequently they also had their staffers take photographs of their participation in the events that they could use on their websites, in newsletters, and for other purposes.

94. The Members-only meeting with Brig. Gen. McClain was also attended by the four staffers of the Women's Caucus leaders, who brought their files on the issue of sexual assault of women in the military for their boss' reference and who also made a confidential record of the meeting and notes of follow-up actions. For the Members-only meeting with former Rep. Fowler (R-FL), each Member who attended was also permitted to bring one staffer (but no staff were permitted if they were unaccompanied by their Member). In previous Congresses, the Member meetings were arranged in either of these manners (permitting only the staff of the caucus leaders, or permitting only one staffer per Member who attended). This emphasized the importance of the meeting, and ensured that Members attended the meetings in person (since they would not be allowed to send a staffer alone).
c. Member-Led Initiatives

As noted above, the Women's Caucus leadership sometimes asked individual Members to take the lead on projects that were brought to the Caucus leadership by outside organizations. Individual Members also took the initiative on their own to spearhead projects related to women's issues, and they usually sought support from the Caucus leadership for these initiatives. Examples of projects undertaken by individual Members working with the Women's Caucus leadership include briefings, such as Rep. Roybal Allard's office (D-CA) spearheading a briefing on violence against women, and Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY) convening a briefing on Gender Mainstreaming for Effective Development Assistance: InterAction's Gender Audit. Other examples include legislative proposals, such as Rep. Sue Kelly's office (R-NY) spearheading the legislation supporting Women's Business Centers, and Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson's office (D-TX) taking the lead on the Iraqi Women's and Children's Liberation Act.

Distributing the workload among various Members of the Caucus, either through task forces or teams (such as in previous Congresses), or through individual Members (such as in the 108th Congress), not only enables the Caucus to undertake a broader number and array of projects, but it also increases the investment in the Caucus by a greater number of Members. Members who are active in the Caucus tend to be more vested in the success of the Caucus if they feel that they are able to make a concrete contribution. They will also invest more in the Caucus if they understand that the Caucus can be utilized to leverage their own priorities concerning women's issues.

Although task forces or teams were not utilized in the 108th Congress, they were revived at the beginning of the 109th Congress. Sometimes the Women's Caucus leaders had previously sent out a survey at the beginning of a Congress to determine interests of women Members, and the leaders of the 109th Congress have reinitiated this practice. Based on experiences from previous Congresses, several factors are important in establishing effective task forces and appointing

95. Bylaws, supra note 2, Art. X; See also GERTZOG I, supra note 3, 166–69.
96. This was done from the beginning, with Rep. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) sending out a survey to the women Members in 1977 to set the stage for the Women's Caucus initiatives in the 95th Congress. Thirteen of the eighteen women Members completed this survey, indicating an interest in focusing on creating more jobs, with greater responsibilities, for women in the federal government, "a less-discriminatory social security system . . . child care, displaced homemakers, and health care for women." GERTZOG II, supra note 4, at 185.
task force leaders and Members. Considerations in appointing task force leaders and Members include organizing task forces around nonpartisan issues appealing to Members of both parties; allowing Members to self-select which task forces they would like to join or lead (instead of being assigned without consultation); appointing bipartisan pairs of task force co-leaders; and considering the Members' personal and political interests, as well as positions on relevant committees in order to leverage their expertise and access to committees. Of course, the work of the task forces should be coordinated with the Women's Caucus co-chairs and vice-chairs to help ensure bipartisan support, good communication so that all Caucus Members are aware of and can participate in the initiatives, coordination so that two events are not planned for same date and time, and the like. The task force leaders and Members should agree not to do anything in the name of the entire Caucus unless the Caucus has reached consensus on an issue. However, the bipartisan task force leaders should be encouraged to undertake initiatives supporting women's issues within their purview and in their capacity as task force leaders, particularly in conjunction with the Women's Caucus co-chairs and vice-chairs.

3. Women's CaucusStaffers

The staffers of the Women's Caucus leaders help direct and implement the work of the Caucus and play a key role in running an effective Caucus. In the 108th Congress, the Women's Caucus leadership staff (the staffers responsible for the Women's Caucus work in the offices of Rep. Slaughter, Capito, Solis, and Brown-Waite) held regular meetings, typically on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, in order to coordinate all of the Caucus projects. Generally one of the co-chairs' staffers would draft an agenda to help keep the meeting focused and to help the staffers remember all of the balls that the caucus had in the air.

One of the key factors in the success of the Women's Caucus in the 108th Congress was the fact that the staff in all four leadership offices—co-chair and vice-chair, Republican and Democrat—worked closely together and shared a commitment to the success of the Caucus, advancing women's issues, and collaborating in a fully bipartisan manner. Through this close working relationship, they developed a trust in

97. See GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 122–24, 138.
98. According to conversations with numerous staffers and others, in some previous Congresses the staffers of the co-chairs did not work as closely with those of the vice-chairs, nor the Democrats as closely with the Republicans.
and respect for each other, as well as friendship, enabling them to rely on one another concerning their support and judgment. In addition to allowing the staffers to spread the work among all four offices, this arrangement also allowed the staffers of the vice-chairs to become actively involved in running the Caucus, providing them with experience, continuity and institutional memory to enable them to hit the ground running once their bosses became the co-chairs in the next Congress.

On all matters, and particularly those on which their bosses may be a bit more circumspect, it was vital for all four offices to reach consensus in terms of the Caucus approach. Clear and open communication proved to be absolutely vital to maintaining effective working relationships. On most issues, all four leaders agreed to have their names associated with an action. In order to facilitate action, the lead staffer would often send an e-mail and leave a voicemail message with the other three staffers indicating that she proposed to implement a certain action on behalf of the four caucus leaders by a certain date and time, and request that the other staffers let her know if they had any concerns, suggestions or changes before that deadline. For example, the lead staffer might send a draft “Dear Colleague” letter to be signed by the four Caucus leaders (which had been discussed and agreed to in concept during a previous meeting), and request any edits by a certain deadline. The staffer would then incorporate any changes that the others sent back, and if she did not hear from some of them, she would go ahead and send out the letter under all four leaders’ names, operating under the premise that “no news is good news.” This modus operandi facilitated action even during time periods when the staffers were extremely busy, since if a staffer was fine with a certain action, she would not have to take any steps (she would only do so if she or her boss had a concern about something). Again, this method only worked due to the high level of trust between all of the offices that each would not do anything that would embarrass or be contrary to the interests of any of the others.

Of course, on certain matters, not all four leaders felt comfortable participating, and on those projects only one or two would undertake the action. For example, when consensus could not be reached among all four leaders to become original cosponsors of the comprehensive bill on sexual assault in the military, particularly with respect to the timing

---

99. The staffers’ jobs, in part, entail making their bosses more effective by helping to build relationships among each other. One key to maintaining good relations among the Members was for the staffers to let the other staffers know when their bosses made compliments about each other. Another is to help diffuse any tensions that might arise, such as helping to clear up any misunderstandings or differences between offices.
of its introduction, they agreed as an alternative that Rep. Slaughter should introduce the bill in her individual capacity. There was a mutual understanding that if the Caucus leadership did not take on an issue, the individual Members were free to do so themselves.

The leadership staffers also called meetings with all of the Women's Caucus staffers on an ad hoc basis. For example, they held a meeting at the beginning of the second session, in conjunction with Women's Policy, Inc., in order to provide an overview of upcoming legislation affecting women, to discuss upcoming Women's Caucus initiatives and projects by individual Members, and to meet each other face-to-face and get to know each other. They also convened full caucus-staff meetings to discuss the development of comprehensive legislation addressing sexual assault of women in the military, and those who were interested formed a smaller working group to further discuss the development of the legislation. However, most communication between the leadership staffers and the other staffers was done via the Women's Caucus Action newsletter and other e-mails. Since many staffers are too busy to attend meetings, electronic communication was found to be more efficient and reliable, though one drawback is that the staffers were less able to get to know each other face-to-face (and might pass each other in the hall without recognition, though they have a close relationship via e-mail).  

The Women's Caucus leadership staffers are frequently utilized as a resource on various women's issues by other staffers and Members, who call to obtain information on women's issues in Congress. They are similarly called upon by women's groups, reporters, academics and scholars, parliamentarians from other countries, and state legislators. Since this can frequently take up a good deal of time, Rep. Slaughter's office decided to post a significant amount of information about the Women's Caucus on her website, so that those requesting information could simply be referred to the website where they would generally find answers to all of their questions.  

100. In the past, the Women's Caucus staffers had more all-staff meetings, especially if the working meeting were combined with a social aspect as well as food, such as a pizza luncheon meeting. However, without caucus funding, such meetings are difficult to organize. In the future, the Women's Caucus staffers might consider other types of staff initiatives, such as a mentorship program (where veteran Women's Caucus staffers could mentor newer staffers); leadership trainings and career-building programs; self-defense classes; and fun events, like attending a Mystics game, touring the Sewell-Belmont House during women's history month, visiting the National Museum of Women in the Arts, etc. Such initiatives could also be opened up to other women staffers, interns and pages.

B. Mechanisms for Action within the Women's Caucus

1. Women's Caucus Action Newsletter

When the author first started working with Rep. Slaughter and spearheading the Women's Caucus at the end of the first session of the 108th Congress, she held individual introductory meetings with numerous staffers handling women's issues for various Women's Caucus Members. A common theme was that the staffers tended to receive an inordinate number of e-mail messages from the Women's Caucus leadership staff. The general consensus was that the e-mails were more helpful than receiving the information via regular meetings, because not all staffers could attend every meeting (and consequently would miss vital information), but that the volume of e-mail traffic about women's issues was often overwhelming. Therefore, the Women's Caucus leadership staffers established the Women's Caucus Action electronic newsletter. The purpose of the newsletter was to:

1) Keep Members and staff apprised of Women's Caucus meetings and Women's Caucus leadership initiatives such as legislation, sign-on letters, briefings, events, etc.;
2) Inform Members about other initiatives concerning women's issues spearheaded by individual Women's Caucus Members;
3) Distribute research or other information on women's issues that might be of interest to Women's Caucus Members and staff, for example, a publication about women in government around the world by the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The format of the newsletter was fairly simple. The name Women's Caucus Action and the date on which each issue was sent was included in

---

102. The author also held meetings with staffers who had previously worked with Women's Caucus co-chairs and directed the Women's Caucus, even if they were not now working with Caucus Members. All of these meetings proved to be invaluable for gaining insight into the way that the Caucus has functioned, to learn from both the positives and negatives, to gain ideas for future Caucus initiatives, and to build relationships with key players who would be important in helping to make the Caucus successful during the second session of the 108th Congress.

103. See also GERTZOG 1, supra note 3, at 167.

104. Other helpful newsletters include The Source by Women's Policy, Inc., as well as Women's E-News and newsletters distributed by the National Women's Law Center, the National Partnership for Women and Families, the American Association of University Women, National Women's Business Centers, and others.
the subject line, as well as the top of the newsletter (in red, bold, 14 font). A few photographs and captions of recent Women's Caucus events were sometimes included at the beginning of the newsletter. Photos make the newsletter much more interesting, and increase the likelihood that the staffers may pass the newsletter along to their bosses (especially pictures depicting the Members who participated in the events). The next section was labeled "Highlights (additional details are included below)", which listed a brief description of each item, as well as the relevant date (deadlines for sign-on letters, co-sponsorships prior to bill introductions and the like; or dates, times, and locations of events). Items that had due dates were generally listed chronologically with the soonest date first (if a date were important and very soon and therefore urgent, it might be highlighted in red and in bold). In addition, those items more important to the Caucus as a whole (e.g., Women's Caucus leadership initiatives) were generally listed before individual Member initiatives, with informational items coming last. All items that had been included in previous newsletters that were still pending were listed at the end, with "REMINDER" noted immediately before the description. Each item was numbered.

The next section was labeled "Additional Details on Items Listed Above:". In this section, items were listed according to the same numbers as in the previous section, which, along with the description and date, became the heading for each item (so they could simply be copied and pasted from the previous section). Then the complete item was included under its relevant heading (e.g., the “Dear Colleague” letter, the complete invitation for an event, the PDF attachment of the informational materials, etc.). These items were simply cut and pasted from the e-mail notices that were sent to the Women's Caucus leadership staffers with a request that they be distributed (or were created by the leadership staff, themselves, if they concerned caucus leadership initiatives). The final section was "A note about Women's Caucus Action 

105. The following explanation was appended to the end of every newsletter issue:

Greetings from the Women's Caucus! In order to help facilitate communication among Women's Caucus Members and staff, we are sending an informal, periodic e-newsletter called Women's Caucus Action. The purpose of the newsletter is to send invitations to upcoming events, distribute “Dear Colleague” letters, highlight important initiatives in which Members and staff are encouraged to participate, and forward informational items that Members of the Women's Caucus would like to disseminate to the caucus. We encourage you to forward any such items dealing with
was established, the Congressional Children's Caucus instituted a similar electronic newsletter for its Members.

Requests by Members to include items not specifically related to women, or initiatives that were undertaken solely by male Members (who were not a part of the Women's Caucus) were not included, in order to prevent the newsletter from becoming too unwieldy. The newsletters were sent to the staffers handling women's issues for all women Representatives. Therefore, the Women's Caucus leadership staffers had to maintain a listserv containing the e-mail address of all such staffers. They followed a strict policy of never giving out the listserv, out of respect for the privacy of the staffers. As with all e-mail messages to groups of people, everyone receiving the newsletter was blind carbon-copied ("bcc'ed") in order to preserve the privacy of their addresses. The size of the newsletters could be quite large (especially those containing photographs and PDF documents), so it may be beneficial in the future for a staffer to learn a more sophisticated technological method for creating the e-newsletter. But by all accounts, the Caucus staffers greatly appreciated the newsletter format. Indeed, some noted that they saved every copy so they could refer back to them (perhaps they could be posted on the websites of the Caucus co-chairs in the future).

