

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

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HELD AT: 250 Broadway-Committee Room,
14th Fl.

B E F O R E:
LAURIE CUMBO
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Ben Kallos

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Noreen Connell
Northeast Regional Director
National Organization for Women

Tricia Shimamura
Deputy Chief of Staff
Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney

Susan Danish
Treasurer
National Women's History Museum

Carol Ann Rinzler
Historian/Author
NYC

CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: You ready? Oh, fantastic. No problem. Good morning. Thank you all for coming today. I am Laurie Cumbo, chair of the Committee on Women's Issues. Today we will hear Resolution Number 354, which calls upon the United States Senate to pass the resolution and have the President sign the companion legislation of H.R. 863, which would establish a commission to study the creation of a National Women's History Museum.

According to the United States Census, women comprise about 51 percent of our nation's population and yet it is estimated by some that they only comprise 10 percent of the figures represented in United States history textbooks. In response to this lack of inclusion of women's history, Congress Member Carolyn Maloney introduced H.R. 863 legislation, which would establish a congressional commission to study the potential creation of a National Women's History Museum in Washington, D.C., which was passed by the House of Representatives in May 2014 with bipartisan support, and was sent to the Senate for consideration.

As chair of the Committee on Women's Issues, I strongly support the passage of this

1 federal legislation, as well as my colleagues at the
2 City Council. In 1999, I founded the Museum of
3 Contemporary African Diasporan Arts, MoCADA, in my
4 hometown of Brooklyn, New York because I recognized
5 that museums shape the way we see the world and
6 ourselves and demonstrates what we, as a society,
7 place value upon. I've worked at the Metropolitan
8 Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the Brooklyn
9 Children's Museum, as well as Pratt Institute and I
10 have seen personally over my professional career how
11 art, historical documents, photographs, memorabilia,
12 exhibitions and public programs can inspire people
13 and unite people across all racial, social, economic,
14 class and in this case, gender boundaries.

16 A National Women's History Museum would
17 be a tremendous win for our nation and it is a
18 necessity. Today it is astounding that women still
19 need to fight and advocate for equality. There is
20 much to be done to bridge the gender inequality gap.
21 We must continue to honor our young women who have
22 pioneered unchartered territories. Today's female
23 youth are entitled to see themselves in books,
24 museums, media and business, as their male
25 counterparts. I believe that there is real value and

1
2 especially like to thank my colleague, Council Member
3 Ben Kallos, the only male member of the Women's
4 Issues Committee, for being an enlightened man and
5 being so very excited about championing the causes of
6 women's issues and for introducing Resolution Number
7 354 in support of the Congress Member Maloney's bill.
8 I would also like to thank my staff, Joan Povolny,
9 policy analyst and a special thank you to Tonya
10 Cyrus, policy analyst, for her assistance in helping
11 to put this hearing together so very quickly. I will
12 now turn this over to my colleague, Council Member
13 Ben Kallos, for some additional words. Thank you.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you, Chair
15 Cumbo. It is an honor and a privilege to serve on a
16 committee under your leadership. We're truly doing
17 amazing things on this committee and focusing on so
18 many women's issues, whether it's domestic violence o
19 treatment in our prisons. Thank you for your
20 leadership.

21 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: And it is an
23 honor to have this resolution with you as a co-prime
24 because this is your real house, both as the Women's
25 Issues Committee chair and as the founder of a

1 museum, so hopefully you can play a large role in
2 making this happen in Washington, D.C. I also want
3 to thank Congresswoman Maloney for her leadership on
4 this on a national level and what we're doing here is
5 just a small part of just saying that a few folks,
6 eight and a half... 8.5 million of us or so in New
7 York City would really like to see this happen.
8 Young women must have a museum to commemorate
9 incredible women throughout American History, a place
10 for the next generation of women leaders, CEOs and
11 American Presidents and we will have a woman American
12 President hopefully in our lifetime; in fact, it must
13 be in our lifetime. By some estimates, women
14 comprise only 10 percent of figures in U.S. history
15 books. That doesn't reflect the central and massive
16 contributions of women to New York City and federal
17 history. Here are just a few of New York City women
18 that should be highlighted, and this is courtesy of
19 the National Women's History Museum of 501(c)(3):
20 founding suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton; an
21 investigative journalism pioneer Nellie Bly; music
22 legend Billie Holiday; Visiting Nurse Services
23 founder Lillian Wald; entrepreneurs Madam C.J. Walker
24 and Estee Lauder; political action icons, as already
25

1 referred to, Eleanor Roosevelt and Shirley Chisholm
2 and many others too countless to name today. They
3 deserve to have their stories told and one other item
4 which must be highlighted is that this has passed the
5 House, but it is being held up in the Senate by
6 Senators Tom Coburn of Oklahoma and Mike Lee of Utah
7 and in passing it here we are asking the councils in
8 those states to please take similar actions to put
9 local pressure on their senators to do what's right
10 and to pass this legislation in the Senate so that we
11 can finally have our Women's Museum. Thank you very
12 much, Chair Cumbo.

14 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you. I want to
15 thank my colleague, Ben Kallos. It's been a pleasure
16 to work with him on this, and there will also be a
17 press conference later on today in reference to this
18 to further support and bring together some dynamic
19 allies around this very central topic.

