

Lynn's Biography

Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey, the first former welfare mother to serve in Congress, is in her ninth term as the representative from California's 6th District, just north of San Francisco. Her district includes all of Marin, and most of Sonoma County.

As Co-Chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, Congresswoman Woolsey is a vocal and visible leader on progressive issues, particularly those dealing with children and families. A passionate and outspoken opponent of the Iraq war, she has helped move public opinion against President Bush's failed Iraq policy. She introduced the first resolution calling for our troops to be brought home and convened the first congressional hearing on military exit strategies, and introduced H.R. 508 the Bring Our Troops Home and Sovereignty of Iraq Restoration Act. The San Jose Mercury News recently called her "the unofficial matriarch of the [anti-war] movement in Congress."

Congresswoman Woolsey, a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, believes that ending the Iraq war must be the beginning of a complete re-evaluation of U.S. national security policy. She has proposed the Sensible Multilateral American Reengagement and Transition (SMART Security) which puts an emphasis on peaceful resolution of international conflict. SMART would keep Americans safe through stronger global alliances and improved intelligence capabilities, as opposed to pre-emptive military strikes. SMART also calls for the United States to live up to its nonproliferation obligations, and it includes an ambitious humanitarian development agenda to address the hopelessness and oppression that give rise to terrorism in the first place.

As the Chairwoman of the Committee on Education and Labor's Workforce Protections Subcommittee, Congresswoman Woolsey helps to oversee policies that affect millions of American workers. Congresswoman Woolsey also sits on the Subcommittee on Elementary and Secondary Education. She is currently working on reform of the No Child Left Behind Act, to fully fund the law and make it more flexible and less punitive toward schools and school districts.

Since her appointment in 1993, Congresswoman Woolsey has used her seat on the Committee on Education and Labor to provide children and families the tools they need to realize the American Dream. She has been an advocate of special education and vocational education, and she has fought against job discrimination in Head Start and other federal programs. Congresswoman Woolsey also authored a School Breakfast Pilot Program that was signed into law by President Clinton.

During her time in Congress one of Congresswoman Woolsey's top priorities has been a legislative package called "The Balancing Act," which aims to help parents manage the challenge of the balance between work and family. Among the Balancing Act provisions are: paid family leave; public universal pre-school; major investments in child care; universal school breakfast; benefits for part-time workers; and telecommuting incentives.

Congresswoman Woolsey is also a Senior Member of the House Committee on Science and Technology, where she works to reduce American dependence on foreign oil and promote the use of clean, efficient energy sources. In the most recent energy bill, Congresswoman Woolsey was instrumental in securing over \$2 billion in renewable energy research, development, demonstration and commercial application. The energy bill also included the “Woolsey Green Building Amendment,” modeled after a project in her district, which will promote the use of renewable energy technology in public buildings. Congresswoman Woolsey has also recently introduced legislation to add the Sonoma coastline to the National Marine Sanctuary Program, thus protecting it from oil and gas drilling.

Having raised her family in California’s North Bay and lived there for over 40 years, Congresswoman Woolsey understands the concerns and reflects the values of Sonoma and Marin County residents. She frequently says they are the most important voice she listens to; and she not only listens, she responds. Her Washington office alone receives and answers over three thousand letters, phone calls, and emails from constituents each week.

Congresswoman Woolsey has used her influence and seniority to modernize and upgrade North Bay infrastructure. Twice, she helped save the Petaluma Coast Guard Training Center from closure, and she helped secure more than \$11 million for repairs that helped bring Fort Baker under the protection of the National Park Service. She was also able to get the federal money needed to build a thriving community and wetlands preserve at Hamilton Field -- the nation’s first such successful conversion of a military base. Over the years, Congresswoman Woolsey has helped bring home \$400 million in special projects to the 6th District. Last year’s transportation bill, for example, included money for the expansion of Highway 101; a bicycle and pedestrian network for Marin County; natural gas buses in Sonoma County; and earthquake damage protection for the Golden Gate Bridge.

Congresswoman Woolsey’s dedication to family issues and her belief in a strong social safety net are rooted in her personal history. As a young single mother struggling to raise three children by herself, she needed public assistance just to make ends meet, even though she was employed. The experience of needing a helping hand from her government has shaped her commitment to family-friendly policies.

Before coming to the House of Representatives Congresswoman Woolsey was a Human Resources Manager for a large high-tech manufacturer in Marin County. In 1980, she opened her own human resources consulting and employment agency, Woolsey Personnel Service, while finishing her bachelor’s degree at the University of San Francisco. She began her public service career in 1984 with a seat on the Petaluma City Council, where she served until she was sworn in to the United States House of Representatives in January 1993.

Since then, the people of the 6th district have returned Congresswoman Woolsey to office eight times.

Woolsey was born on November 3, 1937 in Seattle, Washington. Now living in Petaluma, California, she is the mother of four grown children and a grandmother of five.