2. Women's Caucus Website

According to the House ethics rules, caucuses and other Congressional Member Organizations are not allowed to establish their own independent websites. Therefore, information about caucuses and other caucus materials are generally posted on the personal Congressional websites of the chairs of caucuses. Rep. Slaughter's office developed a comprehensive and detailed web page about the Women's Caucus women's issues that you would like included in the e-newsletter to Julia Ernst in Rep. Louise Slaughter's office at Julia.Ernst@mail.house.gov. We would appreciate receiving these announcements at least a week before any deadlines, so that we can work them into the next newsletter in a timely manner. We hope that this mechanism will be a useful way to distribute information, while not cluttering up your e-mail box with too many messages. We welcome your feedback on the format and content of the e-newsletter, as well as any other suggestions you have to further strengthen the effectiveness and usefulness of the Women's Caucus.

within her Congressional website under her “Women’s Issues” page. The web page also contains related resource materials, such as links to Congressional Research Service (CRS) reports addressing women’s issues. The text from the initial page appears as follows (underlined text indicates a hyperlink to additional materials):

Women’s Issues

Representative Louise Slaughter is an outspoken national champion of women’s rights. As the co-chair of the Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues (“Women’s Caucus”) for the 108th Congress, which has worked to improve women’s lives since 1977, Rep. Slaughter has spearheaded bills in Congress to address the sexual assault of women in the military and the promotion of equal opportunity under Title IX. She constantly fights for the equality and rights of women, calling for awareness and action both in the U.S. and abroad.

Below you will find further information regarding Rep. Slaughter’s efforts for women.

Congressional Research Service Reports
Press Releases on Women’s Issues
WOMEN’S CAUCUS

Women’s Caucus 108th Congress Report (pdf)
Women’s Caucus Leadership and Women Members of the 108th Congress
About the Women’s Caucus: The Present and Past
Women’s Caucus Priority Issues in the 108th Congress
Congressional Briefings and Events
Congressional Letters
EDUCATION, ATHLETICS AND TITLE IX
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S ISSUES
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
WOMEN’S HEALTH
WOMEN’S HISTORY AND HERITAGE

WOMEN IN THE MILITARY
WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE, BUSINESS, AND THE ECONOMY

The website has been very useful as a resource to which Women's Caucus leadership staffers can direct people who make inquiries about the Caucus. Before the information was posted on the website, the staffers spent a significant amount of time responding to such inquiries.108

108. The format and information in Rep. Slaughter's website can be used as a model for Women's Caucus co-chairs in the future, who might also consider including additional features, such as the following:

• A photo gallery of Women's Caucus events throughout the year (including captions and dates);
• Current and back issues of the Women's Caucus Action newsletter;
• The profile of a Women's Caucus Member on the website each week and in each newsletter;
• A list of upcoming Women's Caucus events, and other events on Capitol Hill related to women's issues;
• A list of bills related to women's issues (staffers and others frequently request such a list);
• Links to significant national women's organizations (and the co-chairs could suggest that such organizations include links from their websites to the Women's Caucus website);
• A calendar with significant dates (Members like to make one-minute speeches, introduce bills, and take other actions around commemorative days, weeks or months of importance to women. Such dates could include Sexual Assault Awareness Week, International Women's Day, Women's History Month, Women's Equality Day, Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, etc. The calendar could also include annual Women's Caucus events, such as Stop Violence Against Women Week in March, the Wreath Laying Ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery in May, the reception with women U.S. Supreme Court Justices in October, and any other events that the Women's Caucus holds annually. It could also include any other Women's Caucus events, and possibly other events on the Hill related to women's issues.); and
• Suggestions for district events on women's issues, such as town hall meetings, briefings, hearings (e.g., with women's studies centers at local colleges and universities), op-eds for local newspapers, public service announcements, rallies with local celebrities, half-time programs during athletic events (such as with professional women's teams and high-school or elementary girls sports teams).
3. Whipping

"Whipping," or contacting Members' offices to encourage them to participate in some activity, is an important function of the Women's Caucus leadership. Whenever the Women's Caucus leaders in the 108th Congress attempted to get other Members to join them in an activity, they implemented several methods of communication. First, their staff would send out an e-mail urging the Members to join them (e.g., co-sponsoring a bill, joining a sign-on letter, voting a particular way on a bill, participating in a hearing, meeting or reception, etc.), and requesting a response by a certain date. The leadership staff would keep a running list of those who responded affirmatively, negatively, and those who had not yet responded. The notice would often be included first in the Women's Caucus Action newsletter, followed by several separate e-mail reminder notices.

If the targeted Members included only Women's Caucus Members, then the Women's Caucus listserv was used. If the targeted Members included all Members of the House, then in addition to the messages sent specifically to the Women's Caucus Members, the e-mail messages were also sent using the House electronic "Dear Colleague" mechanism, noting both "Women's Issues" as well as any other relevant category (e.g., "Education" or "Foreign Policy"), as well as to the Democratic and Republican Legislative Directors (LD) lists. Often the staff of the Democratic leaders would e-mail the Democratic offices and the Republicans would e-mail the Republican offices—in part because the Republican LD listserv could only be utilized by Republican LDs. Sometimes, hardcopies of the "Dear Colleague" letters were sent as well. If the activity requested the Member to participate in an event, then the electronic invitations would also be sent to the schedulers. The Women's Caucus leadership staffers maintained a listserv of all schedulers for Women's Caucus Members. If it were an activity open to all Members, then the invitation would also be sent to the full Democratic and Republican schedulers lists. Again, all e-mails were sent "bcc" to all recipients (the sender would put her own address in the "To" line), to respect the privacy of the recipients' addresses. Generally a significant number of offices would respond to such e-mail notices.

If the activity were quite important and the leaders wanted to get as many Members as possible on board, the staff of the Women's Caucus leaders would also call all of the offices who had not yet responded. A few days before the deadlines, staffers with the Caucus leaders would call the women's issues staffers (often leaving a message if the staffer was not available), offering to resend the message and requesting a response (either
positive or negative). Sometimes the Republican leadership staff would call Republican Members' offices and the Democratic leadership staff would call the Democratic Members' offices; however, sometimes they called offices of the other party, which was an effective way to encourage positive bipartisan relationships among staffers. Depending on the scope and significance of the activity, a follow-up round of phone calls was sometimes made (e.g., if the activity were just for Women's Caucus Members, the number of calls was more limited, and if the activity was particularly important, such as the reception with the U.S. Supreme Court Justices, more calls were made). \(^{109}\)

According to the House ethics rules, if the Women's Caucus leaders or other Members of Congress are doing something "in conjunction with" or "in partnership with" an outside organization, then that organization must send the invitation to the Members of Congress first. \(^{110}\) The organization can send a hardcopy invitation through the mail, hand-deliver the invitation, can utilize a service or its own in-house capacity to blast-fax the invitation, or can e-mail the invitation. \(^{111}\) Only after the

---

109. At first, new leadership staffers should make those calls personally to get to know the other staffers in the Caucus. Then once the leadership staffers have gotten to know the other Women's Caucus staffers, they could ask interns to help make the calls on their behalf (since making the rounds of calls is incredibly time consuming). If the Women's Caucus leadership staffers are whipping the entire House on an issue, they can also recruit staffers from other Women's Caucus Members' offices and divide up the calls into smaller lists.

110. The House rules prohibit Members of Congress from "cosponsoring" or "co-hosting" events or projects with an outside entity. However, Members of Congress are permitted to undertake an activity "in conjunction with" or "in partnership with" an outside entity. Any questions on wording of invitations can be run by the House Committee on Standards and Ethics, which has a group of attorneys on staff who are available to consult with other Hill staffers.

111. Often an organization will send a group of interns to hand-deliver the invitation, which tends to be one of the most effective and efficient way of delivering them. Sending a hardcopy can be expensive (considering the cost of postage), as well as slow and possibly damaging to the invitation (since all mail delivered to the House must first be inspected and radiated at an off-site location to prevent another anthrax or ricin incident). "Blast-faxing" the invitation, in other words, faxing the invitation to all of the Congressional offices, can be costly if an organization is using a blast-fax service, but the services can take care of ensuring that the fax numbers are current. However, this may be a reasonable option if the organization is not located in the Washington, D.C. area, since faxing the invitations from a long-distance number can be both expensive and time consuming. The organization could compile the e-mail addresses for the House offices by calling each office to obtain the e-mail of the relevant staffer (though sometimes the staffers do not like to give out their e-mail addresses), or by checking the website of each office to obtain the general e-mail address for the Member. This may be a good option if the organization sends frequent communications to the Hill; however, it can be very time-consuming to maintain, since staffers change frequently. Moreover, e-mails sent to the main office e-mail ad-
organization sends the initial invitation can the Women's Caucus leadership forward a copy of the invitation along with a "Dear Colleague" letter encouraging other Members and staffers to participate. If an organization is planning an event or helping to encourage Members to join a sign-on letter, cosponsor legislation, or vote a particular way on a bill, that organization should also help make phone calls to Members' offices.

4. Meetings with Government Officials

Meetings with high-ranking government officials are another way in which to influence public policy affecting women. The Women's Caucus leaders, both jointly and individually, held numerous meetings throughout the 108th Congress with federal, state, local and foreign officials, as well as with House leadership, to discuss the importance of women's issues and women-friendly, non-discriminatory governmental policies. Their staff often attended the meetings in order to take notes and implement any follow-up activity. Some analysts have stressed the importance of the Women's Caucus meeting with the leaders of both parties and with high-level Administration officials—including with the President—early in each new Congress. The Women's Caucus has a

dress may take quite a bit of time before they reach the attention of the relevant staffer, making this option less attractive. However, it is important to note that once the invitations are sent out, if an organization is holding an event in conjunction with Members of Congress such as the Women's Caucus leaders, those Hill offices can then help get the word out about the event by sending follow-up "Dear Colleagues" and forwarding the invitations, encouraging Members and staff to attend the event.

112. Examples of such meetings include:

- Meeting with former Rep. Tillie Fowler (R-FL), chair of task force on sexual assault at the U.S. Air Force Academy;
- Meeting with Brigadier General K.C. McClain, chair of Department of Defense task force on sexual assault in the military; and
- Meeting with military personnel to discuss the 5% women and minority owned business requirement for governmental contracting.

113. GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 139, 172–78. For example, the Women's Caucus could meet with leaders from the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS), the Women's Bureau within the Department of Labor, and the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans in the Department of Veteran Affairs. Id. at 173. The Women's Caucus could also meet with the women's offices at the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control, the Health and Human Services Agency, the Food and Drug Administration, and any other Administrative entity. It would be interesting to have a chart or listing of each women's office within every entity in the Administration. Perhaps groupings of these offices could brief the Women's Caucus staff throughout the session as to their work on women's issues.
long history of inviting high-ranking Administration officials to attend Caucus meetings, who provide a brief overview of their programs that affect women, and then engage in a dialogue with the Members about these issues. 114 The Caucus has also used such interaction to call for stronger enforcement of statutes by the Administration. 115 In developing relationships with the U.S. President and within the White House and Administration, as well as with First Ladies, the Women's Caucus has helped to promote women's interests by influencing the executive branch. As noted by one analyst who has studied the Women's Caucus:

Examples of types of meetings that the Women's Caucus may initiate in the future include:

• Meeting with the U.S. President at the beginning of each Congress to highlight legislative priorities
• Periodic meetings women Senators to coordinate legislative priorities and strategies
• Institutionalization of an annual meeting or reception with women U.S. Supreme Court Justices
• Periodic meetings, receptions or events with dignitaries such as:
  • Former Women's Caucus Members (e.g., Lindy Boggs, Connie Morella, Pat Schroeder)
  • Current Administration officials to discuss priorities concerning women's issues (e.g., the offices of women's health in the Health and Human Services Agency, the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control, the Food and Drug Administration, etc.; the officials dealing with women business owners in the Small Business Administration; the Senior Advisor for International Women's Affairs in the State Department, and offices addressing women's issues within the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, and other departments and agencies)
  • Women Ambassadors to the United States from other countries
  • Collaboration with other caucuses (e.g., the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, the Congressional Children's Caucus) and Congressional Member Organizations (e.g., the Honorary Girl Scouts Troup);
  • Outreach to editors and reporters from women's magazines, such as Self, Marie Claire, Working Woman, Oprah, Ms., etc.
  • Outreach to women's organizations and national women leaders, women's study centers at colleges and universities, women executives of Fortune 500 companies, etc. (develop an e-mail listserv to keep them up to date on Women's Caucus initiatives and invitations to events).

114. See GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 14; see also FOERSTEL, supra note 5, at 106.  
115. GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 15-16.
Caucus leaders were interested not only in promoting legislation designed to help women, but also in ensuring that statutes already on the books would be administered in a woman-friendly way. A good working relationship with [presidential] appointees meant that congresswomen would obtain direct access to White House and cabinet officials. These contacts would allow them to press their requests for new legislation, oversee executive agency behavior, encourage administration studies addressing women's unmet needs, and urge appointments of more women to executive and judicial branch vacancies.\(^{116}\)

Due to such significance, the Women's Caucus leaders may want to develop a list of meetings they would like to take place at the beginning of each Congress and begin to schedule them on the calendar as soon as possible.

5. Press Releases, Press Conferences and the Media

Press releases on Women's Caucus leadership initiatives were done individually by the Women's Caucus leaders in the 108th Congress.\(^{117}\) That way the press secretaries in each of their offices could reach out to their press contacts, and if several offices sent a press release to the same reporter, then it may help to create more of a "buzz" about an issue and draw the reporter's attention. Unlike other caucuses, where a press release might be issued on behalf of the caucus as a whole because all Caucus Members supported a particular position, the Women's Caucus did not issue caucus-wide press releases, in part because the Women's Caucus is more diverse than some of the other caucuses, so the leaders did not feel that it would be appropriate to speak for the caucus as a whole.\(^{118}\)

116. GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 12; see also, Thomas and Wilcox, supra note 12, at 138. According to Gertzog, "Officials [in President George H.W. Bush's Administration] holding health-related portfolios—NIH director Bernadine Healy, Surgeon General Antonia Novello, and Health and Human Services secretary Louis Sullivan—were particularly attentive to the [Caucus'] interests. They also helped mobilize administration support for several provisions in the Women's Health Equity Act." GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 32.