20 At this time, we would like to call up
21 those individuals that are going to testify and we'll
22 do it actually two at a time. I would like to bring
23 at this time Noreen Connell and I would... who's a
24 national organizer and I would also like to bring up
25 Tricia Shimamura. I did it, right? Yes, thank you

1 so much and welcome. She is a representative from
2 Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney's office. Okay.
3 Tricia, would you be able to begin your remarks
4 first? Okay, thank you. [background voices]

6 TRICIA SHIMAMURA: Yes, thank you.

7 Hello, my name is Tricia Shimamura and I am Deputy
8 Chief of Staff for Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney. I
9 would love to speak on behalf of the congresswoman,
10 who is unfortunately unable to be here at this time.
11 I read her testimony.

12 Chairwoman Cumbo and members of the City
13 Council Committee on Women's Issues, thank you for
14 the opportunity to testify in strong support of City
15 Council Resolution Number 354, calling on the U.S.
16 Senate to pass the companion legislation to H.R. 863
17 to establish a commission to study the creation of a
18 National Women's History Museum on or near the
19 National Mall in Washington, D.C. I would like to
20 especially thank Council Member Kallos for
21 introducing a resolution and the New York City
22 Council in support of this important effort. I
23 authored H.R. 863 and introduced it with my
24 republican colleague, Marsha Blackburn. In May, the
25 bill passed the House with overwhelming bipartisan

1 support by a vote of 383 to 33. Senators Susan
2 Collins and Barbara Mikulski have introduced the
3 Senate companion bill that has 28 co-sponsors,
4 including all 20 women senators. I am confident that
5 the bill will pass and would pass should it come to a
6 vote.
7

8 The commission that would be established
9 through this legislation would be independent and
10 entirely privately funded. In other words, it
11 obligates no taxpayer dollars. The commission would
12 be tasked with presenting Congress with several plans
13 for creating a museum dedicating to showcasing the
14 extraordinary contributions of women to the
15 development of our nation. It would be required to
16 include an option for a privately funded museum.
17 Surely studying a Women's History Museum should not a
18 partisan issue. Just looking at monuments, museums
19 and historical accounts in textbooks, it is clear
20 that the story of women throughout U.S. history has
21 gone largely untold. According to a survey of 18
22 historical history textbooks, only 10 percent of the
23 individuals identified in the texts were women. Less
24 than five percent of the 2,400 national historical
25 landmarks chronicle women's achievements. We know

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that even here in New York City's Central Park there are no statues of non-fictional women and in the Capitol building just 13 of the over 200 statues honor women.

A comprehensive National Women's History Museum would make women's history more than merely than an afterthought and properly chronicle the half of our history that is unknown and unheralded. It is intended to include stories of women from all races, religions, ideologies and professions. The independent commission model to study potential museum location, construction and management has been very successful in creating some of our nation's most loved museums. A National Women's History Museum is not only important to telling our story of our past; it would undoubtedly be a source of inspiration for future generations.

Again, I want to thank the City Council for holding a hearing on this bill. Your resolution will undoubtedly raise awareness on this important issue and provide much needed support to move the bill forward. Thank you.

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2 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you very much.
3 Thank you. You are a great representative for our
4 Congresswoman. Thank you. Next.

5 NOREEN CONNELL: My name is Noreen
6 Connell. I'm the most immediate Northeast Regional
7 Director for the National Organization for Women on
8 the National Board. At New York State I am the
9 chairperson of the Women's Employment Task Force, but
10 I'm soon... I'm running for Legislative Vice
11 President and so I will soon be fulfilling that role,
12 and before I start, I just want this committee to
13 seriously consider some of the issues we've raised.

14 I'm going to read a resolution that
15 passed nationally without one objection. A report
16 was made to our National Board about some of the
17 developments surrounding this legislation, which made
18 us very concerned about it and then when it came
19 before our national body at our national conference
20 it passed unanimously with no objections. There are
21 some serious problems with this legislation and it's
22 not just that the right wing...

23 [crosstalk]

24 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Mm-hm.
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2 NOREEN CONNELL: Or the Tea Party is
3 objecting, but also it is exempt from the open
4 meetings law, public notice and report. It provides
5 no federal funding and you know when you... it would
6 be good to look at how other museums have been
7 established.

8 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: [interposing] Mm-hm.

9 NOREEN CONNELL: And to some degree there
10 has been federal funding and in fact, in Seneca
11 Falls, though it is historical site, federal funding
12 was provided for that and to preclude it... now this
13 is just an exploratory commission, but to make it
14 subject to negotiation between the republican and the
15 democratic party rather than really looking to see
16 what scholars, their input and to make an assurance
17 that it would be only historical scholars with public
18 input that would be commission members. Now, the
19 commission members are restricted in terms of their
20 roles, but it's already very partisan and we're very
21 worried that certain right wing figures...

22 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: [interposing] Okay.

23 NOREEN CONNELL: Would have stated their
24 intention to be made chair of the commission and we
25

1
2 just do not want women's history to be negotiated by
3 two political parties...

4 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: [interposing] Right.

5 NOREEN CONNELL: With compromises. This
6 is supposed to be about how women got the vote and
7 some of these people are not on the partisan divide.
8 Some of the people participating in these discussions
9 are opposed to women... women's rights; maybe not to
10 suffrage at this point, but they are contemptuous of
11 women's history and why should they be in
12 negotiating; negotiating over the forming of this, so
13 we're very alarmed at the developments moving forward
14 and the restrictions on this. So let me read the
15 resolution.

16 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay.

