

OCTOBER 1, 2002

**SCHAKOWSKY PAYS TRIBUTE TO PATSY MINK
"A WOMAN WHO GAVE VOICE TO THE VOICELESS"**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Patsy Mink, a leader, a visionary, a mentor, and a true advocate for so many who had no voice. Patsy Mink was a woman I looked up to, learned from, and was inspired by. As the first woman of color elected to the U.S. Congress in 1964, Patsy knew what it meant to break down barriers. Her passion was for those who were otherwise forgotten or pushed to the side.

Patsy was a strong fighter for women's rights. Her leadership in the fight for equality for women and girls in education and sports has made an everlasting impact on this country. The passage of Title IX has literally changed the lives of millions of young girls and women. It opened the doors to countless opportunities for women and girls and allowed us to dream bigger than we ever had before. It allowed more people to see women as Olympic athletes and competitors. It allowed parents to see their daughters as softball players and runners. It challenged school administrators and coaches to see the potential in female athletes and embrace it.

Patsy was a relentless fighter for low-income and poor families. She had great compassion for those who were struggling against the odds to work and provide for their families. She wasn't afraid to make her voice heard in standing up for fair treatment of women receiving welfare benefits, workers' rights and fair pay, and children who were lacking food or a good education. Patsy was a fearless fighter for the environment. She helped protect Hawaii's natural beauty in national parks and worked at the local level to help communities preserve their lands. Patsy was a lifelong fighter for civil rights. She knew what it meant to stand up in the face of adversity and she worked hard to break down barriers so those coming after her would instead experience justice and equality.

Patsy was tough and passionate. I can see her now shaking her small but mighty fist as she eloquently challenged an injustice. Patsy was a pioneer and a trailblazer. As we honor the memory of Patsy Mink today, we should also think about the future that she would want and work to achieve it. Patsy would want us to pass a Labor/HHS bill that truly leaves no child behind. She would want us to fully fund the Women's Education Equity Act. She wanted to see passage of a welfare bill that lifts women and children out of poverty, not just off the welfare rolls. Patsy wants us to make sure that all people have a fair chance.

Today, as I mourn with my colleagues and extend my condolences to her family and to the people of Hawaii, I honor the memory of Patsy Mink and all that she stood for. And I deeply miss her beautiful smile.