It is often difficult to get the media to cover press conferences called by Members of Congress, unless the issue is breaking news of national significance. Press conferences tend to be most effective when a story has just been released and when the Members immediately swing into action calling a press conference the day of a newsworthy event, or very soon thereafter (or immediately ahead of time, if the Members have a heads-up). Press conferences on annual events are not as likely to draw media attention (such as Breast Cancer Awareness Month). The Women's Caucus leadership staffers worked closely with the press secretaries in their offices concerning newsworthy stories, such as the issue of sexual assault in the military, which continued to have “legs” throughout 2004, in large part due to several reporters who consistently covered the issue. Cultivating good relationships with a few reporters who are keenly interested in a particular issue is very helpful in gaining media coverage. The press conference on the “Rosie the Riveter” events was well-attended, in part because of the significant efforts devoted by the Ford Motor Company and in part because of the “human interest” story, since there were so few of the “Rosies” remaining. Members of Congress can also get significant press coverage of letters they write to Administration officials questioning a newly announced policy such as the letter from Reps. Capito, Slaughter, DeLauro and Van Hollen to the Bureau of Labor Statistics asking why the BLS had decided to stop seeking information on female workers, which generated an article in the Washington Post.119

6. Briefings, Receptions and Ceremonies

The Women's Caucus sponsors many events on women's issues every year, including briefings, receptions and ceremonies.120 Often these

119. Henderson, supra note 90.
120. For new Congressional staff and organizations new to working with Congress, an overview of logistics for planning such events may be useful. Only Members of Congress are allowed to reserve rooms in the Capitol Building or in Congressional office buildings, so organizations wanting to hold an event on Capitol Hill must ask a Congressional staffer or Member to assist in this process. On the House side, Rooms 1539 or 1116 are appropriate for smaller briefings, and the Gold Room, Cannon Caucus Room, or a banquet room are appropriate for larger events. Committee rooms may also be used, but the Committee always has preference and can “bump” an event at the last minute if necessary, so they are somewhat less preferable venues. The House caterer (Haute on the Hill) is generally used for any event with food or beverages. For events sponsored by organizations, the organization must originally distribute the invitation to the Members of Congress and their staff, and only then can the Members of Congress (such as the Women’s Caucus co-chairs) send a “Dear
events are organized in partnership with other organizations with expertise on the relevant topic or issue, although the Women's Caucus leadership or Members also plan such events on their own initiative. The most frequent type of event is the Congressional briefing, where a panel of experts provides presentations around a particular topic. These events are most useful when the presenters offer recommendations for action by Members of Congress and their staff to help address the issue, and where handouts are provided summarizing the main points of the presenters (including copies of any PowerPoint presentations, important statistics and other data, etc.).

The Women's Caucus leadership has organized receptions and ceremonies to honor important women and to commemorate significant events. During the 108th Congress, these events included the receptions for the Supreme Court Justices, Olympic gold medal winners, and women who served as "Rosie the Riveters." In 1997, for the 20th Anniversary of the Women's Caucus, Reps. Jennifer Dunn (R-WA) and Juanita Millender-McDonald (D-CA) organized a reception for Women's Caucus founders Elizabeth Holtzman and Margaret Heckler during Women's History Month. The main ceremonies organized by the Women's Caucus are the annual wreath-laying ceremony honoring women in the military and the pass-the-gavel ceremony to commemorate the change in Women's Caucus leadership at the beginning of each new Congress.

7. Speeches

Women's Caucus leaders and Members utilize opportunities to offer speeches to draw attention to important women's issues and initiatives, as well as to explain the work of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues. Types of speeches include:

One-minute speeches (called "One-Minutes") are given by Members of Congress on the House Floor that are generally scheduled in the morning at the beginning of the legislative day. The Women's Caucus leadership may organize numerous women Members of Congress to give consecutive one-minute speeches on a given topic to

Colleague" encouraging Members and staff to attend the event. Moreover, for events sponsored by an organization, special ethical regulations apply (e.g., the organization can organize an event "in conjunction with" or "in cooperation" with the co-chairs of the Caucus, but they cannot "co-sponsor" the event). The staffer working on an event should consult the House Ethics Rules to ensure compliance with ethical guidelines, and can contact the House Ethics Committee with any questions.

121. GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 121.
highlight a significant issue, such as during Women’s History Month (March), on Women’s Equality Day (August 26, the date of passage of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote), commemorating the death of a prominent women’s rights advocate, etc.

“Special Order” speeches are generally scheduled as the legislative day ends (sometimes late into the night). Usually five-minute Special Order speeches are scheduled first (the Women’s Caucus leaders can coordinate Caucus Members to schedule consecutive speeches on a particular topic), and then one-hour blocks of time can be reserved (e.g., the Women’s Caucus leaders can reserve a one-hour block of time, and organize a series of Caucus Members to speak during that time).

Members and their staff are frequently invited by organizations to give remarks during their annual meetings, lobby days, and other events in Washington, D.C., in their districts, and in other locations. Due to the constant pressure of time constraints, Members frequently offer to send a letter to the conveners that can be read during the event if they are unable to attend personally, or they send a staffer to provide remarks in their place. For example, Rep. Slaughter was invited to give a presentation on the Women’s Caucus for representatives from Eastern Europe at the Woodrow Wilson Center, and she sent her Women’s Caucus staffer in her place due to scheduling conflicts. The American Political Science Association (APSA) invited the Women’s Caucus staffers from both Rep. Capito’s office and Rep. Slaughter’s office to give a joint presentation on the Women’s Caucus to the APSA Fellows during their fellowship training program.

8. Sign-on Letters

The Women’s Caucus leaders sent numerous letters concerning women’s issues to their colleagues in Congress and to other government officials in the United States and in other countries. Such letters might urge the recipients to implement some measure, to refrain from a particular course of action, to provide clarification about a policy, to answer an inquiry from the Members of Congress, or for other purposes. Sometimes the Women’s Caucus leaders would sign just as the two co-chairs, or as the four co-chairs and vice-chairs. They would open other letters for signatures from other Members—sometimes just the women Members and sometimes all Members, depending on the issue. When encouraging other Members to join them on a letter, the Women’s Caucus leaders would send a “Dear Colleague” letter to the other Members, explaining the significance of the underlying sign-on letter that they sent along with
the “Dear Colleague” letter. The Women’s Caucus staff often made several rounds of telephone calls to their counterparts in other offices encouraging them to get their bosses to join the letters. The “Dear Colleague” letters can be sent in hardcopy or via e-mail, or both, but experience has demonstrated that distributing the letters via e-mail tends to be more efficient and effective in gaining other Members’ signatures. Establishing a firm deadline for joining the letter is more likely to encourage a staffer to act on the letter and take it to their Member for approval; this method is preferable to leaving the letter open for signature without a firm deadline. Sending a reminder to staffers close to the deadline, along with a list of Members who have already joined the letter, is another useful tactic to encourage more Members to join.

9. Partnership with Women’s Policy, Inc. and Other Women’s Organizations

Women’s organizations comprise a significant resource for the Women’s Caucus and its Members. Women’s Policy, Inc. (“WPI”) has a special relationship with the Women’s Caucus due to their historical ties.122 WPI distributes a newsletter called The Source on Women’s Issues in Congress, which details legislative action taken during the past week and on the calendar for the upcoming week on issues of interest to women.123 WPI personnel provide institutional knowledge of the Women’s Caucus to Members and Hill staffers, and are available for meetings or telephone consultations, e.g., providing assistance with the annual appropriations letter from the Women’s Caucus co-chairs to the House Appropriations Committee. WPI hosts a Congressional briefing series on topics of interest to women, and the Women’s Caucus staff help encourage Members and other Hill staffers to attend these events.124

122. See supra Part II.
123. The Source was previously named Update, which was a monthly newsletter published by the Women’s Caucus. See Thompson, supra note 8.
124. For example, WPI sponsored a briefing entitled “Financial Literacy: The Road to Building Wealth for All Women,” on Sept. 22, 2004, moderated by Stacey Stewart, President and CEO of the Fannie Mae Foundation, with panelists Elizabeth Wahab, COO of the Goldman Sachs Foundation; Anne Mosle, President of the Washington Area Women’s Foundation; and Stephen Brobeck, Executive Director of the Consumer Federation of America; with opening remarks by Cindy Hall, Executive Director of Women’s Policy, Inc. WOMEN’S CAUCUS ACTION, Sept. 9, 2004 (Cong. Caucus for Women’s Issues, Wash., D.C.) (on file with author).
WPI also hosts an annual dinner in honor of the women Members of Congress.\(^\text{125}\)

The Women & Politics Institute at American University also established a close working relationship with the Women's Caucus in the 108th Congress. They helped organize the Women's Caucus reception for the Olympic gold medalists, the hearing on Title IX, and a briefing on women and the 2004 election. The Women & Politics Institute also sponsors a New Leadership DC Program each year, which trains young women on college campuses in Washington, D.C., about the U.S. political process.\(^\text{126}\) As part of this program, the students participate in a “shadow day,” where they accompany Women's Caucus Members or their staff throughout a work-day to experience what working in Congress is like, culminating in a reception at the end of the day. The Women's Research and Education Institute is another organization with a long history of partnership with the Women's Caucus. It was originally established as a privately funded research arm of the Caucus developing substantial studies and reports on women's issues.\(^\text{127}\) Other women's organizations have also formed partnerships with the Women's Caucus, such as Lifetime TV through the annual “Stop Violence Against Women Week,” and coalitions such as the organizations working on VAWA III and the High School Athletics Accountability Act.

10. CODELs

Members of Congress sometimes go on Congressional Delegation trips (called “CODELs”), to visit a location in the United States or in another country to investigate a particular issue in person. These trips can be an important mechanism to learn about an issue in order to make better-informed policy decisions, to draw attention to the importance of an issue, and to forge working relationships with other significant parties. For example, in 2003 several Women's Caucus Members went on a CODEL to Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, to investigate the large number of murders of women in that city and to encourage the government of Mexico to treat the murders seriously and devote adequate resources to investigation and prevention of additional murders.

\(^{125}\) Although she was unable to attend, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was invited to be the keynote speaker for 2005 dinner.


\(^{127}\) Thompson, supra note 8, at 7.
11. Informal Gatherings in the Lindy Boggs Room

The Lindy Boggs Room, located directly off Statuary Hall in the Capitol Building, provides the single sanctuary on Capitol Hill reserved exclusively for women Members of Congress. The Members frequently retire to the room late at night while they are waiting for votes on the House floor. An intimate yet very elegant setting, the Lindy Boggs Room was the room to which John Quincy Adams was taken off the House floor (which is now Statuary Hall, before construction of the new House chambers) when he fell ill, and rumor has it that he died on the same couch that still is present in that room today. A bust of Adams located in the room commemorates his death. A hallway wall displays portraits of all 68 women serving in the House of Representatives. There is a small kitchenette, a small quiet-room for sleeping, and a small bathroom, as well as an anteroom where a House staffer guards the room to ensure that only Congresswomen may enter. It is said that Members will sometimes duck inside the Lindy Boggs Room in order to escape a particularly persistent reporter or lobbyist. Congresswomen may bring in one female staffer with them to discuss business or if they are having small meetings with other Members. As a rule, men are not allowed, so as to give the women Members some personal privacy, particularly if they are resting in the quiet-room. However, rules are made to be broken, such as when the Women’s Caucus hosted Supreme Court Justices Sandra Day O’Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Justice O’Connor asked to bring her husband as well as a few clerks and other family Members, and her request was granted without hesitation. In addition, although photographs are generally prohibited, one of the Members brought her camera to this event, and several photographs were taken in order to memorialize the occasion.

12. Report of the Women’s Caucus Accomplishments

The co-chairs of the Caucus submit an annual report at the end of each session to the Caucus Members, detailing all of the projects that the Caucus undertook during that year. In fulfillment of this requirement, Reps. Slaughter (D-NY) and Capito (R-WV) distributed a 56 page “Report on Accomplishments of the Congressional Caucus for

128. GERTZOG II, supra note 4, at 188.
129. See id. at 187.
130. Bylaws, supra note 2, at Art. VI § 2.
Women's Issues in the 108th Congress" on Friday, January 14, 2005.\textsuperscript{131} This report provided an executive summary, a listing of the Women's Caucus leaders and women Members of the 108th Congress, a photo gallery, a detailed summary of the Women's Caucus initiatives in its seven priority issues (Education, Athletics and Title IX; International Women's Issues; Violence Against Women; Women's Health; Women's History and Heritage; Women in the Military; and Women in the Workplace, Business and Employment), a chronological listing of Congressional briefings and events addressing women's issues, and a chronological listing of Congressional letters addressing women's issues. These reports are important historical records of the Women's Caucus' accomplishments, and an archive should be maintained by the Congressional Research Service and by all Women's Caucus co-chairs, to be passed down as new leaders are installed at the beginning of each Congress.

IV. PRIORITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE WOMEN'S CAUCUS IN THE 108TH CONGRESS

The leaders of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues in the 108th Congress, co-chairs Louise M. Slaughter and Shelley Moore Capito, and vice-chairs Hilda L. Solis and Ginny Brown-Waite, together with their Women's Caucus staff, all made a conscious effort to work closely together in a bipartisan framework to advance women's issues. This harmonious relationship enabled them to rally Women's Caucus Members from both parties to support numerous initiatives, and also to reach out to their male colleagues with a united voice on priority issues on which they desired House action. Some examples of both the legislative and non-legislative accomplishments of the Women's Caucus in the 108th Congress are discussed in this section.

During the 108th Congress, sixty three women served in the U.S. House of Representatives, including forty two Democrats and twenty one Republicans; fourteen women served in the U.S. Senate, including nine Democrats and five Republicans.\textsuperscript{132} Interestingly, these numbers

\textsuperscript{131} Slaughter, supra note 60.