17 NOREEN CONNELL: Whereas, the time has
18 come to build a National Museum of Women's History on
19 the National Mall to reflect the story of how women
20 and men in the oldest organized women's movement have
21 led the world in advocating for women for equality
22 and in doing so are broadening the concept of
23 democracy to fully embrace the equal rights of women
24 and whereas, women's history is also unique and that
25 while women have contributed to American public life

1 since revolutionary and colonial day formal women's
2 history remains largely invisible, but is evolving
3 through the contributions of museum professionals
4 with the Smithsonian Institution, the Library of
5 Congress, the U.S. Park Service, Sewall-Belmont House
6 and the National Women's History Project in regional
7 local museums and whereas, a private effort for a
8 National Women's History Museum has been underway for
9 17 years and the U.S. House of Representatives
10 recently passed H.R. 863, Congresswoman Maloney's
11 bill, a commission to study the potential for
12 creating a National Women's History Museum and a
13 similar bill, S.398 is pending in the Senate with the
14 legislation being placed on unlimited confidential
15 hold and whereas, the passage of a National Women's
16 History Museum Commission legislation set up an
17 uproar among conservative women groups and the
18 National Women's Historical Museum has been
19 criticized as being a plan to brainwash women and
20 feminist views and with the chair of the Concerned
21 Women for America demanding that she be appointed
22 chair of the commission and whereas, this legislation
23 authorizes a commission to study the potential rather
24 than intended creation of a private Women's History
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2 Museum and includes only eight members chosen from
3 highly restrictive types of combined expertise; bans
4 compensation for commissioned members and prohibits
5 public funding... prohibits public funding; provides
6 a limited timeframe of only 18 months; exempts the
7 commission's proceedings from the Federal Advisory
8 Commission Act that requires open meetings, public
9 notice and report. Whereas, a new museum focused on
10 women's history should be a truly national museum
11 that is both a public and private entity supported by
12 public funding and private donations, as many major
13 museums require and with a strong affiliation with
14 the Smithsonian Institution in order to ensure that
15 this public purpose is ensured and that the highest
16 quality of its work is promoted. Therefore, be it
17 resolved that NOW places its full support behind the
18 creation of a truly national, authentic, inclusive
19 and accountable public National Women's Museum on the
20 National Mall that reflects the full history of women
21 in the United States, the work of many women's
22 leaders and organizations throughout American history
23 to expand democracy and women's rights and that with
24 the appointment of commissioned members in
25 consultation with major women's organizations and

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2 recognized women's history scholars and be it further
3 resolved that NOW calls upon the administration and
4 Congress to adopt legislation and take the steps to
5 establish the national Women's History Museum and
6 Democracy Plan for Action Presidential Commission to
7 develop implementing recommendations for the
8 establishment and maintenance of the national Women's
9 Historical Museum and democracy in Washington, D.C.
10 as a public private entity with sufficient funding
11 for the planning commission members, consultants and
12 operations along with a programmatic plan of action
13 that is vetted and developed with extensive public
14 and scholarly input and be it further resolved that
15 the legislation establish an independent professional
16 commission not connected with any existing private
17 entity, but is typical of all commissioned efforts
18 intended to plan and establish a federally sponsored
19 museum on the National Mall, including as part of the
20 structure of the Department of Interior and National
21 Park Service, which has expertise in planning,
22 staffing and curating such museums and be it finally
23 resolved that to achieve these ends NOW will work
24 with others to recommend to the administration and
25 Congress that the structure of a National Women's

1
2 History Museum and Democracy Plan for Action
3 Presidential Commission should have a large enough
4 membership, up to 25 members, adequate or
5 authorization up to two years public resources
6 including staffing, as well as requirements for
7 membership diversity; racial and ethnic, as well as
8 inclusion of activists and experts drawn from women's
9 organizations and those with expertise in the
10 American Women's Movement regardless of academic
11 specialty.

12 So those are our recommendations in the
13 last whereas clauses and so we think that this does
14 take some thought because there have been efforts at
15 Women's History Museums, which have attempted to
16 essentially negotiate between right wing and left
17 wing interpretations of women's history, and you can
18 see they've been unsuccessful. I won't mention them
19 because it's embarrassing, but you know, museums that
20 honor Phyllis Schlafly, who is opposed to the Equal
21 Rights Amendment, have not exactly drawn large
22 numbers of young women to their venue and I think if
23 we have a museum that is a compromise between two
24 political parties rather than an earnest effort to
25 capture all of women's history, then we'll have an

1
2 unsuccessful and of course, poorly funded museum if
3 there's not to be any federal funding, so I would
4 urge this committee to really explore in depth some
5 of the issues around this... the creation of this
6 commission.

7 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you very much.
8 I have a question. Do you have questions also?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Yeah.

10 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay, wanted to ask
11 the question to Mrs. Shimamura in regards to the
12 funding aspect of it. So was this a decision that
13 was made in terms of the fact that this would... at
14 this current time this would not be a federally
15 funded institution?

16 TRICIA SHIMAMURA: Currently this is...
17 we've... this commission is completely privately
18 funded. Actually I will say that that... that right
19 now the two senators who are holding up the
20 legislation their argument is that it would cost
21 federal funds and they don't want to spend the money
22 on it, so we are thinking of this as a good... as a
23 positive because right now it is simply the
24 commission to study the placement of a... or the
25 creation of a National Women's Museum uhm...

[crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: So it's only...

[crosstalk]

TRICIA SHIMAMURA: And...

[crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Their objection is to the creation of the commission utilizing federal dollars.

TRICIA SHIMAMURA: That's what... that is what we are being told.

CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: But most certainly the institution would require federal funding in its creation.

TRICIA SHIMAMURA: Right now, it's my understanding is that the National Women's History Museum has enough... is confident to raise enough private funds.

CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Do you know approximately at this time what is the estimated cost and value of what this institution's going to cost?

TRICIA SHIMAMURA: I currently do not know, but I think that there are other members of the National Women's History Museum who may be giving testimony today who might know.

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2 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay, because the...
3 of the institutions that I have seen; I was very much
4 a participant in the African American Museum; that it
5 also received federal funding in support of that
6 institution, so in the House of Representatives it
7 passed in part perhaps because there's this
8 thought... there's this ideal that it's not going to
9 cost the federal government any funding, but what
10 about on an ongoing basis in terms of its expense
11 dollars and how will the museum continue to raise
12 dollars. Will it be raised continuously privately or
13 is the intention that once the capital dollars are
14 raised that the expense funding would start to have
15 that level of federal support from IMLS or maybe
16 many...

17 [crosstalk]

18 TRICIA SHIMAMURA: Mm-hm.

19 [crosstalk]

20 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Other federal
21 organizations that support this kind of project?

22 TRICIA SHIMAMURA: I understand that the
23 legislation that the congresswoman put forward is for
24 a commission to study these questions and to...

25 [crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Mm-hm.

[crosstalk]

TRICIA SHIMAMURA: Truly better understand what would it take in terms of finances and otherwise to create this museum on or near the National Mall or the National Mall, so certainly these are questions that I understand that the committee would be considering and would be making recommendations and reporting on within that 18 months.

CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: And I also understand and I remember with the African American Museum that there is a lot of discussion that goes into placement on the mall or in and around the mall. Has there been a site already identified for this institution?

TRICIA SHIMAMURA: Not at this time. Perhaps unofficially there... I would imagine that there might have been some discussions, but certainly not at this... not in any official capacity. Again, this is all that would be considered within this commission, which we are very happy to report has bipartisan support.

CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: And my final question before I turn it over to my colleague.

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TRICIA SHIMAMURA: Mm-hm.

CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Have there been museums that are documenting women's history in this way across the country that have been utilized as models for the creation of this larger institution?

TRICIA SHIMAMURA: Currently there is no museum in the United States or elsewhere that documents women's history or not women's history in a full comprehensive capacity. We have museums that recognize First Ladies, women...

CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: [interposing] Mm-hm.

TRICIA SHIMAMURA: Of... women in the arts, certainly Seneca Falls.

CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: [interposing] Mm-hm.

TRICIA SHIMAMURA: Women suffrage, but nothing that fully acknowledges women's history throughout our United States history, so this is the first one of its kind.

CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you and I just wanted you to make that point abundantly clear.

TRICIA SHIMAMURA: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: And I will now turn it over to my member, Council Member Kallos.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you very
3 much. So I want to just ask a couple of questions
4 for Noreen Connell. First, I want to thank the
5 National Organization of Women for endorsing me in my
6 primary. It was a very difficult race that ended up
7 centering a lot around women's issues, so I owe you
8 and all the women in my district a huge debt of
9 gratitude for the privilege of serving. In reading
10 your resolution and reading H.R. 863, it seems that
11 although your testimony was marked in that position
12 that because this is commission that would actually
13 once established hopefully hear and listen to your
14 resolution, so I guess my question is the H.R. 863
15 creates a commission that the commission itself is
16 privately funded or publicly funded, but not by
17 federal dollars, but in terms of all the things
18 you're asking for for the museum that's not actually
19 addressed by 863. Can you speak to any concerns you
20 have about 863 in itself and if you're looking for a
21 non-political process around a commission is there
22 any other way of achieving space on the National Mall
23 without engaging in a governmental process?

24 NOREEN CONNELL: We're not opposed to a
25 governmental process. We're opposed to a

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2 governmental process that's been structured so that
3 the result might be too ideological; just a debate
4 between republicans and democrats with people on the
5 commission who represent ideological points of view
6 rather than historians and I think though I, myself
7 don't know all the origins, but it... when you go to
8 Seneca Falls that was done by the National Parks and
9 that was well done. I'm not talking about the
10 private museum, but I am talking about the public
11 celebration of suffrage and I think a lot of care and
12 public dollars went into that and to sort of say oh,
13 let's have a museum, but no federal money at all when
14 sometimes it's quite difficult to sustain a museum.

15 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: [interposing] Mm-hm.

16 NOREEN CONNELL: You know, you're already
17 sort of hampering it in a way. It's sort of let's
18 see what happens in November in terms of political
19 parties, but the idea that we're supposed to... that
20 women alone are supposed to have a museum on the mall
21 with no federal funding you know that's precluded I
22 mean that's quite an agreement that you know why not?
23 The city of New York provides funding to museums here
24 in New York City because quite frankly, it takes a
25 lot of money to run a museum and so to sort of say

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2 well, we'll never have any federal funding for this
3 museum you know this quite... this is hampering it,
4 so we think that there needs to be...

5 [crosstalk]

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: So...

7 [crosstalk]

8 NOREEN CONNELL: Let's just say a do-
9 over. I mean we support this concept. We are
10 thankful that Congresswoman Maloney is really working
11 on this, but the compromises that have taken for...
12 taken place so far make us really uncertain about
13 what the outcome would be and...

14 [crosstalk]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Mm-hm.

16 [crosstalk]

17 NOREEN CONNELL: You don't want a sort of
18 crippled institution that doesn't have enough money
19 and where the presentation is not based on sort of a
20 reasoned overview by experienced historians, but you
21 know some sort of compromise, a political compromise
22 on how to tell women's history, so these are all
23 things...

24 [crosstalk]

25 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: So...

