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National Women's History Museum gains traction; bill would launch exploratory panel



By Jessica Goldstein, Published: December 11 [E-mail the writer](#)

At a House Administration Committee hearing Wednesday morning, Reps. Carolyn B. Maloney (D-N.Y.) and Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) presented their bipartisan bill to launch an exploratory commission on building a National Women's History Museum, an effort that has been ongoing [for almost 20 years](#).

The theme of the day was "sisterhood trumps party lines," as every speaker ran down the alternately distressing (less than 5 percent of the 2,400 National Historic Landmarks in the United States recognize the achievements of women) to empowering (women outnumber men in college enrollment) statistics as proof that women are owed Mall real estate.



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The two biggest obstacles, aside from the slow grind of government, are financial and logistical: Where will the money come from, and where will the museum go?

Joan Wages, president and chief executive of the National Women's History Museum, says she believes the museum can be funded entirely through private donations. She expected that "half the nation's population and the other half who love their mothers" would be able to raise the \$400 million to \$500 million estimated cost of constructing a museum, along with a \$15 million to \$20 million yearly operating budget.

Wages said that, in determining location, "it comes down to, where will the most people visit it? Where will it have the greatest impact?" Which means the museum must be "on or very, very close to the national Mall."

Committee Chairman Candice S. Miller (R-Mich.) presided over the hearing, calling the museum an "important and, I think, frankly long overdue acknowledgment of women's accomplishments" in American history.



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"Sometimes, people think we can't work together," Miller said. "We know, as women, that we can work together."

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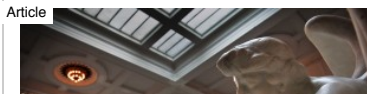
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