\textsuperscript{132} CRS Women in Congress Report, supra note 9. Three of the Democratic women Members are non-voting Delegates: Madeleine Bordallo of Guam, Donna Christensen of the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Eleanor Holmes Norton of the District of Columbia. As of the 108th Congress, a total of 220 women had been Members of Congress (one hundred thirty nine Democrats and eighty one Republicans), with one hundred eighty seven serving only as Representatives, twenty six only as Senators, and seven in
equaled 14% of both chambers. Although this percentage is still low considering that women make up over half of the U.S. population, it is a dramatic improvement over the number of women in Congress just a few decades ago. The strong relationships among the women Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle have led to their being dubbed the "last bastion of bipartisanship." These bipartisan relationships have grown out of a climate of mutual trust, respect and friendship, and have developed through working together toward common goals on behalf of women and their families. The Congresswomen have also endeavored to

both positions. Of the two hundred and twenty women Members of Congress, twenty three have been Black, seven Hispanic and two Asian-American.\footnote{Cokie Roberts, \textit{A Look at the Makeup of the 109th Congress National Public Radio} Jan. 5, 2005 \textit{available at} http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4255721 [hereinafter Cokie Roberts story]. The 2004 election raised the number of women in the 109th Congress slightly higher, to a total of 68 women serving in the House and the same 14 women in the Senate. Eight new women Members joined the House of Representatives in the 109th Congress: Melissa Bean (D-IL), Thelma Drake (R-VA), Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Cynthia McKinney (D-GA), Cathy McMorris (R-WA), Gwen Moore (D-WI), Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL) and Allyson Schwartz (D-PA). Two women retired from the House at the end of the 108th Congress: Jennifer Dunn (R-WA) and Karen McCarthy (D-MO), and Denise Majette (D-GA) vacated her seat to run unsuccessfully for Senate. All women Members of Congress reelections were successful. Women's Policy, Inc., Election 2004 Wrap-up, \textit{The Source on Women's Issues in Congress} Nov. 3, 2004, \textit{available at} http://www.womenspolicy.org.}

\footnote{See Cokie Roberts story, supra note 133. As to be expected, the women Members of each party also do things independently on issues that are more partisan, with the understanding that these issues are kept strictly distinct from anything that the Women's Caucus as a whole undertakes. By taking unified stances on partisan issues, the Members can strengthen women's voices within each of their respective parties. While serving as the Democratic co-chair of the Women's Caucus in the 108th Congress, Louise M. Slaughter was also the \textit{de facto} leader of initiatives that the Democratic women Members have undertaken separate from the Women's Caucus. Of course, she worked closely with Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), the first women Leader of either party, and Rep. Hilda Solis, vice-chair of the Women's Caucus. For example, Rep. Slaughter, Leader Pelosi and Rep. Solis led a press conference in the spring of 2004 highlighting the ways in which President George W. Bush's budget was detrimental to women, releasing a letter to the President that all Democratic women had signed. See Press Release, Rep. Slaughter Calls on President Bush to Tell the Truth about theFY05 Budget, (Mar. 2004) \textit{at} http://www.slaughter.house.gov/ HoR/Louise/News/Press+Releases/2004+Press+Releases/SLAUGHTER+CALLS+ON+PRESIDENT+BUSH+TO+TELL+THE+TRUTH+ABOUT+FY+05+BUDGET+03.17.04.htm. They spearheaded a similar letter opposing the President's plan to privatize Social Security in January 2005. See Press Release, Solis, Pelosi and 25 Women Members of Congress Send Letter to Chairman William Thomas about Social Security, (Jan., 24, 2005) \textit{at} http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/ca32_solis/012405socsecthomas.html.}
maintain the respect of, and good relationships with, the leadership of both parties.  

Moreover, the women Representatives have enabled their male counterparts to better understand that all issues are women's issues, yet that many issues impact women differently than men, in degree of impact, in type of impact, and frequently both. For example, the leaders of the Women's Caucus participated in an event at the beginning of the second session in January 2004 to address "The State of the American Woman," as a counterpart to the president's State of the Union address the next day. The platform for this event was the launch of a nationwide college tour by Deborah Perry Piscione, Senior Fellow with the conservative Independent Women's Forum and Dr. Julianne Malveaux, a syndicated columnist and acclaimed economist, to discuss their book titled Unfinished Business: A Democrat and A Republican Take on the 10 Most Important Issues Women Face. This event enabled the Women's Caucus leaders to bring women's perspectives not only to issues that are commonly viewed as "women's issues" such as equal pay, work and family, education and the economic safety net; but also to those not commonly perceived as women's issues, such as the economy and taxes, crime and violence, civil rights, foreign policy, globalization and the environment. This event demonstrated that the Women's Caucus is a catalyst for bringing together people who have different perspectives on how best to approach women's issues—a venue through which to discuss and respect those differences.

A. Legislative Campaigns and Victories

The Women's Caucus in the 108th Congress focused much of its efforts toward achieving legislative goals. Frequently the Women's

135. GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 12.
138. For example, women's issues have traditionally been viewed as education, children and youth, health, welfare, local government, domestic relations (marriage, divorce), pensions, violence against women, equal pay, peace and international harmony, while men's issues were traditionally viewed as taxes, appropriations, national budgets, economic policies, commercial and financial practices, civil and criminal laws, military and defense policies. GERTZOG II, supra note 4, at 131.
139. A summary of the major legislative proposals spearheaded by the Women's Caucus leaders includes:
Caucus would implement a comprehensive campaign strategy to draw attention to an issue in conjunction with legislation to address the matter, including hearings, briefings, press conferences, "Dear Colleague" letters, and other measures. In addition to legislation, some of these awareness-raising strategies are also described in this section. As Congresswoman Slaughter has emphasized, enacting bills into law is the primary way that a Member of Congress can help positively impact thousands, if not millions, of lives, and therefore was what she views as the fundamental purpose of the Women's Caucus. The Caucus in the

- Amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act addressing Sexual Assault in the Military (Amendment 538 to H.R. 4200; spearheaded by Reps. Slaughter, Capito, Solis, and Brown-Waite; passed unanimously on May 20, 2004; incorporated into final bill);
- Prevention of and Response to Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence in the Military Act (H.R. 5391; introduced by Rep. Slaughter);
- Resolution honoring the contributions of the women, symbolized by "Rosie the Riveter," who served on the home front during World War II (H.Con.Res. 413; introduced by Rep. Capito; primary original cosponsors were Reps. Slaughter, Brown-Waite and Solis; passed unanimously on June 2, 2004);
- Legislation tripling funding for United Nations Development Fund for Women (Subcommittee amendment to Foreign Operations Appropriations Act; spearheaded by Reps. Biggert (R-IL), Slaughter, Capito, Solis and Brown-Waite; secured by Rep. Lowey (D-NY) in subcommittee on June 23, 2004; incorporated into final bill);
- High School Athletics Accountability Act (H.R. 4994; introduced by Rep. Slaughter; primary original cosponsors were Reps. Capito, Solis and Brown-Waite);
- Iraqi Women's and Children's Liberation Act (H.R. 4671; introduced by Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX); primary original cosponsors included Reps. Capito, Slaughter, Brown-Waite, Solis, Biggert (R-IL), Schakowsky (D-IL), Dunn (R-WA) and Maloney (D-NY); Senate version has all 14 women Senators as original cosponsors); and
- Women's Business Sustainability Extension Act (H.R. 4853; introduced by Rep. Sue Kelly (R-NY); original cosponsors included Reps. Louise Slaughter, Nancy Johnson (R-CT), Juanita Millender-McDonald (D-CA), Kay Granger (R-TX), Diana DeGette (D-CO), Judy Biggert).

140. The Women's Caucus had previously utilized omnibus bills as message pieces to gain broader support, and then broke off pieces to enact each Congress; later the leaders decided to use more limited, targeted bills. GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 128–29. Of course, some bills might pass even if the Women's Caucus does not make them a priority; therefore, for the Women's Caucus to make a concrete impact, it should take on legislative initiatives that would not necessarily otherwise become enacted into law. Id. at 130–31. Examples of legislative initiatives that the Women's Caucus may address in the future include the following:

- Reauthorization of and appropriations of funds to implement the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA III)
108th Congress was quite successful by this measure, as indicated by the examples of legislative initiatives outlined in this section.

The four Women's Caucus leaders often worked closely on various legislative proposals. As addressed below, either Rep. Capito or Rep. Slaughter often took the lead in introducing bills or amendments, with the other Women's Caucus leaders as the primary original co-sponsors. On certain bills spearheaded by other Women's Caucus Members, all four leaders joined as original cosponsors. The staff of the Women's Caucus leadership found it useful to work with the relevant committee staff prior to introduction of a bill, as well as to work with the appropriate staff in the Senate office that was leading the bill in the other chamber. It was also helpful to work closely with organizations that have expertise on a particular issue, in order to obtain their input on the wording of the bill; their assistance in drafting the talking points, fact sheets, "Dear Colleague" letters and other materials describing the bill; and their resources in encouraging their activists to call Members to urge their support for the bill. It was also imperative for the Republicans and Democrats to work collaboratively together in order to develop a bill and message points that would appeal to Members of both parties.

1. Sexual Assault of Women in the Military

The issue of sexual assault and other forms of violence against women serving in the U.S. military is not new, and has arisen time and again over the last three decades, at times drawing significant national attention in the media, Congress and the Pentagon. The typical response has frequently been a call for a study, and then a lack of

- Increased federal support for childcare to help working families
- Paid family leave to promote strong families and support working families
- Expanded health care coverage for the underinsured and uninsured
- Sound and adequate retirement benefits, including Social Security
- Economic equity, equal pay for equal work and elimination of the glass ceiling
- Equality in educational opportunities, vocational training and athletics.

See, e.g., GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 176.

meaningful, concrete and lasting change. However, when reports began to surface during the 108th Congress of sexual assault of women serving in the theater during the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as at the U.S. Air Force Academy, the Women’s Caucus leadership and other Members decided it was time to bring about concrete reform to stop the abuses and to ensure adequate assistance to victims.

The Women’s Caucus leadership spearheaded a sign-on letter to House Armed Services Committee Chairman requesting hearings on the issue. When they were informed that the committee planned to postpone hearings, the Caucus leadership decided to convene its own Women’s Caucus hearing. Staff of the Women’s Caucus Members held a staff briefing to discuss this issue with Christine Hansen, Executive Director of the Miles Foundation, a civilian organization that provides assistance to women serving in the military who have been sexually assaulted. The Women’s Caucus co-chairs and vice-chairs, along with the office of Rep. Jane Harman (D-CA), then organized a full hearing on March 31, 2004, where eleven Women’s Caucus Members heard testimony from Christine Hansen of the Miles Foundation; Scott Berkowitz, President of the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN); Anita Blair, with the Department of Defense; and Captain Jennifer Machmer, who testified that she had been sexually assaulted while serving in Kuwait.

Although only committees can technically hold “official” hearings, the Women’s Caucus Members held two unofficial Caucus hearings during the 108th Congress, one on the proposed changes to the regulations providing equity for women and girls in athletics under Title IX, and the one on sexual assault of women in the U.S. military. These hearings had the aura of an official hearing, with a panel of Members taking testimony from a series of expert witnesses. For example, the Women’s Caucus hearing on sexual assault in the military was held in an official committee room before a standing-room only audience, including many reporters from the national media and a camera with a live-news feed because so many stations wanted to film the hearing.

142. Maloney letter, supra note 141; See also Teresa Riordan and Sue Kirchoff, Women on the Hill: Can They Make a Difference?, Ms., Jan./Feb. 1995.
143. See Miles Moffeit, Betrayal in the Ranks THE DENVER POST Nov. 2003, at http://www.denverpost.com/Stories/0,0,36%257E30137%257E257E1767390,00.html.
144. Women’s Caucus Action, supra note 136.
Rep. Slaughter chaired the hearing, since she was the lead Member organizing the event, alongside Reps. Capito, Solis and Brown-Waite.\textsuperscript{147} Seven other Women's Caucus Members also joined the Women's Caucus leaders on the dais to provide opening statements, hear the witnesses' testimony and ask questions. As noted above, the witnesses included the executive directors of two organizations providing direct services to victims of sexual assault in the military and advocating for statutory, regulatory and policy reform concerning the problem, a captain in the U.S. Army who had suffered sexual assault during her recent tour of duty in Kuwait during the Iraq war, and an official from the Pentagon.\textsuperscript{148} The Women's Caucus staffers prepared an agenda with the biographies of the witnesses, and name plates for each Member who committed that she would attend (a few impromptu nameplates had to be added for Members who arrived unannounced). A recorder transcribed the hearing, which the Women's Caucus staffers then helped turn into a report. The Women's Caucus leadership submitted this report to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and to the House Armed Services Committee during a hearing on the matter later in the year.\textsuperscript{149} The Women's Caucus also convened a Members-only meeting with former Rep. Tillie Fowler (R-FL), who was the chair of a task force investigating the allegations of sexual assault at the U.S. Air Force Academy, to obtain her advice and input and discuss what the caucus could do to further address the issue.\textsuperscript{150} Republican Members also as-

\textsuperscript{147} Rep. Jane Harman's (D-CA) staff was also instrumental in organizing the hearing, although Rep. Harman was unable to attend.

\textsuperscript{148} Originally the Pentagon waffled as to whether it would send a representative to testify at the hearing. In the end, the prospect of an empty chair at the witness table bearing the label of the Pentagon must have been deemed less attractive than sending a representative to come to the hearing. Although the DOD representative apologized for not having much substantively to convey and could not answer most of the questions from the Members of Congress, she did promise to take the questions and concerns from the Members back to the Pentagon hierarchy. In the days leading up to the hearing, the Women's Caucus had announced the hearing and the fact that they would accept written statements from service-members who wanted to testify about the issue. Dozens of individuals responded, including several telephone calls from troops serving in the theater in the Middle East, as well as e-mails, faxes and mailed statements, most of which were from veterans who had been sexually assaulted during their tour of duty.

