

**Remarks for House Admin Comm Hearing  
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Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Brady, and members of the committee. I am very grateful to you for holding this hearing today on HR 863, a bipartisan bill to establish a commission to study the potential creation of a National Women's History Museum.

I am thrilled to be joined here with my friend and partner in this effort, Congresswoman Marsha Blackburn, who has been a great advocate for this important bill.

I'm also pleased to be here with my good friend Joan Wages, the president of the National Women's History Museum, a non-profit that has already begun compiling and sharing the contributions of women who shaped our country.

For many of us – this isn't just a hearing – it is a chance to take a historic step forward.

Here in our nation's Capitol, museums have traditionally been a way for our country to proclaim our history, to demonstrate and honor what we value, to educate our children, and to shape our culture.

A short walk from where we sit – there are museums dedicated to our nation's founding, to science, the arts, to flight, postage stamps, law enforcement, news, and many other important areas of special interest.

But women and their achievements are almost nowhere to be found among these buildings that are supposed hold the stories of our nation's journey.

This bill seeks to change that.

Following the model set with the establishment of previous national museums, such as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, HR 863, would establish a commission to evaluate the idea of, and make recommendations to the President and Congress concerning, a National Women's History Museum in Washington, DC, on or near the National Mall.

Most importantly, the commission will fund its own costs so that taxpayers will not shoulder the funding of this project. All of the funding necessary would be raised by the nonprofit National Women's History Museum, Inc.

When it opens, the museum will help ensure that future generations understand what we owe to the generations of American women that came before – and help to advance the goals, and the values of our society.

In my view, this can't happen soon enough. Because the fact is - women's history is not only missing in our nation's capital, it is largely missing nearly everywhere you turn.

According to a survey of eighteen history textbooks, only ten percent of the individuals identified in the texts were women.

Less than five percent of the 2,400 national historic landmarks chronicle women's achievement.

Right here in our Capitol building, there are 210 statues on public display. Just 13 of them, including the Statue of Freedom that sits above our dome, are of female leaders. That's about 6 percent.

It was only recently that the great marble statue of three female suffragists was placed on permanent display in the Capitol Rotunda.

The suffragists' statue had been commissioned way back in 1920, but after being briefly on display, it was banished to the Capitol Crypt for 75 years.

The statue shows three women who played pivotal roles in the passage of the 19th Amendment.

That was of course – the amendment that gave women the right to vote. And for the first time fully -enfranchised one-half of the adult population of the United States. That was truly a historic achievement.

But, according to the New York Times, in 1921, shortly after the statue was completed, Congress ordered workers to scrape off the statue's "blasphemous" inscription, which declared: "Woman, first denied a soul, then called mindless, now arisen, declared herself an entity to be reckoned."

To me, that's an amazing story and a telling one. It shows how difficult it has been for women to be recognized for their achievements, even for what was one of our country's most important moments. In contrast, men have thousands of years of written history available to reflect upon and use for inspiration.

I respectfully suggest that Congress— can now – at this moment - play an important and historic role in seeing to it that half of the population of these United States is actually represented when the history of our nation is told.

From pioneering women like abolitionist Harriet Tubman, to astronaut Sally Ride. From Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, to the founder of the Girl Scouts Juliette Gordon Low.

These remarkable women helped make this country what it is today. They deserve a place for their stories to be told and preserved for the ages.

But we aren't doing this just to recognize those women who came before us. We're also doing this so that our daughters and our sons, and their children have the chance to learn the story - the **full** story – of how this amazing country came to be.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify before you. I hope this Committee will see fit to move this bill forward and I look forward to working with all of you on this very important endeavor.