

**The Honorable Lynn C. Woolsey**  
U.S. Representative of California (1993–2013)

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

**Committee Assignments**

Representative Woolsey reflects on how she prioritized which committees she sought to serve on throughout her time in Congress.

*Interview recorded March 7, 2016*

Remember I told you I was really naïve when I came? I knew nothing about any of this. But I was a good personnel, a human-resources executive, is what I was in the outside world. So, I knew how to hire people I knew, and I knew right up front, quickly what I didn't know much, here. So, I hired people that did. So, okay, so I came to Congress because I wanted our country to be better educated. I thought that was—and I still do—think that's the core of this country knowing what it wants, needs to be doing. So, I campaigned for Ed and, and Labor. And I wanted to be on that committee. Nobody believed me, that, when I would say, this is the committee I want to be on, and I want to be on it—this is what I want, period. Because it's a stepping-stone committee—I don't know that when I come here. I don't know that big money doesn't go the Education and Labor—well labor helps, because of labor unions, but I don't know that. I know none of that. I just know where I want to be. And I got on it, thank heavens. I wouldn't have, you know, but I had no disappointment there. And Science because we wanted Science because it was, of all the technology in my district, and I came from a high-tech company. And then the government was—there were—the Government Operations. That was a gift because it was—they had room, and they asked me, did I want to go on it. And I loved it. But then we lost so many seats I didn't get to stay on it. But I stayed on those two committees the entire 20 years. Now Appropriations came up, about, about six years before I left. And it was my turn, and I was the one that would get it from our, from the California, Northern California. And I got the letters out, and I did all that I needed to do to get the support I need. You learned. I mean, believe me, you learned how to do all this, you know? Stay naïve for more than two-and-a-half seconds, but because it's a campaign. Every one of these things is a campaign. So, and, and it was good, it would have, it was going to be my seat. And I started thinking, "Do I want to do that, compared to making a different, making law?" I mean, and I changed my mind. And I wrote everybody and said, "Thank you for your support, but I'm not going to do it. I'm going to, I want to stay where I am." Because I was the ranking or chair of the Labor Committee or Workforce Protection, but I always called it "Labor." And I loved that. That's where I belonged.