\textsuperscript{149} WOMEN'S CAUCUS ACTION, Apr. 29, 2004 e-newsletter (Cong. Caucus for Women's Issues, Wash., D.C.) (on file with the author).

\textsuperscript{150} Rep. Jane Harman was instrumental in arranging this meeting, as she and Rep. Tillie Fowler had previously worked together through their positions as co-chairs of the Women's Caucus team on women in the military in opposing attempts to re-segregate female and male trainees, GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 137. One of the suggestions that came out of this meeting was to draft sample questions for Members of
sured the Women's Caucus leadership that they were working behind the scenes through conversations with the Pentagon and other Administration officials to help address the problem.

Another opportunity arose for the Women's Caucus to act when the House took up consideration of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005. The Caucus leadership had learned about an amendment on which the Senate Armed Services Committee was working, which would implement some of the recommendations made by the Department of Defense (DOD) Task Force on Care for Victims of Sexual Assault. Moving quickly, Reps. Slaughter, Capito, Solis, and Brown-Waite introduced a similar amendment during the House floor consideration of the bill. Their staff worked closely with the House Armed Services Committee staff—both Republican and Democrat—to ensure their awareness and support. Rep. Slaughter spearheaded the amendment on the House floor and led the debate for the Democrats supporting the amendment. Since no one rose in opposition, Rep. Capito claimed the time for the Republicans and, along with Rep. Ginny Brown-Waite, led the debate supporting the amendment on the Republican side. The House passed the amendment unanimously in a recorded vote. The Women's Caucus action on this amendment ensured retention of the provision in the final bill that was enacted into law, and the Pentagon released new policies in January 2005 in accordance with these requirements. The Women's Caucus leadership also convened a working group to help draft more comprehensive legislation

---

150 CONG. REC. H3413 (daily ed. May 20, 2004) (Rep. Slaughter decided to ask for a recorded vote to demonstrate the depth of commitment in Congress to addressing this problem. Although a unanimous vote is never guaranteed, the Women's Caucus leaders had sent out numerous Dear Colleagues letters alerting other Members to the amendment and urging them to support it).

addressing additional aspects of the problem, which Rep. Slaughter introduced in November 2004.\textsuperscript{155}

2. The United Nations Development Fund for Women

The Women's Caucus led a successful 2004 campaign to triple the amount of U.S. funding for the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). This agency provides assistance for women in some of the most impoverished regions of the world, much like its better-known counterpart, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) provides assistance for children.\textsuperscript{156} The Women's Caucus held a staff briefing with UNIFEM Executive Director Noeleen Heyzer and representatives of Amnesty International, Women's Edge Coalition, and the Family Violence Prevention Fund, who discussed UNIFEM's activities to improve women's lives around the world.\textsuperscript{157} During this briefing, a bipartisan group of staffers and presenters discussed possible strategies for increasing U.S. assistance in leveraging UNIFEM's impact helping women and their families. UNIFEM's work in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as its focus on eliminating violence against women around the world, complemented the deep interest of the Women's Caucus leaders and Members concerning these issues.

This briefing and strategy session resulted in a letter from the Women's Caucus leadership and Rep. Judy Biggert, a former Women's Caucus co-chair, to their colleagues asking them to sign onto a letter to the House Foreign Operations Appropriations Committee supporting a tripling of U.S. funding for UNIFEM.\textsuperscript{158} The letter asked for an increase of funding that had been appropriated for UNIFEM's core programs from $1 million (which was the previous year's appropriation level) to $2 million, as well as a first-time contribution of $1 million for the UNIFEM-administered Global Fund for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.\textsuperscript{159} The offices of the Women's Caucus leadership and Rep. Biggert then conducted a comprehensive "whipping" effort to garner


\textsuperscript{156} See http://www.unifem.org.

\textsuperscript{157} \textit{WOMEN'S CAUCUS ACTION}, Apr. 29, 2004 e-newsletter (Cong. Caucus for Women's Issues, Wash., D.C.) (on file with the author).

\textsuperscript{158} \textit{WOMEN'S CAUCUS ACTION}, June 17, 2004 e-newsletter (Cong. Caucus for Women's Issues, Wash., D.C.) (on file with the author).

\textsuperscript{159} Id.
as much support for the letter as possible, and ultimately succeeded in

 gaining seventy six Members of Congress to join a bipartisan letter to

 the appropriators.\textsuperscript{169} This campaign succeeded and Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY), who serves on the Appropriations Foreign Operations Subcommittee, increased UNIFEM's funding from the U.S. to a total of $3 million ($2 million for core support and $1 million for the Global Fund).\textsuperscript{161}

 Unfortunately, the Senate version of the Foreign Operations Appropriations bill only contained $1.5 million for core support and nothing for the Global Fund.\textsuperscript{162} Therefore, the Women's Caucus leadership worked closely with Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA), who had led the initiative supporting UNIFEM in the Senate for years, to petition the conference committee to adopt the level of funding in the House version of the bill. The Women's Caucus leadership and Rep. Judy Biggert sent a cover letter and a copy of the original sign-on letter from the seventy-six Members of the House to the Conference Committee urging them to adopt the House version. They also sent a copy of the letter to Senator Landrieu for her distribution to all Senators, along with a sign-on letter she spearheaded urging the Senate Conference Committee Members to agree to the House funding levels. These efforts ultimately proved successful, as the final bill adopted into law contained the full $3 million for UNIFEM.\textsuperscript{163}

 3. Honoring “Rosie the Riveter”

 At the beginning of 2004, the National Park Service (NPS) was

 planning the opening of a new park commemorating women’s significant contributions to the nation during World War II by working in factories while men entered military service.\textsuperscript{164} These women became known collectively as “Rosie the Riveter” (or the “Rosies”). The NPS teamed up with Ford Motor Company, which had employed many of the Rosies to work in its factories during World War II. Since the new park was located in Rep. George Miller’s (D-CA) district, NPS and Ford Motor Company representatives visited his Washington, D.C. office to brainstorm possible initiatives to honor the Rosies and to celebrate and raise awareness about the new park. In addition to supporting the idea, Rep. Miller’s staff suggested that they work with the Women’s Caucus,

 160. “Whip” is a term of art signifying a concerted effort to encourage Members to take action for or against a measure.


 162. SEN. REP. No. 108-346.


 164. See http://www.nps.gov/roti/.
since the issue is an important component of women's history in the United States, and because the bipartisan nature of the Women's Caucus would enhance the likelihood of success of any initiatives on this issue. Representatives of the NPS and Ford then visited the staff of Reps. Capito and Slaughter in separate meetings and brainstormed about possible ideas. After a series of meetings and telephone and e-mail communications among the various parties, they agreed upon a series of commemorative events, deciding that these would coincide with the opening of the new World War II Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., in order to leverage interest and participation in both celebrations.

Rep. Capito offered to take the lead on behalf of the Women's Caucus. She introduced a resolution honoring “Rosie the Riveter,” which mirrored a resolution that Senator Olympia Snowe (R-ME) introduced in the Senate. Although seeking co-sponsorships of legislation is often a staff-to-staff effort, Rep. Capito successfully devoted considerable personal time to gaining co-sponsorship from her Republican women colleagues. She took a copy of the resolution along with a sign-on sheet to the House floor during votes on other matters. Talking one-on-one, she convinced many of her colleagues to sign on the spot. Her staff also made several rounds of calls to each of the Republican Members who had not yet signed on, encouraging them to join their growing ranks of colleagues in support of the bill. Rep. Slaughter’s staff also worked the phones, calling counterparts in both the Democratic and Republican women’s offices several times, and particularly making last-minute calls to the few remaining holdouts to let them know that their bosses would probably not want to be one of the few women Members left off of the bill. Ultimately this resolution gained the co-sponsorship of every woman Member of the U.S. House of Representatives—an unparalleled accomplishment and demonstration of unity by the Women’s Caucus.

166. Some had simply not yet turned their attention to the resolution because Members and staff are always terribly busy with many matters competing for their attention, but signed on once they focused on it because time was running out before the bill went to the floor. Others did not feel that a resolution on a historical issue was important enough to merit co-sponsorship and have a policy of not co-sponsoring legislation unless it is a priority; but they were finally convinced that the significance of having every woman Member support a single initiative was important to demonstrate unity in the Women’s Caucus, and they did not want to be the sole Member left off the bill.
167. Attaining unanimous support for measures dealing with women's issues is important to increasing the visibility of and support for the Women’s Caucus as a whole, and for building momentum for its future initiatives, which is why the Women’s Caucus
Rep. Capito and her staff worked with the Republican House leadership to ensure that the bill was brought up for a vote on the House floor, and the resolution passed unanimously.

The Women's Caucus also participated in a reception held on Capitol Hill in partnership with the NPS, Ford Motor Company, and other Members of Congress. They honored several dozen Rosies, then in their 80s and 90s, who traveled to Washington, D.C., from around the country to attend the events being held in their honor. Although a few of the organizers expressed concern about the possibility of low turnout because the venue was in the Rayburn House Office Building (since all of the rooms in the Capitol Building had been previously booked), the room on the evening of the event was jam-packed—and included many Members of Congress from both the House and Senate.168

Numerous Women's Caucus Members also traveled to the Women's Museum at Arlington National Cemetery to speak at a press conference honoring Rosie the Riveter. This event was intentionally scheduled immediately after the annual Women's Caucus Wreath-Laying Ceremony, also at Arlington National Cemetery, which significantly increased the turnout of Members participating in the press conference.169 Officials from Ford Motor Company made all of the arrangements for the press conference and garnered a substantial audience. The reception and press conference helped to heighten interest in co-sponsorship and passage of the resolution.

leadership worked so hard to ensure that every woman Member joined this resolution before the vote.

168. It is highly unusual for Members of either body to make the trek from their side of the Hill over to the other side. Interestingly, there sometimes seems to be as much of a divide between the House and Senate as there is between the Republicans and Democrats. The culture of the two chambers is known to be vastly different, with the Senate generally seen as the more genteel, refined, deliberative, broad-minded body favoring consultation and compromise; whereas the House is generally viewed as the more assertive, dogmatic, active, partisan body promoting greater dominance of the party in power. For these reasons, as well as the generally overbooked nature of all Members' schedules, it is rare for Members of one chamber to venture over to the other side, even though they are physically only a few blocks apart and can be reached through the underground tunnels without ever stepping a foot outside.

169. Considering that it is difficult to get Members of Congress to trek to the other side of the Hill, it is extremely difficult to get them to attend an event that is entirely “off campus.” Therefore, scheduling the Rosie press conference at Arlington National Cemetery immediately after the annual Women's Caucus Wreath-Laying Ceremony was key to attendance at the press conference.
4. The High School Athletics Accountability Act

A number of women's organizations that promote women's and girls' participation in athletics hold a yearly forum on Capitol Hill around February 5th for National Girls and Women in Sports Day. The event in February 2004 was originally scheduled to take place in one of the Senate office buildings, but had to be moved to the Rayburn House Office Building at the last minute due to the discovery of ricin, a potentially deadly toxic substance, in the Senate buildings, resulting in their closure for several days. The event was being held in conjunction with a lobby day to support the High School Sports Information Collection Act, which had been introduced in the Senate by Senator Olympia Snowe (R-ME). The bill had not yet been introduced in the House, since the coalition decided to concentrate its efforts on gaining Senate support first.

Later that spring, the topic of the High School Sports Information Collection Act came up during a conversation between a member of the coalition and Rep. Slaughter's staff, who discussed the possibility of Rep. Slaughter working with the other Women's Caucus leaders to introduce and promote the bill in the House. After confirming interest among the Women's Caucus leadership, their staff, and representatives of the women's organizations, the staff of the Women's Caucus leadership met with several representatives of the organizations to brainstorm a strategy for the Women's Caucus leaders to champion this bill. They decided that one tactic entailed linking the bill with issues that had currently gained national interest, such as the widely recognized problem of obe-

170. This meeting was between Kristen Galles, a preeminent attorney working across the nation on issues of fairness for women and girls in school-based athletics programs, and the author, both of whom also serve together as leaders of the Committee on the Rights of Women of the American Bar Association Section of Individual Rights and Responsibilities.

171. Rep. Slaughter agreed to take the lead as primary sponsor of the bill, with Reps. Capito, Solis, and Brown-Waite as the primary original co-sponsors. The organizations most involved in the House strategy included the American Association of University Women, Girls Inc., the National Women's Law Center, and the Women & Politics Institute. The coalition supporting this bill thought that it was appropriate for the Women's Caucus to champion this bill, in part because of the Women's Caucus significant involvement in 2003 in preventing the regulations under Title IX of the 1964 Education Act from being weakened. See GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 174–75 for an account of this achievement. During the February 2005 National Women and Girls in Sports Day event, Rep. Slaughter received the Patsy Mink Award for her long-standing support of fairness and equity in women and girls' athletic opportunities.
sity among the nation's youth. In drafting fact sheets and "Dear Colleague" letters supporting the bill, they conscientiously used language that would especially appeal to Republican Members, such as quotations from cabinet secretaries in the Bush Administration discussing the importance of athletic participation by students across the country. They also highlighted the high level of active support by fathers for their daughters' athletic opportunities, thus emphasizing this as an issue of interest to men as well as girls.

Concerning the bill itself, the team decided to alter slightly the language of the original High School Sports Information Collection Act. The team Members thought it important to add a "findings" section, in order to help explain why this legislation is both necessary and important. They also consulted with the House Education and Workforce Committee staff, who would have jurisdiction over the bill once it was introduced, and who made suggestions to change the placement of the bill within the U.S. Code and to modify the agency within the Administration that would be responsible for implementation of the statute once it was enacted. They also took this opportunity to change the

---

172. WOMEN'S CAUCUS ACTION, June 21, 2004 e-newsletter (Cong. Caucus for Women's Issues, Wash., D.C.) (on file with the author). They also highlighted the fact that increased athletic participation by girls leads to reductions in teen pregnancy, depression and suicide rates, and drug abuse, and to increases in self esteem, leadership and teamwork skills, and future career advancements.

