

Congresswoman Susie Lee Remarks – House Modernization Committee

- I want to start here by thanking the Modernization Committee for hosting this session.
- I want to thank Rep. Kilmer and William Timmons for their leadership.
- Pre and post pandemic the Hill is a place where there is an emphasis placed on relationship building and getting to know our peers.
- Networking with our peers is particularly important for bipartisanship.
- Building relationships outside of work, personal relationships, is good for legislating.
- While this networking mostly occurs on the House floor, there are also other facilities that serve as a place for members to connect.
- When I came to Congress, I thought that the gym would be a great place to make connections with my fellow lawmakers.
- But I soon came to learn that the co-ed gym wasn't exactly welcoming to female members.
- You see, back in 1985 – not all that long ago – a group of female lawmakers launched a successful campaign to allow women to use the “men's gym,” a two-floor facility with a pool and a basketball court.
- However, they didn't bother to build an adjoining locker room when they gave women access to what had been the men's gym.

- Instead, while our male counterparts can pop into their adjoining locker room, we're expected to trudge across Rayburn – which is usually open to the public, and of course to press – sweaty after a workout.
- Not only is this uncomfortable, it means we have to budget more time for working out than our male colleagues do.
- As the constraints on our time get more demanding, the time we set aside for our personal health becomes especially critical. While it might not seem like a long time, a separate trek to the women's locker room becomes as big of a barrier as not having a gym at all.
- I, for one, don't use the co-ed member gym for this very reason.
- In an environment where time is so precious, I hope that the female members are given the same parity in access to a locker room as our male counterparts are given.