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January 6, 2009

Rep. Jan Schakowsky
2367 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Schakowsky:

We met at a breakfast in Chicago when I was working for Carol Moseley Braun for President in 2003 – and the following spring marched together in the March for Women's Lives.

Congratulations on your election as Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues. Clearly, there are many big issues facing the 111th Congress, but we cannot forget that there are far too few seats held by women. That makes it very difficult for women's issues to be real priorities, or for women's voices to impact legislation as much as they should. **What if you had 150 women in your caucus instead of 78?**

Attached, please find a suggestion I submitted to the Barack Obama transition website www.change.gov last month. It addresses the need to accelerate the election of women to Congress, with a suggested strategy: Every Open Seat a Women's Seat. It requires voluntary rule changes and additional funding – at least temporarily – by the two major political parties. The Democratic Party constantly gives lip service to electing more women, but it's way past time for real action. **Without a real plan and concrete goals aimed at parity, we will never see the day when there are 150 women in Congress.**

I ask you and your Caucus colleagues to give this proposal your full consideration. It seems to me that the change in party leadership makes this a very good time to get support for change in electoral politics. **It is certainly never too early to work on electing more women.** My letters and personal outreach to Howard Dean have gone unanswered for over three years. What's up with Party silence and seeming disdain for making a REAL effort to gain Equal Representation for women? **There can be no real democracy without full participation by women!**

Please let me know what you think.

For my part, I will continue to raise awareness on the status of women in Congress and to push for change – and also post news on my website, www.equalrepresentation.org. Incidentally, I will also be in Washington on January 20th to see Barack Obama inaugurated. Onward and upward!

Sincerely,

Paula Xanthopoulou

cc: Rep. Gwen Moore, Vice-Chairwoman Women's Caucus