173. This particular appeal to Republicans acknowledged the pragmatic reality that Republicans controlled the House, and therefore controlled the prioritization of legislation for movement through committee and onto the House floor. It also took into account the fact that Republicans have traditionally been more reluctant to take up issues particularly concerning women; therefore, a more concerted effort would be needed to reach out to Republican Members for their support. The Women's Caucus leadership staffers also concentrated their efforts to reach out to cosponsors on Republican Members, making special calls and sending additional "Dear Colleague" letters to Republican offices. They placed a particular emphasis on offices that were most likely to be supportive, such as Members who had supported other women's issues in the past, those who were Members of related caucuses such as the Congressional Athletics Caucus, those who have close relationships with the Women's Caucus leaders, and Members who have daughters or granddaughters involved in school-based athletics programs. They also targeted Members who serve on the Education and Workforce Committee, since their support would be particularly important in working the bill through the committee process.

174. Women's Caucus Action, supra note 158. The president of Dads and Daughters, a Minnesota-based organization devoted to supporting advocacy by fathers on behalf of greater opportunities for their daughters to participate in athletics, sent a letter to the leaders of the Women's Caucus expressing support for this bill and urging them to enact it into law. The Women's Caucus leaders distributed this letter along with their first "Dear Colleague" inviting co-sponsorship of the bill.

175. In addition to collecting information about the gender of all students participating in school-based athletics, the original bill also required the collection of information
title of the bill to more closely track language that the Republican president had utilized in promoting his education bill a few years earlier, emphasizing "accountability," in order to make the bill more appealing to the Republican Members and leadership in the House, and later to encourage the President to sign the bill into law. They informed Senator Snowe's staff about each of these changes, in order to help coordinate strategies between the two chambers.

Another idea that the legislative team propounded to draw attention to, and increase support for, the High School Athletics Accountability Act was to take advantage of the fact that the Olympic Games were occurring that summer. The Women's Caucus leaders sent several "Dear Colleague" letters highlighting the significant gains that women and girls have made in athletics over the last three decades, in order to emphasize a positive spin on the bill. They also forwarded news articles that were published at the time of the Olympics that highlighted the discrepancies that girls and women often still face in opportunities to engage in athletic pursuits, as well as the disparities in equipment, playing fields and other resources and support that they frequently encounter.

Leveraging celebrity backing for a bill increases awareness of, support for, and momentum behind a bill. Therefore, the legislative team decided to organize a Women's Caucus event celebrating the U.S. women athletes competing in the Olympics, and specifically honoring Julie Foudy and Brandi Chastain, U.S. Soccer Team Olympic gold medal champions. The Women's Caucus worked closely with the Women & Politics Institute on the event, which did a tremendous amount of work to ensure its resounding success. Rep. Slaughter submitted a Congressional Record statement honoring Julie Foudy, Brandi
Chastain, the U.S. Women's Soccer Team, and U.S. women Olympic athletes, which she had framed for presentation to Foudy and Chastain during the event. As Rep. Slaughter was unable to attend the event, Rep. Ginny Brown-Waite (R-FL) stepped forward to spearhead the program. She was joined by Reps. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), Judy Biggert (R-IL), Gene Green (D-TX), Loretta Sanchez (D-CA), Lynn Woosley (D-CA), and Grace Napolitano (D-CA). A highlight of the event was the participation of four 8-year old girls from a nearby girls soccer team, who joined their soccer heroes and Members of Congress at the front of the room during the program, and who each brought a soccer ball for Foudy and Chastain to sign. The event provided a perfect photo opportunity, as demonstrated by the press coverage.

Finally, the Women's Caucus leadership staff decided to organize a "fun event" for all Women's Caucus staffers and any other interested Hill staff, interns, family and friends. They correlated the "fun event" with the work that the Caucus had been doing on women in athletics, so they invited everyone to go to a Washington Mystics game (the women's professional basketball team in Washington, D.C.). They also included educational information about the High School Athletics Accountability Act on the invitation, to help raise awareness about the bill. During half-time at the game, the announcer recognized the staff of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues and the Caucus' longstanding commitment to women's sports. Several attendees encouraged the Women's Caucus staff to make this an annual event.

Although Congress has yet to take action on the High School Athletics Accountability Act, gaining sufficient momentum behind a new legislative initiative is frequently a multi-year process. Rep. Slaughter, Rep. Capito and the new Women's Caucus leadership have expressed a commitment to building support for this bill in the 109th Congress, in the hope that it will eventually be enacted into law.

---

176. Rep. Slaughter also attended the kick-off U.S. Women's Soccer Team Celebration Tour game in her district in Rochester, NY, where she presented a Congressional Record statement honoring her constituent Mia Hamm, another star player on the team, as well as all of the other players.


178. Staff interest in and support of a bill is often key to garnering the attention and support of their boss, and the Mystics game was a perfect opportunity to highlight the bill to staffers.
In recent years, Lifetime Television For Women has partnered with the Women’s Caucus to organize an annual “Stop Violence Against Women Week” every March. The theme of the 2004 activities revolved around the 10th anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). As part of these activities, Reps. Capito and Slaughter requested the Congressional Research Service (CRS) to investigate both the impact that VAWA has had over the last 10 years in addressing the problem of violence against women, as well as areas in which it could be improved and strengthened. The CRS report found that VAWA has had a tremendous impact on addressing numerous aspects of the problem, but that the nation had a long way to go in achieving an end to domestic violence, acquaintance rape, stalking, and other types of abuse of women. Reps. Capito and Slaughter launched this report and announced its findings at a Congressional briefing during Stop Violence Against Women Week, and called upon Congress to enact additional measures to help address the myriad aspects involved in this problem.

Reps. Capito, Slaughter and other Women’s Caucus Members participated in and supported many other events highlighting the continued problem of violence against women throughout the week. For example, Reps. Slaughter and Capito joined celebrities such as Martina McBride, Ashanti, Rosanna Arquette and Vanessa Marcil at the Kennedy Center for a celebration of VAWA’s 10th anniversary and a reaffirmation of commitment to helping women who are still suffering from abuse. They also joined other Members in supporting numerous briefings on related topics, such as violence against women internationally, including in Mexico, Afghanistan, Colombia and Iraq. They


181. Id.
The distributed "Dear Colleague" letters, and facilitated Lifetime TV's distribution of commemorative scarves and ties to serve as lasting reminders about violence against women throughout the year.

The Violence Against Women Act was first enacted in 1994 and was reauthorized and strengthened in 2000 (known as VAWA 2000). Since it was slated to be up for reauthorization again in 2005, the Women's Caucus leaders were very interested in being actively involved with the reauthorization strategy. In part, they wanted to help ensure that the new legislative initiative (known as VAWA III) was further strengthened in order to provide adequate support for victims of violence, to foster sufficient prevention measures to reduce violence against women, and to ensure appropriate punishment of abusers to readdress the crimes and to deter future violence. A large coalition of women's rights organizations working on violence against women had already been collaborating for many months to help draft a legislative proposal so they would be ready to help Congress when the bill came up for reauthorization. On the Senate side, Senator Joseph Biden (D-DE) and his Judiciary Committee staff began working through the details of the draft bill, and took steps to reach out to Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT), who had expressed interest in supporting the Senate bill. Sen. Biden's staff also reached out to staff for the House Judiciary Committee as well as Women's Caucus leadership staff in order to help coordinate legislative strategy for the bill. The staffers of the four Women's Caucus leaders also met several times with the lead organizations working on the draft bill. In order to discuss each of the provisions and provide input on both substance and strategy, they organized a follow-up meeting for staffers of all Congresswomen and House Judiciary staff. These bipartisan meetings have been valuable in helping think through the most effective messages, talking points, key Congressional players (both members and staff), and strategic options for moving the bill through the legislative process in 2005.

The coalition of women's organizations working on various aspects of violence against women also organized an event in the summer of 2004 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of VAWA and to build energy and momentum for its reauthorization. The event was also to honor the memory of Senator Paul Wellstone (D-MN) and his wife Sheila Wellstone, who had been major champions of the original Violence Against Women Act and its reauthorization in 2000, and who faced an untimely death in an airplane crash during Senator Wellstone's reelection campaign in 2002. Held in the Capitol Building, the event drew a standing-room-only crowd of supporters, including many Senators and Representatives who spoke about the importance of renewing
and strengthening VAWA. Reps. Capito and Solis represented the Women's Caucus in reinforcing these sentiments.

The Women's Caucus supported several events during Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October. For example, the four Women's Caucus leaders joined Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) in sponsoring a Congressional briefing on a new corporate initiative to raise awareness of violence against women. This initiative, dubbed the "It's Time to Talk' Day," was started by Marie Claire magazine and Liz Claiborne, a woman's clothing fashion line, to educate their employees about violence against women. They have inspired other corporations to take up the initiative, and hope to gain increasing participation by corporations across America, eventually reaching millions of people.

6. Women in Iraq and Afghanistan

The Women's Caucus focused significant attention on the plight of women in both Iraq and Afghanistan, in part because of the oppressive circumstances under which they have lived for decades, in part because of the United States' continued involvement in armed conflict in both of those countries, and in part because of the U.S. commitment to helping establish democracy and rebuild the devastated infrastructure in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many of the Women's Caucus Members felt that under these circumstances, the United States also has a responsibility to ensure that women are strongly factored into the equation in any action taken by the U.S. personnel, whether civilian or military, in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Members of the Women's Caucus took various actions on this issue in the 108th Congress, including introducing legislation to increase assistance geared specifically toward women, sending a letter to President Bush urging him to look into reports of rape and abuse of women prisoners in Iraq, and holding numerous Congressional briefings to raise awareness of the continued plight of women in Afghanistan and Iraq. Rep. Slaughter corresponded with her counterparts in the British Parliament to encourage their involvement in persuading the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq to support measures advancing women's status and equality. The Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues also jointly participated with the newly formed Iraqi Women's Caucus (co-chaired by Reps. Jennifer Dunn (R-WA) and Tom Osborne (R-NE)) in hosting delegations of women representatives from Iraq to engage with them about their participation in the emerging democratic systems. The successful campaign by the Women's Caucus to triple the amount of
U.S. funding for UNIFEM was also spurred in large part by their desire to support UNIFEM's initiatives to help women in Iraq and Afghanistan, as noted above. The Women's Caucus also participated in a Congressional briefing on Women in Afghanistan: Present and Future, presented by Dr. Cheryl Bernard on September 10, 2004, highlighting the findings of her recent fact-finding mission to Afghanistan.

In addition, the Women's Caucus leadership joined a bipartisan legislative initiative spearheaded in the House by Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX), and joined by the co-chairs of the Iraqi Women's Caucus as well as other Representatives at the forefront of this issue. The Iraqi Women's and Children's Liberation Act had originated in the Senate, and had gained the bipartisan co-sponsorship of all 14 women Senators. Although the bill was not acted upon in the 108th Congress, in part because it was introduced relatively late in the second session, such strong bipartisan support may bode well for its future prospects.

7. Women's Caucus Appropriations Priorities

For the last several years the Women's Caucus co-chairs have sent an annual letter to the House Appropriations Committee and to its relevant subcommittees outlining priority programs impacting women, for which the co-chairs request adequate levels of funding. In 2004, Reps. Slaughter and Capito highlighted numerous priorities in letters sent to the following subcommittees: 1) Commerce, Justice, State, Judiciary and Related Agencies, 2) Defense, 3) District of Columbia, 4) Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs, 5) Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies, 6) Veteran Affairs, Housing and Urban Development and Independent Agencies, and 7) Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies. Reps. Capito and Slaughter requested suitable funding for various programs impacting women, asking for either level-funding for programs that were operating satisfactorily or for increases in funding for programs that lacked sufficient resources.182

In drafting these letters, the co-chairs often use the letter from the previous year as a template, and conduct research to determine the adjustments they would like to make in the funding levels requested. Women's Policy, Inc., and other women's organizations that have relevant expertise concerning the various programs have been invaluable in providing the research and background information to help the co-chairs determine appropriate funding levels to be requested. The co-chairs also

182. Examples of programs highlighted in their letter are included in Appendix F.
poll other Members of the Women's Caucus to request their input as to programs and funding levels that should be included in the letter. The letter must be sent before the deadline set by the various appropriations subcommittees, generally in February or March of each year. In prior years, Women's Caucus Members have also testified before the appropriations subcommittees in support of increases in funding for programs impacting women.

8. Addressing the Murders of Women in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico

Congresswoman Hilda Solis has led the Women's Caucus in its efforts to address the brutal murders of over 370 women in Ciudad Juarez and Chihuahua, Mexico, near the Texas border. In conjunction with other Women's Caucus leaders and Members, she has introduced several Congressional resolutions condemning the murders and calling for more effective investigations and prevention measures. She and her staff have worked with the Women's Caucus to conduct meetings with high-ranking officials in the U.S. State Department and from the Mexican Embassy in Washington, D.C., to encourage them to take more effective steps to address the problem. Rep. Solis has spearheaded sign-on letters, including a letter to Secretary of State Colin Powell on November 7, 2003, and along with thirty one other Members of Congress a letter to Mexican President Vincente Fox to express concern about this issue and call for action to address it. She has organized a series of Congressional briefings at both the Member and staff level, to raise awareness of the issue and motivate action. In addition, she organized a Congressional Delegation (CODEL) trip to Ciudad Juarez on October 11-13, 2003, in order to meet with the families of victims, government delegates, representatives from factories where some of the victims previously worked, and other relevant individuals.

B. Non-Legislative Initiatives and Accomplishments

In addition to advancing and enacting legislation, the Women's Caucus also undertook many non-legislative projects during the 108th Congress. Some of these undertakings specifically concern women's issues, such as sending letters of inquiry to agencies within the Administration about issues affecting women, and holding events to

raise the visibility of women in certain professions where they have traditionally been underrepresented. Some projects help foster increased networking among Congresswomen (developing an "old girls network" to help counterbalance the still-prevalent and powerful "old boys network" in Congress). Some initiatives serve to increase the profile of the Women's Caucus, thus magnifying its credibility, reputation and effectiveness in supporting its legislative efforts. This section provides a few examples of the non-legislative projects undertaken by the Women's Caucus in the 108th Congress.

