

**REMARKS OF
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RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART
NEW YORK, NEW YORK
JUNE 23, 2015**

Good morning. Thank you to Women in Consumer Electronics for inviting me to join you today. It's a treat to be here because your mission is fantastic—empowering women, building networks, and expanding the reach of the technology economy. I am all in.

Now in preparing my thoughts for this event, dozens of stories came to mind—because I've got some doozies. There are the inspired episodes, like earlier this month when I sat down with women start-up founders at a San Francisco incubator and learned about the “tribes” they build for personal and professional support. Then there are the less than inspired reminders that the number of women in technology is too few, like two years ago when I spoke at an international spectrum conference. The room was packed with hundreds of engineering and wireless experts and the conversation on stage crackled with energy. When it was over, I deposited my microphone in a heap of stage electronics and headed off to use the facilities. I found a long line, a queue to get into the bathroom—the men's bathroom. The women's bathroom was totally empty. I marched right in.

But instead of talking briefly about these greatest hits, I thought instead I would start at the very beginning. I want to tell you about my first day at the Federal Communications Commission.

A few years ago, I became a Commissioner at the FCC.

The first day in a job like mine goes a lot like you might imagine. The top brass of the agency assembles. My family joins them. There's a bible and there's an oath.

I dutifully swear to uphold the Constitution. And then I head to my new office.

Now before this, I had been in positions proximate to power, but not the principal.

And before this, I had a small office, not necessarily the big desk.

So I gingerly open the door to my office suite on my first day.

Walk down the hall, step into the office.

And it's large. But the one thing that gets my attention is that for some reason there is a table—a dining room table—in the middle of the room. Which is odd. Not a small one. One big enough for 12 people. Smack in the middle of the room.

I had never seen this before in a Commissioner's office. It wasn't a corporate table. It was more like a dining room table. It was the kind of table that makes you think of family reunions and turkey and ham and holidays.

What was this table doing here? Did someone think I would be serving dinner?

So in a first, sweeping, grand gesture, I use my new power on the very first day to make an executive decision. I get rid of the table.

Fast forward a few months. The office looks good. The stray furniture is gone. The walls are painted a stately blue. The carpet is clean—or cleanish. The pictures are up.

But somehow I can't stop thinking of that table. I can't get it out of my mind.

Here's why. When you reach some heights in your career—as everyone in this room has—you think about what it means for women to have a seat at the proverbial table.

When it comes to decision-making in boardrooms, in politics, or anywhere else, the best decisions are made when there is some diversity at the table.

So that table is no longer in my office, but I keep an iconic one in my mind. I think about it in everything that I do as an FCC Commissioner.

Because day-in and day-out, I am in meetings and events in Washington and on the road and I can't help but be reminded. The number of women I see in technical fields is simply too few. But our new economy is built on technology. In fact, science, technology, engineering, and math are the fastest growing fields in our economy. There are three times as many job opportunities in STEM fields than in any other field. Yet the Bureau of Labor Statistics tells us that while women hold half the jobs in this country, they hold less than a quarter of all jobs in STEM fields.

We need to close that gap.

Because it's a matter of equity.

Because it's an economic imperative.

Because it's the right thing to do.

So how do we do it? There are no easy answers. We are in what Peggy Ornstein, author of *Cinderella Ate my Daughter*, calls the “half-changed world” of the early 21st century. But even if change is only at the midway mark, we need ideas now. So here are three of mine.

First, to bring more women to the table we need more math. And by math, I mean more than calculus, statistics, and building a STEM pipeline. I mean organizations and institutions need to start counting. It's already happening in some of our nation's largest technology

companies. For the first time they are making public numbers about the demographics of their workforce.

Let's be clear that what we have seen to date is a stunningly less diverse workforce than the population as a whole. These numbers are not what we want them to be. They are not what they could be. But collecting data is a start.

Let's also praise efforts to bring numbers like these to light. The endless churn and burn of social media has led to lots of conversations about these numbers, online and off. That's good—and important.

Prominent publications have done their duty as well, with the *Wall Street Journal* calling last year “the year Silicon Valley spilled its diversity data.” *Forbes* tells us that of the top 100 investors in technology, only 5 are female. The *New York Times* has written extensively about the decline in computer science degrees among women, who totaled 37 percent of computer science graduates in 1985 and number just 18 percent today. Plus, countless articles have noted that the percentage of women on corporate boards has held steady at a stubborn 16 to 19 percent. But it was a *Washington Post* headline earlier this year that got me. The paper pointed out that this means there are more men on corporate boards named John, Robert, William, or James than there are women on boards altogether.

At the same time, *Dow Jones* has tallied start-ups with women executives—and found they succeed more often. Likewise, the *Financial Times* has highlighted work by Credit Suisse finding that global companies where more than 15 percent of senior management are women generate higher valuations, share price performance, and dividend payouts.

This math matters. These numbers matter. They matter because we cannot manage what we do not measure. So calling on companies, institutions, and organizations to account for their demographics and measure year-over-year gains, failures, and trends—is key because it is how we unlock the possibilities of change. It gets us nearer to what Kimberly Bryant, founder of Black Girls CODE, calls a “tipping point.”

Second, to bring more women to the table we need to do it ourselves. Former Secretary of State Madeline Albright famously said, “there is a special place in hell for women who don't help other women.” Amen. But let me put the fire and brimstone aside and say it another way. At my metaphorical table, there is always room for more women. That's because the success of any one of us alone is not enough. No matter who you are or where you sit, pull up another chair and encourage other women to join you. Be a sponsor, be a mentor, be someone who brings someone else along. No matter where your seat is at the table, make room for other women.

Third, to bring more women to the table we need to commit resources. This cuts so many ways. It means supporting the services and products of companies with women in their senior ranks. It means investing in a women-owned start-up or female entrepreneur. It means showing up and joining the line-up at programs for girls that give them a glimpse of a technical career.

It means supporting programs and films that have women in leading roles—both in front and behind the camera. They are still too few. But if a couple of years ago if you told me Orange is the New Black would be a massive hit or that the newest Disney animation movie would take place inside the mind of a hockey-skating 11-year old girl, I would not have believed you. We need to support this change, because even as traditional media fragments, what gets brought to the screen says so much about who we are as individuals, as a community, and as a nation.

It means supporting women in political life. No matter your stripes or your partisan calling, aid a woman candidate—at the school board, at the state house, wherever you find one to your liking. Because I think there are too few women making decisions in public life—and without them I am not sure that problem-solving, legislating thing is going all that well right now.

So there you have it. If we want more women at the table, we need to start with math and study the data. If we want more women at the table, we need to pull up chairs for others. And if we want more women at the table, we need to support more women in economic and civic life.

That's how we start the process of changing a world where talent is equally distributed but opportunity is not. It's the "half-changed" world that is our responsibility to change. It's a world I want my daughter—and son—to know one day. And it's one I think the women in this room can help bring about sooner rather than later.

Thank you.