

**The Honorable Shelley Berkley**  
U.S. Representative of Nevada (1999–2013)

**Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress**

**Family Support and Elective Office**

Representative Berkley recalls a conversation with her mother about running for office and starting a family.

*Interview recorded July 22, 2019*

I'll tell you a story. I was, I really wanted to run for office. This was the very early '80s, and I remember having, I was having brunch with my mother at a place that doesn't exist anymore in Las Vegas, but the French Bakery. And we were sitting there, and I was lamenting to her that—because there was an opening in my assembly district, and I wanted to run. But I was also in my very early 30s, and I, I wanted to start a family. And I remember telling my mother, you know, "I want, I have this opportunity to run for office, it's an open seat. But I want to start a family, and I don't know what to do." And my mother—who I have already explained her background—she looked at me, and she said, "Do both. I'll help." And she did. My mother encouraged me from the beginning to have children and not to let that part of your life be dormant. She thought it was very important to have a family, to have children. As she always said to my sister and I, the best part of her life were her kids. She didn't want me to miss that, but she knew that I had a desire and hunger to run for office. And so with my mother's help and my mother-in-law's help, we got through the election, and they were very, very—I could not have done this without them.