1. Women in the Law Forum Honoring U.S. Supreme Court Justices

The Women's Caucus leaders held a "Women in the Law Forum" in October 2004, to celebrate the advancements that women have made in the legal profession, to commemorate the anniversary of the birth of Belva Lockwood, the first woman to be admitted to the U.S. Supreme Court Bar, and to honor Justices Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the first women to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court.184 Such events bring together women serving at the top levels of the legislative and judicial branches of government to foster increased communication, support and goodwill among these leaders.

The forum consisted of a two-part program. About 20 Women's Caucus Members welcomed the two Justices, and their family members and law clerks, at a pre-reception in the Lindy Boggs Room.185 After a period of informal conversation, they then walked down to the Speaker's Dining Room for the formal program and reception. This part of the event was held in conjunction with the Women's Studies Program at George Mason Law School and the Women's Law & Public Policy

184. The Women's Caucus had hosted a tea with Justices O'Connor and Ginsburg in an earlier Congress.
185. Normally only women Members are permitted in the Lindy Boggs Room (and one female staffer may accompany a Member); however, an exception was made for the Justices and their guests. This was a Members-only event, so Members did not bring staffers, because the room is quite small. However, three staffers of the Women's Caucus leaders arrived early in order to set up tea, coffee, water and cookies, and remained to help replenish the refreshments during the reception and to clean up afterwards. Although generally photographs are not permitted in the Lindy Boggs Room, a few of the Members brought cameras and had photographs taken of all of the Members and Justices. These were nice mementos of the events for the Members, and were included in the next Women's Caucus Action newsletter. W O M E N ' S C A U C U S A C T I O N, Oct. 13, 2004 e-newsletter (Cong. Caucus for Women's Issues, Wash., D.C.) (on file with the author).
Fellowship Program at the Georgetown University Law Center. Several people attended from both law schools, and a representative from each spoke about various aspects of women in the law. The Women’s Caucus leaders made brief remarks on women lawmakers in Congress and presented a framed copy of personalized Congressional Record statements honoring Justices Ginsburg and O’Connor. The two Justices then offered a few words about their experiences as the first to women to serve on the Supreme Court. Finally, the Justices graciously had their photographs taken by the official House photographer with all of the Members of Congress in attendance, and with the representatives from the law schools and the Women’s Caucus staffers who had helped organize the forum.\(^{186}\)

2. Women in Politics

Advancing opportunities for other women to engage in the political process, to run for office, and to become elected public officials was another priority for the leaders of the Women’s Caucus in the 108th Congress. In early 2004, Reps. Capito and Slaughter partnered with Marie Wilson, President of the White House Project, to launch the Vote, Run, Lead campaign to encourage young women to become more involved at all levels of the political process, especially as candidates.\(^{187}\) Reps. Slaughter and Capito opened the event with a retrospective of women in politics, including a few stories from their own personal experiences. The audience consisted of young women working on the Hill, several of whom expressly noted that they aspire to run for office themselves in the future.

The Women’s Caucus also participated in a briefing organized by the Women & Politics Institute at American University in conjunction with the National Council of Women’s Organizations, providing a review of women and the 2004 elections.\(^{188}\) Speakers included Rep.

\(^{186}\) In addition to enjoying the forum itself, many of the Members were particularly interested in being a part of the official photograph, which was included in the invitation as part of the program. Announcing that an official photograph will be taken during an event is an effective mechanism for increasing Member participation in events.

\(^{187}\) The White House Project is a non-partisan, non-profit organization devoted to helping elect a woman to serve as president of the United States. They do so by helping to increase the “pipeline” of women throughout all layers of the political system, local, state and national. Marie Wilson also authored a new book, published in 2004 by Viking Press, see supra note 12, addressing some of these same issues.

\(^{188}\) Note, Members of Congress cannot conduct any campaign-related activities on Capitol Hill nor using federal resources. However, they can be involved with non-
Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), who helped kick-off the forum, as well as representatives from EMILY's List, WISH List, Democratic and Republican pollsters who specialize in women's voting patterns, and advocates from Women's Edge and Legal Momentum discussing the international and domestic women's issues that the audience could expect to see at the forefront in the 109th Congress.

HBO launched a new movie in February 2004 entitled *Iron Jawed Angels*, a film about Alice Paul's struggle to win suffrage for women. The movie reminds women that they had won the right to vote and participate in the political process less than a century ago, and they should therefore take full advantage of the opportunity now available to them as both candidates and voters. A coalition of women's organizations working with HBO to increase nationwide interest in the film hosted a screening for Congressional staff, and then for all Members of Congress at the Library of Congress before the airdate. They also participated in a Congressional breakfast with actor Hillary Swank, who starred in the film as Alice Paul. HBO also worked with Members of Congress to hold regional screenings across the country. For example, Rep. Slaughter participated in a screening at a theater in Rochester, NY, in conjunction with the Rochester League of Women Voters.

3. Wreath Laying Ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery

Shortly before Memorial Day each year, the Women's Caucus holds a Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Women's Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery. This annual tradition was started by Rep. Juanita Millender-McDonald during her tenure as Women's Caucus co-chair, and has been a favorite of Women's Caucus Members ever since. In addition to memorializing the women who have died serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, the Women's Caucus also honors one outstanding woman representative from each of the five branches of the military.\(^{189}\)

\(^{189}\)The Women's Caucus leadership staff works with a liaison at the Pentagon, who helps each military branch choose an appropriate representative, facilitates transportation to the ceremony, etc. The staffing also works with personnel at the Arlington National Cemetery Women's Memorial, who secure a color guard and wreath for the ceremony, a rose to present to each of the five honorees, a podium, microphone and speakers, seating arrangements, etc. The staffing arranges with the House of Representatives Office of the Sergeant at Arms for an official motorcade to transport

partisan, educational briefings analyzing the outcomes of elections. For more information about women's initiatives within the two major political parties, see the Women's Vote Center at the Democratic National Committee, at http://www.democrats.org/wvc/ and "Winning Women" in conjunction with the Republican National Campaign, at http://www.winningwomen.com/.
Fifteen Members participated in the event in 2004, as well as retired Air Force Brigadier General Wilma L. Vaught, who had overseen the establishment of the Women's Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery. The ceremony included a presentation of flags by the military color guard. The Women's Caucus leaders gave presentations about the long history of women's service in the U.S. military, the development of the Women's Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery, the current status of women in the military and the advancements that women have made both in numbers and in the fields in which they operate. They then read the personalized Congressional Record statement that had been entered into the record on behalf of each of the five women being honored that day, who were presented with framed copies of the statement signed by each of the Women's Caucus leaders. The honorees were also each presented with a rose, as well as a copy of the Congressional Record book, which had been signed by each member of the Woman's Caucus who was present at the ceremony. One representative gave brief remarks on behalf of the five honorees in acceptance of the recognition by the Women's Caucus, as well as General Wilma Vaught (USAF, Ret.), the host of the event. The rest of the Women's Caucus Members all gathered around the podium, and each made a brief comment on the significance of the ceremony and women's service in the military. Then the Women's Caucus co-chairs jointly placed the wreath prominently before the Women's Memorial, and all of the dignitaries and honorees gathered for several formal photographs.

4. Women’s History Month

The Women's Caucus typically uses Women's History Month to highlight the significant contributions that women have made to society throughout history in the United States and around the world. Mem-

---

190. They were transported out to the Women's Memorial in two Sergeant at Arms vans, with the Members in one van and staff in the other van. A few Members made their own way out to the cemetery, since they were coming from other locations.

191. The Women's Caucus Members each signed the cover of the five Congressional Record books while they were in the motorcade on their way to Arlington National Cemetery, to serve as a memento for the five honorees.
bers have sent “Dear Colleague” letters, made Congressional Record statements, and made one-minute or Special Order speeches, to commemorate some of these women, particularly women who had lived or worked in their districts. They have also held briefings to highlight issues of importance to women that Congress should be addressing. For example, Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) organizes an annual Congressional briefing near International Women’s Day (March 8) to draw attention to the status of women in other countries, as well as U.S. foreign policy initiatives that could help improve their situations.

5. Silicone Gel Breast Implants

Despite questions about the safety and effectiveness of silicone gel breast implants, in the fall of 2003 the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) was reconsidering whether to allow them back on the market.\(^\text{192}\) The Women’s Caucus co-chairs decided to send a letter to the FDA Administrator expressing concern about the lack of sufficient data. Instead of calling for an outright rejection, they instead requested that the decision to expand the availability of silicone gel breast implants be postponed until further research could be conducted, in order to determine the true safety record of such implants.\(^\text{193}\) Following up on their original letter, the two co-chairs then spearheaded a broader sign-on letter from eighteen Women’s Caucus Members, to demonstrate that others had similar concerns. The FDA decided to withhold approval for expanded availability of silicone gel implants at that time.

6. Women’s Gym

Historically, the original House gym was limited only to male Members of Congress. After female Members protested, a separate and smaller “Women’s Gym” was established for women Members and for wives of male Members. The original configuration of the Women’s Gym caused Members to change in their offices and walk through the

\(^{192}\) Concerns were raised about the lack of longitudinal studies, the best types of analysis when dealing with devices like breast implants which may not develop side effects until years down the road. The NIH has determined that about 80% of breast implants are for cosmetic purposes, whereas only about 20% are for reconstruction after mastectomies or other reconstructive surgery.

\(^{193}\) The Women’s Caucus will often take a moderate approach to an issue, such as calling for further study instead of outright rejection of an application, because a moderate stance can often be more effective than one that could be perceived as more extreme, strident, or accusatory.
Halls of Congress and then through the garage in order to access the entrance to their facilities, although this inconvenience was subsequently remedied.

The Women's Caucus leaders in the first session of the 108th Congress conducted a survey of Congresswomen to determine their usage of gym, what additional amenities might be added, and their interest in having a woman member serve on the Gym Board—the three-person body of Representatives overseeing the Members' athletic facilities, which had always been occupied by male Members. Speaker Dennis Hastert indicated an interest in possibly establishing separate Women's Gym Board, which some Congresswomen favored but others were concerned may lead to reduced resources for the Women's Gym, and this idea never gained traction. During the second session, several Members held an open house at the Women's Gym to encourage greater awareness and use of the athletic facilities.

7. American Medical Women's Association Local Legends Exhibit at NIH

The American Medical Women's Association has teamed with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to recognize women physicians who have excelled in their professions and who have opened the door for other women in the health care profession. Starting in 2003, they initiated a "Local Legends" exhibit at NIH highlighting women who have been chosen by their Members of Congress as outstanding women doctors. The Women's Caucus distributes information about this initiative to Members of Congress to encourage their participation.

V. LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

The 30th anniversary of the Women's Caucus will occur in 2007. The Women's Caucus has much to celebrate, considering the strides that it has made during its first three decades. Its leaders might want to consider building upon the success of previous anniversary celebrations, and perhaps host an anniversary dinner, a reception for all founding Members, resolutions, floor speeches, and other commemorative events, particularly in March and April celebrating the first meetings and the

establishment of the official Caucus. These events will take place at the beginning of the 110th Congress, just as the new set of Women's Caucus co-chairs and vice-chairs will be taking the helm. Therefore, they will want to do a significant amount of pre-planning in order to be able to launch into these events immediately upon the transition into their new positions. If the current vice-chairs in the 109th Congress become the new co-chairs in the 110th Congress, then Reps. Lois Capps (D-CA) and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) and their staffers will have sufficient time to begin making plans to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the Women's Caucus. This will be a wonderful opportunity for them to launch their term as the Women's Caucus leaders, to establish their priorities, and to build momentum for a highly productive era within Women's Caucus history.

Of course, while celebrating its victories, the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues still has much work yet to do before women achieve full equality, both in the United States and throughout the world. The enduring strength and efficacy of the Women's Caucus, therefore, is crucially important in continuing to advance the status of and to promote issues of importance to women. As noted previously, all too often the institutional memory of the Caucus has been lost as Members and staffers rotate off the Caucus or leave the Hill; and this Article is intended to help counter that loss and prevent the need to "reinvent the wheel" during each new transition. Hopefully, this Article will assist interested parties in sustaining and enhancing the influence and effectiveness of the Women's Caucus and the realization of its goals.

195. WPI held a tremendously successful 20th anniversary gala attended by President and Hillary Clinton, where Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was the keynote speaker and NPR commentator Cokie Roberts emceed the event. GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 121, 127.
APPENDIX A: Acknowledgements

Julia L. Ernst served as co-director of the bipartisan Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues ("Women's Caucus") from December 2003-January 2005 during her tenure as Legislative Counsel for Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY), who co-chaired the Women's Caucus. The author is profoundly grateful to Rep. Slaughter for the privilege of working with her and for her longstanding leadership in promoting women's equality in the United States and around the world. She is also deeply indebted to her colleagues in Rep. Slaughter's office, particularly Chief of Staff Sally Shaeffer, Legislative Director Rosaline Cohen, Press Secretary Megan Thompson, Office Manager and Scheduler Danielle Sullivan, Legislative Assistant Moira Bergin, and former Chief of Staff Cindy Pellegrini, as well as her predecessor Lynsey Morris, for their steadfast support, advice, friendship and assistance.

The author would also like to thank the other leaders of the Women's Caucus in the 108th Congress, Reps. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Hilda L. Solis (D-CA) and Ginny Brown-Waite (R-FL), as well as their staff who co-directed the caucus, Carrie Gilkey and Krista Sheets (with Rep. Capito), Jenny Blau and Nikki Yamashiro (with Rep. Solis) and Kristina Moore and Pete Meachum (with Rep. Brown-Waite), for their devotion to advancing the status of women and for their friendship. The work accomplished by the Women's Caucus discussed in this paper was largely the result of the collaborative, bipartisan leadership of the Congresswomen spearheading the caucus and their staff. The author is also grateful for the assistance provided by Women's Policy, Inc., and especially its executive director, Cindy Hall, for sharing her institutional memory of the history of the Women's Caucus.

