

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

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Democratic Welcome

Representative Capps recalls feeling welcomed by her congressional colleagues after winning her special election.

Interview recorded July 16, 2019

California now is pretty solidly Democratic as a state. But in those days, it was pretty much half and half. I mean, we had Republican governors, we had Schwarzenegger, Deukmejian, and Pete Wilson. And they were, our party was trying to gain seats, and it was such an achievement when Walter was elected. And then when hopes were dashed as he sat in office, and it was just his spouse, his wife, you know, running for a seat—good heavens. So I think it was such a surprise that they, that I won. It was just, like, really a celebration in some areas. Now, it, partisan-wise, it was certainly not a part of the, the goal of the, the Republican Party to have the seat stay Democratic. And they, they sent good candidates against me every single time. So I did have to earn my seat every two years. But the, there was a sweetness about the special election that, as I look back on it, I was surprised—I think lot of people were surprised to find me there.