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[crosstalk]

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NOREEN CONNELL: We're very worried

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about.

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COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: All...

6

[crosstalk]

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NOREEN CONNELL: But...

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[crosstalk]

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COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I can speak to is
10 the H.R. 863 and I'm just gonna... I believe that the
11 representative for Carolyn Maloney has already said
12 that the resolution does not speak to funding for the
13 museum at all. It is silent as to the funding of the
14 museum or any preclusion; in fact, Section 4A Sub 2
15 suggests that part of its report is a report on
16 issues and Sub A is the availability of cost and
17 collections to be acquired in the House in the museum
18 along with G cost of construction and operating, so
19 there is no concept of preclusion of funding to the
20 museum and...

21

[crosstalk]

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NOREEN CONNELL: But it is...

23

[crosstalk]

24

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: It's...

25

[crosstalk]

NOREEN CONNELL: For the commission.

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Right.

[crosstalk]

NOREEN CONNELL: For this commission...

[crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: So that is...

that is the distinguishing factor here and from what

I'm seeing in your resolution there is no... the...

uhm... where... while it mentions the commission in

the resolution within the resolved clauses, it does

not speak to the commission. It speaks to what you

hope to receive from the commission and the type of

legislation as the commission is hoping to do.

NOREEN CONNELL: I... uh... uh... there

is... we have problems with this legislation...

[crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Mm-hm.

[crosstalk]

NOREEN CONNELL: As passed by the House.

We do.

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Okay.

NOREEN CONNELL: We think that it is...

uhm... we think that there is a need for

reconfiguring or re... rewriting the legislation and

1
2 trying again, which is, you know there'll be new
3 legislative session and bills have to be redrafted.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: [interposing] Mm-
5 hm.

6 NOREEN CONNELL: And that there might be
7 another way of writing it so that it would be a
8 uhm... it would be subject to the open meetings law.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Mm-hm.

10 NOREEN CONNELL: So that it would not be
11 so restricted in terms of funding; so that there
12 would not only be just eight members; so that maybe
13 there would be appointing authorities who would be
14 broader than four people. This is just four people
15 who... you know just the majority leader/minority
16 leader of both Houses.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Mm-hm.

18 NOREEN CONNELL: So you have a sort of
19 50/50 make up right now given the constitution or
20 what about having an appointee from the American
21 History Association or an appointee from various
22 different other sources rather than just
23 congressional sources? Why not someone from the
24 Smithsonian? You know, so we just like don't
25 particularly like the narrow group of people; the

1 limited number eight and then also just six months...

2 I think it's just six months. Is it?

3 TRICIA SHIMAMURA: 18 months.

4 [crosstalk]

5 NOREEN CONNELL: Eight months.

6 [crosstalk]

7 TRICIA SHIMAMURA: 18 months.

8 [crosstalk]

9 NOREEN CONNELL: 18 months. It's 18

10 months, but even that is a very short period of time
11 to consider land on the mall, funding sources, what
12 should be the scope of the museum. This is all to be
13 done in 18 months and none of the commission members
14 are to be paid; none of them? So it is worth some...

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Is there a
16 resolution passed by the National Organization of
17 Women that's...

18 [crosstalk]

19 NOREEN CONNELL: For women, for women.
20 We have male members.

21 [crosstalk]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Sorry, for...

23 [crosstalk]

24 NOREEN CONNELL: Male members.

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[crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: For... for...
for... for women, thank you, that specifically speaks
to these specific recommendations such... that...
that you've made in terms of... where... where...
what the...

[crosstalk]

NOREEN CONNELL: I think it's...

[crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Where... where...

[crosstalk]

NOREEN CONNELL: Very clear in the
reso...

[crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Okay.

[crosstalk]

NOREEN CONNELL: Resolve section. I
should also say that I'm involved in the National
Committee for the implementation of these
resolutions.

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Okay.

NOREEN CONNELL: So I will be working
with the National action vice president and our

1
2 director of policy around specific more... on sort of
3 an outline of the legislation would like to see or...

4 [crosstalk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Uh-huh.

6 [crosstalk]

7 NOREEN CONNELL: Changes in the
8 legislation.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Perfect. Do you
10 believe that a presidential appointee or another
11 appointee in D.C. in the federal government is any
12 less political than an appointee from one of the
13 leaders of Congress?

14 NOREEN CONNELL: I think I, myself, in
15 crafting this would like to see how the National
16 Parks...

17 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: [interposing] Mm-
18 hm.

19 NOREEN CONNELL: Created the Seneca Falls
20 National Park and see the amount of funding, who was
21 the appointing authority and to look at that model
22 just because that was well done.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Mm-hm.

24 NOREEN CONNELL: And sort of see and talk
25 to museum professionals to see how other museums have

1
2 been created and then also Smithsonian you know,
3 which in itself was in disgrace a couple of years
4 ago, because of its corporate ties and to sort of see
5 what sort of... how the Smithsonian is involved in
6 this. So there are some... yeah, I'd like to look at
7 all of those things before we come out with more
8 clarifying steps forward, but I'm just saying that
9 there is quite a lot in this and...

10 [crosstalk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Mm-hm.

12 [crosstalk]

13 NOREEN CONNELL: And if women's history
14 is really serious it deserves to be done correctly
15 and not just as a sort of a compromise...

16 [crosstalk]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Mm-hm.