Additionally, the author would like to recognize the longstanding support from her parents, Judge J. Richard Ernst and Janet L. Ernst, as well as her husband, Richard H. Clemen; who have each provided boundless encouragement, guidance and love. This paper has been vastly improved by the comments and input of numerous individuals, including the author's father and Zinta Saulkalns, Faculty Manuscript Editor at the Georgetown University Law Center, to which the author is eternally grateful. However, any errors, inaccuracies or opinions found within this Article are the author's own. This paper primarily focuses on the second session of the 108th Congress, the period during which the author worked with Rep. Slaughter (D-NY) and the Women's Caucus, and any un-footnoted statements are from the
author's own experiences, conversations and observations. Julia L. Ernst currently serves as executive director of the Women's Law and Public Policy Fellowship Program at the Georgetown University Law Center (www.wlppfp.org).
According to Section 2 of the Bylaws of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues (1995):

The purposes of the organization shall be:

A. To provide a forum for women Members of Congress to speak on critical public policy issues, especially issues of particular concern to women;

B. To develop leadership by and among the women Members of Congress in light of the historic and continuing under-representation of women in Congress;

C. To develop, initiate, and promote legislation and public policies which ensure the administration of justice concerning the rights, progress and status of women;

D. To alert Caucus Members about changes proposed by or actions taken by government agencies, courts and other entities; to analyze such proposals or actions; and to publicize such analysis via bulletins, fact sheets and/or briefings;

E. To solicit ideas and opinions from organizations and causes which advance the rights, status of progress of women in society;

F. To disseminate information to Caucus Members through a means as may be appropriate;

G. To cooperate with community leaders and with legislators at all levels of government to further legislative proposals supported by the caucus;

H. To monitor and promote the proper administration of existing laws as they affect women; and

I. To encourage the education of the general public, the press and government officials concerning the rights, status, and progress of women in society.
The co-chairs have always consisted of one Republican and one Democrat: 196

109TH CONGRESS (2005-2006): Ginny Brown-Waite (R-FL) and Hilda L. Solis (D-CA)

108TH CONGRESS (2003–2004): Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) and Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY)

107TH CONGRESS (2001-2002): Judy Biggert (R-IL) and Juanita Millender-McDonald (D-CA)

106TH CONGRESS (1999–2000): Sue Kelly (R-NY) and Carolyn Maloney (D-NY)

105TH CONGRESS (1997–1999): Nancy Johnson (R-CT) and Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC)

104TH CONGRESS (1995–1996): Constance Morella (R-MD) and Nita Lowey (D-NY)

98TH–103RD CONGRESS (1983–1994): Olympia Snowe (R-ME) and Patricia Schroeder (D-CO)

97TH CONGRESS (1981–1982): Margaret Heckler (R-MA) and Patricia Schroeder (D-CO)

95TH–96TH CONGRESS (1977–1980): Margaret Heckler (R-MA) and Elizabeth Holzman (D-NY)

196. WPI website, supra note 8; GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 21; CRS Women In Congress Report, supra note 9, at 30.
In the 103rd Congress, the following task forces were established:\textsuperscript{197}

- Women's Health, chaired by Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY);
- Violence Against Women, chaired by Constance Morella (R-MD);
- Economic and Educational Equity, chaired by Patsy Mink (D-HI);
- Reproductive Rights, chaired by Nita Lowey (D-NY);
- Caucus Bylaws, chaired by Maxine Waters (D-CA);
- Children, Youth and Families; and
- Older Women.

In the 105th Congress, co-chairs Nancy Johnson (R-CT) and Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) established the following teams:\textsuperscript{198}

- The Violence Against Women Act, chaired by Barbara Cubin (R-WY) and Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA);
- Preventive Health Services for Women, chaired by Connie Morella (R-MD) and Donna Christensen (D-VI);
- Educational Child Care and School Readiness, chaired by Deborah Pryce (R-OH) and Ellen Tauscher (D-CA);
- Job Training and Vocational Education, chaired by Patsy Mink (D-HI);
- Title IX Anniversary Activities, Chaired by Carolyn Kilpatrick (D-MI);
- Health Care Insurance Reform, chaired by Linda Smith (R-WA) and Louise Slaughter (D-NY);
- Juvenile Justice, chaired by Sue Myrick (R-NC) and Zoe Lofgren (D-CA);
- Women in the Military, chaired by Tillie Fowler (R-FL) and Jane Harman (D-CA);
- Pensions and Retirement Benefits, chaired by Jennifer Dunn (R-WA) and Barbara Kennelly (D-CT);

\textsuperscript{197} GERTZOG II, supra note 4, at 223, 239.
\textsuperscript{198} WPI website, supra note 8.
• Teen Pregnancy, chaired by Kay Granger (R-TX) and Eva Clayton (D-NC);
• Higher Education Act, chaired by Marge Roukema (R-NJ) and Loretta Sanchez (D-CA);
• Women-Owned Businesses, chaired by Sue Kelly (R-NY) and Juanita Millender-McDonald (D-CA);
• HIV/AIDS, chaired by Connie Morella (R-MD) and Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX); and
• International Women's Rights, chaired by Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) and Cynthia McKinney (D-GA).

In the 106th Congress, co-chairs Sue Kelly (R-NY) and Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) established the following teams:
• Violence Against Women and Safety Issues, chaired by Connie Morella (R-MD) and Julia Carson (D-IN);
• Women's Health, chaired by Sue Kelly (R-NY) and Louise Slaughter (D-NY);
• Equal Opportunity, chaired by Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC);
• Education, chaired by Judy Biggert (R-IL) and Lois Capps (D-CA);
• Safe Motherhood, chaired by Connie Morella (R-MD) and Nita Lowey (D-NY);
• Older Women's Health, chaired by Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) and Carrie Meek (D-FL);
• Children's Issues and Child Care, chaired by Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX);
• Retirement, chaired by Kay Granger (R-TX) and Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX);
• Women in the Military/Women Veterans, chaired by Tillie Fowler (R-FL) and Corrine Brown (D-FL);
• Women in Business, chaired by Sue Kelly (R-NY) and Grace Napolitano (D-CA); and
• Tax Policy, chaired by Nancy Johnson (R-CT) and Karen Thurman (D-FL).

In the 107th Congress, co-chairs Judy Biggert (R-IL) and Juanita Millender-McDonald (D-CA) established the following teams:
• Education and Children, chaired by Connie Morella (R-MD) and Nita Lowey (D-NY);
• Health and Older Women, chaired by Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) and Louise Slaughter (D-NY);
• Violence Against Women, chaired by Sue Kelly (R-NY) and Tammy Baldwin (D-WI);
• Women in Business and the Workplace, chaired by Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) and Corrine Brown (D-FL); and
• Economic Empowerment, chaired by Judy Biggert (R-IL) and Loretta Sanchez (D-CA).

In the 109th Congress co-chairs Ginny Brown-Waite (R-FL) and Hilda L. Solis (D-CA) established the following teams:

Women's Health, chaired by Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) and Tammy Baldwin (D-WI);

Violence Against Women, chaired by Reps. Ginny Brown-Waite (R-FL) and Hilda L. Solis (D-CA);

Women in Business, chaired by Reps. Judy Biggert (R-IL) and Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX);

Women in the Military, chaired by Reps. Heather Wilson (R-NM) and Susan Davis (D-CA); and

International Women's Issues, chaired by Reps. Deborah Pryce (R-OH) and Betty McCollum (D-MN).
APPENDIX E: INITIATIVES SUPPORTED BY THE WOMEN'S CAUCUS PRIOR TO THE 108TH CONGRESS

In the decades leading up to the 108th Congress, successful initiatives impacting women's issues that were supported by the Women's Caucus have included:

- Authorizing a $10.5 billion grant to improve the accessibility, affordability and quality of child care, particularly for low-income working families;
- Helping ensure the payment of child support by non-custodial parents;
- Enabling the Small Business Administration to assist women and minority entrepreneurs in accessing low-interest loans;
- Establishing a commission to study the "glass ceiling" inhibiting women from rising through the ranks in the workplace;
- Recognizing the importance of women's historical contributions, such as establishing a National Women's History Week (and later the entire month of March), preserving the home of suffragist and women's rights activist Alice Paul as a National Historic Site, and sanctioning a statue of Jeannette Rankin—the first woman elected to Congress—in the Capitol Building;
- Enacting the 1991 Civil Rights Act;\(^{199}\)
- Enacting the Family and Medical Leave Act;
- Enacting a measure enabling former spouses of Foreign Service officers to obtain a share of pensions in divorce settlements;\(^{200}\)
- Enacting measures increasing assistance for survivors of domestic violence and increasing penalties for batterers;
- Supporting federal rape-shield laws to protect rape victims from questions about their sexual histories, which had been used to try to undermine women's credibility, deter them from bringing charges and testifying, and minimize the crime;\(^{201}\)

---

199. GERTZOG I, supra note 3, at 28.
200. Id. at 15.
201. Id. at 16.
• Preventing a proposal suggested by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to delete census questions addressing housing, employment and social services; 202
• Approving a $20 million appropriation to establish a Women's Health Research Center in the Department of Defense;
• Implementing a new policy allowing women in the military to serve on combat vessels, which also expanded their earning capacities; 203
• Enacting a measure requiring the inclusion of women and minorities in federally funded clinical medical research;
• Authorizing $400 million for breast and ovarian cancer research;
• Authorizing $40 million for osteoporosis research;
• Requiring the National Institute on Aging to conduct research on menopause and other factors related to women's aging process;
• Enacting and reauthorizing the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Breast and Cervical Cancer Mortality Prevention Act, to provide pap smears and mammograms for low-income women;
• Providing for women's health care services at military hospitals, establishing a Department of Defense clearinghouse for information on health care needs of servicewomen, and creating a Women's Center in the Department of Veterans Affairs; 204
• Enacting the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), authorizing $1.62 billion over six years to combat violence against women and to assist victims; 205
• Enacting legislation to provide additional resources to reduce gender discrimination in education;
• Establishing a permanent Office of Women's Business Ownership within the Small Business Administration, providing $4 million to assist women entrepreneurs, and

202. Id. at 27.
203. Id. at 39, 49.
204. Id. at 46–49.
205. Id. at 47, 131.
creating a 5% goal for contracting with women-owned businesses;\footnote{206}

- Moving the "Portrait Monument," a sculpture depicting suffragettes Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and Susan B. Anthony, from the Capitol crypt to the Capitol Rotunda;\footnote{207}

- Passing legislation protecting victims of domestic violence from discrimination by insurance companies;\footnote{208}

- Expanding insurance coverage to provide for longer hospital stays for women recovering from childbirth;

- Prohibiting female genital mutilation for girls under eighteen and requiring the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to inform immigrants to the U.S.;

- Raising the limit for tax-deferred individual retirement accounts for non-working spouses from $250 to $2000;\footnote{209}

- Ensuring contraceptive equity in health insurance plans for federal employees;

- Enacting and reauthorizing the Mammography Quality Standards Act;

- Enacting the Commission on the Advancement of Women in Science, Engineering and Technology Development Act;\footnote{210} and

- Promoting other legislation such as the following:
  - Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (H.R. 1248)
  - Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention and Treatment Act (H.R. 4386)
  - Medicare Coverage for Medical Nutrition Therapy Services (H.R. 1187)
  - Lupus Research and Care Amendments of 1999 (H.R. 762)

\footnote{206}{Id. at 46–49.}
\footnote{207}{Id. at 89–91. Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK) was one of the primary proponents of this move, because his grandmother had been an active proponent of women’s right to vote. Id. at 90.}
\footnote{208}{Id. at 106. This provision was promoted by Reps. Connie Morella (R-MD) and Susan Molinari (D-NY).}
\footnote{209}{Id. at 106–07.}
\footnote{210}{Id. at 131.}
United Nations Population Fund Funding Act (H.R. 895)
Folic Acid Promotion and Birth Defects Prevention Act (H.R. 2538)
Right to Breastfeed Act (H.R. 1848)
Child Abuse and Prevention Enforcement Act (H.R. 764)
Stalking Prevention and Victim Protection Act (H.R. 1869)
Hillery J. Farias Date-Rape Prevention Drug Act (H.R. 2130)
Battered Immigrant Women Protection Act (H.R. 3083)
A bill to provide for greater access to child care services for federal employees (H.R. 206)
Military Dependents Communications Confidentiality Act (H.R. 1847)
Veterans Millennium Health Care Act (H.R. 2116)
PRIME Act (H.R. 413)
Women's Business Sustainability Act (H.R. 1497).\(^{211}\)

\[^{211}\] WPI website, supra note 8.
Examples of programs highlighted in their letter include the following:

- The Small Business Administration's (SBA) Women's Business Centers, the National Women's Business Council, and the SBA Direct Micro-loan Program;
- Programs under the Women in Apprenticeships and Non-traditional Occupations Act;
- The Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor;
- Programs supporting access to quality child care services for working parents;
- The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children;
- Programs for housing homeless women and their children;
- Programs to prevent prison rape, eliminate trafficking of women and girls, and to assist victims of these crimes;
- Programs authorized by the Violence Against Women Act;
- Programs for treatment, counseling, justice and prevention of sexual abuse of women in the military;
- The Center for Women Veterans of the Department of Veteran Affairs;
- The Office of Research on Women's Health at the National Institutes of Health;
- The Office of Women's Health of the Food and Drug Administration;
- The National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program;
- The Well-Integrated Screening and Evaluation for Women Across the Nation (WISEWOMAN) Program concerning heart disease;
- Programs within the Centers for Disease Control to prevent and address obesity;
- The Women's Educational Equity Act;
• The Women & Politics Institute Congressional Leadership Program;

• International development assistance, including the US Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of Women in Development;

• The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM);

• Programs to assist women in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

• Primary education programs for girls in developing countries.