

Testimony of the Honorable Sharon Pratt

Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of H.R.4869, the Restroom Gender Parity in Federal Buildings Act.

I believe an overwhelming number of Americans, especially American women and girls; support the principles and purpose of this legislation. However, some may be hesitant about coming forward to support this legislation because it is so easy to make light of this effort---and mock those advancing the cause.

As such, I very much appreciate the leadership you, Chairman Edolphus Towns, Congressman Darrell Issa, Congresswoman Yvette Clarke and Congressman Pete Visclosky have provided in this matter.

I am a native Washingtonian and except for three years in New York, I have lived here all of my life. Not surprisingly, I have regularly patronized federal buildings for meetings, major events and recreation. I can speak from personal observation and experience, as a woman resident, the former Mayor of this City, and as a mother who reared two daughters in this city, that the disparity in restrooms is glaring, inconvenient, enormously inefficient and downright unfair.

Indeed, given the logistics associated with the restroom ritual, true parity would probably require a 2 to 1 ratio of toilets for women to men. Nonetheless, I am pleased to support legislation that, at least, ensures some level of parity in this matter.

Our society has come a great distance in my lifetime. We certainly are a society that now genuinely supports equal rights for women. However, if the practical reality is a woman will be late for a meeting, miss much of a concert, because there are built-in impediments to equally navigating the world at large stemming from an absence of parity in restrooms---women are still not equal.

Mr. Chairmen and Members of this Committee, I heartily support H.R. 4869.