18 NOREEN CONNELL: Promises of absolutely
19 no funding.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Well, so I guess
21 I would just reiterate for the record that 863
22 creates a commission and that commission would
23 recommend the legislation. At that point, I think a
24 lot of your recommendations would be more proper with
25 regard to the partisanship that you've referred to

1 multiple times. This bill has bipartisan support and
2 passed the House, which leads me to believe that at
3 least the House appointees would hopefully take their
4 position seriously within regards to the
5 qualifications. There are no academic requirements,
6 as your resolution points to. It's just according to
7 Section 3C1A, a demonstrated commitment to research,
8 study or a promotion of women's history, art,
9 political or economic status or culture and then
10 there is a list of expertises that are required, but
11 I'm really proud to be sponsoring this and hope that
12 it can happen and I intend to be a person who counts
13 every single day and I only have three years and two
14 months and 20 some odd days left in my term and I
15 think that 18 months would hopefully be enough for a
16 commission to come up with legislation and I hope
17 that that legislation would be something that we
18 could all engage in this very same process around so
19 that we can craft the best possible legislation and I
20 am committed to working with you as you see how other
21 museums were created to make sure that we have the
22 best possible women's museum and I think the
23 commission is a great first step and wish we could
24 just get to the legislation, which seems to be the
25

1
2 thrust of this resolution and I just want to thank
3 Tricia Shimamura from Congressman Carolyn Maloney's
4 office and Noreen Connell from the National
5 Organization for Women for joining us today and for
6 your strong testimony.

7 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you very much.
8 We are going to now hear from Susan Dannish from the
9 National Women's History Museum. Is it Dannish or
10 Danish? Danish, okay and we will also hear from
11 Carol Anna Rinzler. [background voice] Carol Ann,
12 okay, Carol Anne Rinzler, yes, thank you. Miss
13 Danish, would you like to begin?

14 SUSAN DANISH: I would, yes, thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you.

16 SUSAN DANISH: And thank you so much for
17 considering a resolution. Thank you for proposing a
18 resolution and thank you for letting me be here
19 today. I'm here as a rabid New Yorker and as the
20 treasurer of the National Women's History Museum.

21 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Oh, that's good.

22 SUSAN DANISH: So and I'm so excited that
23 this City Council is considering this resolution
24 because you would really set the tone and the pace
25 for things and you know, it's one of the nine million

1 reasons why I love New York because we're always
2 really right out in front. And I... when I think
3 about it, I think about the fact that New York City
4 actually has so much to gain by there being a
5 National Women's History Museum. Ben, you talked a
6 little bit about a few of the women and I'm going to
7 add to that just a little bit because it's very
8 personal to me as well. I'm a member of the New York
9 Women's Forum, which is an organization of 450 women
10 here in New York City from every walk of life, from
11 every persuasion you can imagine, all accomplished
12 and of course, the Forum was founded by Ellie
13 Guggenheimer; Elinor Guggenheimer, who, I don't have
14 to tell anybody on the City Council, was an amazing
15 force of nature in New York City politics for her
16 entire career as the first woman elected to the New
17 York City Planning Commission and so much more. And
18 so I think Ellie Guggenheimer deserves to be in a
19 National Women's History Museum.

21 I'm also really passionate about this
22 because of my own career here in New York City. I
23 run the Association of Junior Leagues International.
24 The Junior League was founded here in New York City
25 by Mary Harriman, the sister of Averell Harriman, a

1 former governor of New York. Mary was 19 years old
2 when she founded the Junior League and now 113 years
3 later, her organization has 150,000 women in 285
4 chapters across the U.S. and also in other cities
5 around the world, and Mary Harriman was not also the
6 founder of the Junior League, but she was also the
7 first woman to head the Consumer Protection Agency,
8 the first Consumer Protection in the U.S. under
9 Franklin Roosevelt.
10

11 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Hm...

12 SUSAN DANISH: So Mary Harriman needs a
13 National Women's History Museum too. A Women's
14 History Museum seems like such a no-brainer to me, it
15 really does, but clearly it's not and the objections
16 to it have been pretty consistent; one, about the
17 funding and you talked a lot about that earlier. The
18 intention is for this commission to be privately
19 funded and of course, the commission will really look
20 closely at what the ongoing needs of the museum are
21 and how that best happens. It's about a \$400 million
22 investment to build the museum and it's estimated
23 that there's about a \$20 million annual operating
24 expense. The other objection is that this museum is
25 just a front for liberal radical causes and I can

1 tell you that that is absolutely not the case.

2 Today, the museum is a virtual museum and if you go
3 onto that museum you see everyone reflected from
4 Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Michele Bachmann.
5

6 So I don't think that there's a lot more
7 for me to add to the conversation that's already been
8 had, except to say that I'm very grateful to
9 Congresswoman Maloney, another great New Yorker that
10 deserves to be in the museum, as you said. I'm
11 grateful to Melissa for bringing this before all of
12 of you; I'm grateful to you, Ben, for proposing the
13 resolution and it would be just terrific for New York
14 City to step out and say the time has come; in fact,
15 it's past time, so let's just get on with it and get
16 this commission going. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you. Thank you
18 so much for your testimony and now we will hear from
19 Mrs. Rinzler.

20 CAROL ANN RINZLER: Do I have to pull
21 this thing right here?

22 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Mm-hm.

23 CAROL ANN RINZLER: Okay, I am an
24 historian I guess. My graduate degree is in history,
25 but the history of the French Revolution, which

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2 taught me that if you cut off the encyclopedia, 30
3 years later, the intellectuals will come back and cut
4 off your heads. I also... now I write about science
5 and medicine. Sorry, now I write about science and
6 medicine; I've done 23 books. I did a column for the
7 *Daily News* on nutrition, a number of op-eds for the
8 *New York Times* and Minna [phonetic] told me when we
9 were speaking that I qualify as STEM. I had no idea
10 what that was, but I'm glad I made it.

