

**The Honorable Lois Capps**  
U.S. Representative of California (1998–2017)

**Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress**

**Energy and Commerce Committee: Part Two**

Representative Capps explains her campaign to join the Energy and Commerce Committee by befriending Representative John Dingell Jr.

*Interview recorded July 16, 2019*

So I used to kid my staff and say I've got, I thought it was a campaign to get to Congress. I've got another campaign now to get to know John Dingell, the longest-serving Member of Congress from Detroit, Michigan, who had been on the, on the Energy and Commerce Committee—well, succeeding his father, who had been on it forever. And so I got to know John Dingell. And he was very old-school. He served a very long time, and he was the Ranking Member. At that point, we were in the minority. But he, he was, unbeknownst to me, quite partial to nurses. So when I pointed out to him that there weren't any nurses on his Health Subcommittee, the next opening, I was asked to join. And I was very blessed in that way, because I got to spend a year of my congressional service—more than a year, probably—working on the Affordable Care Act with my colleagues. And though it's a flawed bill—it was a flawed bill and I was the first to say so—it moved our healthcare system forward immeasurably, I believe. And then I also got on the Energy Subcommittee.