11 The idea of women's accomplishments is
12 not new and I can prove it. In 1974 or six, my
13 husband and I put together a calendar with a woman's
14 achievement on every day of the year from the
15 beginning of the country until 1976. We were about
16 to sell it to a football player, who wanted to use it
17 for promotion, but he wanted all the rights and I was
18 an idiot and I said no, so we didn't sell it. I had
19 the book, which I filled out with everything on every
20 date and it is quite amazing. The breadth of the
21 achievements from the mundane to the actually... for
22 example, today is the 8th of September, so on the 8th
23 of September in 1866, Jennie Lewis Bushnell became
24 the first American woman to give birth to live
25 triplets... excuse me, sextuplets. Tomorrow,

1
2 Florence Chadwick became the first woman to swim the
3 Channel. On the 10th, Barbara Fritchie flew the
4 Union flag before Confederate troops in 1862. On the
5 11th, Jenny Lind gave her first U.S. concert. On the
6 12th, 18 percent of all medical students in America
7 were women for the first time and on the 13th,
8 Margaret Smith became the first woman elected to the
9 Senate; the first woman just elected and to serve
10 without being appointed to take her husband's
11 position. Finally, on the 14th, Margaret Sanger was
12 born and I don't think I have to tell you who
13 Margaret Sanger was. I'm sorry that I don't have
14 copies of this to give you because I just found it
15 last night at the bottom of a pile of stuff, but if
16 you like, I will make a copy and send it. It's kind
17 of fascinating.

18 So I don't think that women deserve a
19 museum because they're more than half the United
20 States population. I think they deserve a museum
21 because so much happened and I cannot imagine not
22 having known about it and I can only imagine what
23 happened between 1976, when I wrote this damn thing,
24 and today. I guess I would need another book. So as
25

1
2 a STEM, I hope that... I thank you for your
3 resolution and I hope Carolyn's work goes forward.

4 CHAIRPERON CUMBO: Thank you.

5 CAROL ANN RINZLER: Okay.

6 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you. Wanted to
7 ask questions in terms of the budget again because it
8 went by pretty quickly. You estimated that the
9 expense for operating the institution would be about
10 \$20 million?

11 SUSAN DANISH: That's what the president
12 of the museum has estimated, yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: And that the capital
14 construction cost would be about \$400 million?

15 SUSAN DANISH: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Now, I just want to
17 gain clarity on this in terms of understanding are we
18 locked into the fact through the legislation that the
19 construction cost for the entire institution would
20 have to happen privately?

21 SUSAN DANISH: I don't think the
22 establishment of the commission locks the museum into
23 anything.

24 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay.

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2 SUSAN DANISH: I think the establishment
3 of the commission opens up the possibility of really
4 exploring what it would take to make this museum a
5 reality.

6 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Understood. The
7 other question that I have, which I think is always
8 very important and I don't know if you've gotten that
9 far in the thought process around it, but would this
10 be only historical in nature or would there be
11 opportunities for temporary current exhibitions,
12 contemporary works of art to be a part of it as well
13 or will it only historical in nature?

14 SUSAN DANISH: Well, it covers history
15 past, present and future.

16 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Mm-hm.

17 SUSAN DANISH: And so for example, there
18 are... there's a piece about Michele Bachmann right
19 now on the virtual... on the website.

20 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Oh, I see.

21 SUSAN DANISH: And so she's certainly
22 very contemporary so...

23 [crosstalk]

24 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Mm-hm.

25 [crosstalk]

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2 SUSAN DANISH: It's about what women are
3 doing now, as well...

4 [crosstalk]

5 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay.

6 [crosstalk]

7 SUSAN DANISH: As what women did in the
8 past.

9 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay and the other
10 question that I had, which was seen in the
11 resolution... let me look where my resolution is.
12 Oh, here it is. Uhm... it was stating here that
13 uh... I wanted to talk about the Senate part of it,
14 but I also wanted to talk about the membership in
15 terms of expanding the Presidential Commission to
16 have potentially 25 members. What were your thoughts
17 around that?

18 SUSAN DANISH: I really haven't formed a
19 person opinion about that. I believe that... I just
20 want to see the commission formed.

21 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Mm-hm. And what have
22 been your thoughts around why... concretely why there
23 happens to be this push back from the Senate around
24 this that they didn't have in the House?

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2 SUSAN DANISH: Well, I don't think that
3 getting this legislation through the House was easy.

4 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: [interposing] Mm-hm.

5 SUSAN DANISH: But ultimately, it was
6 passed 383 to 33.

7 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Right.

8 SUSAN DANISH: In the Senate, all of the
9 women in the Senate have endorsed this legislation.

10 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay.

11 SUSAN DANISH: But it was put on hold by
12 Senators Coburn and Lee for the two objections that I
13 stated previously; one, that they believe it will not
14 be funded privately and that it's going to be a
15 burden on the taxpayers and two, that it's liberal;
16 it's going to only espouse liberal viewpoints and
17 neither one of those are really true at this time,
18 and those points have been reiterated over and over
19 and over again.

20 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: When they're talking
21 about the funding; the institution not being funded
22 privately, are they talking about on the capital side
23 or the expense side or both?

24 SUSAN DANISH: Well, I can say that the
25 initial intent in the museum was that the museum

1
2 would be privately funded; capital, operating
3 expenses, et cetera.

4 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: The whole thing.

5 SUSAN DANISH: Yes, I believe, but I
6 believe also that the commission opens up the
7 opportunity to really talk about various models and
8 what's really most feasible.

9 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: I see. Okay, thank
10 you. I'll turn it over to my colleague now, Ben
11 Kallos, for questions.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you,
13 Caroline [sic] Rizler. I... if I may start with just
14 a quick point to saying thank you for your years of
15 advocacy on good government issues. There is
16 legislation that has been signed into law, thanks in
17 no small part to your advocacy, so I just wanted to
18 say thank you.

19 CAROL ANN RIZLER: And Louise.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: And also Louise
21 Dankberg, who is your co-leader and also thank you
22 for your leadership on science, technology,
23 engineering and math. We, at the City Council have
24 devoted a lot of funding to that in my office. We
25 put \$1 million into every single school for science,

1
2 technology, engineering and math. One question of
3 personal privilege, my birthday is February 5th and
4 the Chair's birthday is February 21st.

5 CAROL ANN RIZLER: And you think I'm not
6 gonna have something, huh?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I'm hoping you'll
8 have something good.

9 CAROL ANN RIZLER: Alright, February...

10 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: February 5th and
11 21st.

12 [crosstalk]

13 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: 21st.

14 CAROL ANN RIZLER: On the 5th, oh.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: On the 21st...

16 [crosstalk]

17 CAROL ANN RIZLER: On the 5th...

18 [crosstalk]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: On the 21st
20 Laurie Cumbo was born.

21 CAROL ANN RIZLER: On the 5th, Gretchen
22 Fraser became the United States woman to win a gold
23 medal Olympic slalom. Is it slalom?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Mm-hm.

25 CAROL ANN RIZLER: In 1948 and the 21st?

CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Mm-hm.

CAROL ANN RIZLER: Lucy Beaman Taylor became the first doctor of dental surgery in 1866.

CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Oh, wow. Alright.

CAROL ANN RIZLER: And it really... I don't want to belabor the point, but it really was fascinating to put this together and as I say, I don't think that there should be a museum because of population. I think there should be a museum because of fact. I deal in facts and I like this and I think that it's ridiculous in a country where we are so diverse and there are museums for everything that there aren't museums for this. I would suggest that virtually everybody listed on this calendar is listed somewhere in a museum. I know there are dental museums 'cause I wrote a book on dentistry and I...

[crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Mm...

CAROL ANN RINZLER: And you know, there is that and I'm sure that there are Olympic people honored somewhere, so this should be too. It's so simple and I did not know, Ben, about the million. That's wonderful.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: No worries and
3 then a quick question for Susan Danish. One of the
4 objections is; just so I have a better understanding;
5 beyond the funding for this commission, which is now
6 going to be from public sources through your
7 501(c)(3), the other concern is that it will put
8 forward a liberal agenda and so just help me to
9 understand. So Senators Tom Coburn of Oklahoma and
10 Mike Lee of Utah believe that feminism is a liberal
11 agenda or... if you can help me on this and I know
12 I'm asking you to make the wrong side of this. It's
13 just hard for me to believe that feminism and equal
14 rights are such things.

15 SUSAN DANISH: Well, I can't really speak
16 for...

17 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: [interposing]
18 Yeah.

19 SUSAN DANISH: Coburn and Lee. Let me
20 see. Their primary argument... their argument was
21 really a financial argument.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Mm-hm.

23 SUSAN DANISH: And I have their letter to
24 Mitch McConnell with me. I'm looking to see... if
25 their... if the argument from them... [phone ringing]

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: That's fine, but
3 with regard to their financial argument, it seems
4 that they're putting the cart before the horse and
5 that they're opposing a commission based on the fact
6 that the legislation might have a financial impact,
7 so just to be clear, this will cost the taxpayers
8 zero dollars. Is that correct?

9 SUSAN DANISH: That's correct.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: And it does not
11 speak to any funding sources or questions for the
12 museum itself.

13 SUSAN DANISH: No.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Okay, thank you
15 very much for your time and for coming out on such
16 short notice in support.

17 SUSAN DANISH: And just to be clear I
18 guess, in the Mitch... in the letter to Mitch it
19 really only talks about the finances, but the other
20 argument has been one that's been raised
21 periodically.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you.

23 SUSAN DANISH: And frequently as well.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you.
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1
2 SUSAN DANISH: Possibly by their
3 constituents.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Okay.

5 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you. I want to
6 thank all of those that came here to testify and in
7 closing, we have testimony that came in from Jean
8 Afterman, Senior Vice President and Assistant General
9 Manager for the New York Yankees and it's
10 interesting. I just want to give her closing... her
11 concluding paragraph here, which I think is really
12 great and it kind of sums up what we've been saying
13 today. She stated that, "We need to have a place
14 where little girls can go and know that they can be
15 assistant general managers and doctors, lawyers,
16 justices of the Supreme Court, scientists, leaders,
17 artists, athletes, professors; a place where they can
18 see their own eyes and that women matter; that they
19 always have mattered. We cannot allow only one story
20 to be told. Think about this country with only one
21 point of view; with only one voice; with only half
22 the story. I urge you to support the National
23 Women's History Museum so that all of our stories can
24 be told and women will not be systematically ignored
25 or erased from history. This happens in other places

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in the world, but not here, not in the U.S. and
certainly not in New York City."

This meeting will be adjourned 'til
recess 'til Wednesday, 9:30 a.m. and we are going to
now adjourn the meeting... [phone ringing] recess the
meeting. Okay, thank you so much.

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date 09/10/2014