



# HELP WITH A FEDERAL AGENCY

Provided by Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey

If you are having a problem with a federal agency, my office may be able to assist you. There are many areas in which my office can be of assistance. These include, but are not limited to:

- US passports
- US immigration
- Social Security
- Medicare
- Military benefits
- Veterans benefits
- Federal taxes
- Federal student loans
- Federal retiree benefits
- Federal workers' compensation
- US Postal Service issues
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assistance
- Employment discrimination
- Government contracting

To find out more about how I can help, you should first contact my office for further information. A caseworker will discuss your situation and, if necessary, instruct you on how to fill out a privacy waiver requesting casework. You can also complete, print out, and sign a privacy waiver through my website, at [woolsey.house.gov/index.cfm?sectionid=75](http://woolsey.house.gov/index.cfm?sectionid=75).

If your concerns pertain not to a federal agency, but to products and services, please view my advice on "Consumer Resources" at [woolsey.house.gov/index.cfm?sectionid=105](http://woolsey.house.gov/index.cfm?sectionid=105), or contact my office for more information.

**For more information about casework in a Congressional office, please consult the FAQs below.** If you have any remaining questions, please contact one of my local offices to speak with a caseworker directly:

**Marin County Office**

1050 Northgate Drive, Suite 354  
San Rafael, California 94903  
(415) 507-9554

**Sonoma County Office**

1101 College Avenue, Suite 200  
Santa Rosa, California 95404  
(707) 542-7182

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What can Congresswoman Woolsey do?**

My office is available to assist you in any matters that fall under my jurisdiction as your federal representative. That means your issue must lie with a federal agency or with some entity regulated by a federal agency. If you are having difficulty with a state or municipal matter, my office will be pleased to refer you to the appropriate local contacts. If you are unsure of whether your issue is a federal issue, please contact my office for assistance.

My office may be helpful in any situation where you believe a federal agency:

- has not done what it is supposed to do
- has made errors without correcting them
- has not responded to you
- has not given you clear information

### **When can Congresswoman Woolsey help?**

It is important to request Congressional assistance only after you have attempted to resolve your issue on your own. In most circumstances, a federal agency will be able to assist you without my intervention. For a complete list of federal agencies and their contact information, visit [USA.gov](http://USA.gov) or contact my office.

It is also important to consider your federal agency's standard processing times. Except in cases of significant hardship, Congressional assistance is not a means of expediting a case or bypassing an agency's established procedures.

### **Must I be a resident of the Sixth Congressional District?**

Yes. Members of Congress are prevented from assisting constituents residing outside their Congressional District. As a matter of both professional courtesy and Congressional ethics, it is important that Representatives have the opportunity to assist the constituents they are elected to represent. Additionally, each Congressional office is allotted a limited amount of resources. These resources are intended for use in the service of constituents, and it is important that be used as intended.

To find out if I am your representative, visit my website at [woolsey.house.gov/index.cfm?sectionid=25](http://woolsey.house.gov/index.cfm?sectionid=25), or contact my office for assistance.

### **Should I ask a Senator for help as well?**

Like my office, the Senators' offices also offer assistance with federal agencies, and any California resident may contact [Senator Dianne Feinstein](#) or [Senator Barbara Boxer](#) for their assistance. However, only one Congressional office is able to proceed with your case, so you are encouraged to direct your request to the Member of Congress whose help you would prefer.

### **What is the process after I request assistance?**

If you require my assistance with a federal agency, you should first contact my office for further information. A caseworker will discuss your situation and, if necessary, instruct you on how to fill out a privacy waiver requesting casework. You can also complete a privacy waiver online at [woolsey.house.gov/index.cfm?sectionid=75](http://woolsey.house.gov/index.cfm?sectionid=75), then print, sign, and return it to one of my local offices for assistance.

After you have submitted a signed privacy waiver and copies of any documentation relevant to your case, my office will start by contacting the appropriate federal agency. Each federal agency is staffed with a Congressional Liaison responsible for answering requests from Members of Congress. Depending on the agency and the nature of your case, a resolution may take as little as a week or as long as several months. My office will keep you updated on the progress of your case. You are also encouraged to remain in contact with your caseworker if you have any questions or new information to provide.

### **Can Congresswoman Woolsey guarantee a response in my favor?**

No. Every case before a federal agency must be judged equally and impartially, and no Member of Congress can request that an agency reach a specific decision on behalf of a constituent. Decisions must always be made on the merits of the case. However, in circumstances where an agency may have made errors, lost or overlooked information, or misunderstood evidence, my office may be able to assist in seeking a rightful resolution based on the merits.

It is important to remember that Congressional intervention is never a guarantee of a favorable outcome.

### **Can Congresswoman Woolsey help resolve a legal dispute?**

No. Members of Congress are prohibited from becoming involved in legal matters, which fall under the jurisdiction of the Judicial Branch. My office is also unable to recommend legal counsel, although you can find contact information for local legal aid at [woolsey.house.gov/index.cfm?sectionid=3](http://woolsey.house.gov/index.cfm?sectionid=3).

If you have a complaint about the conduct of an attorney, you should direct your concerns to the State Bar of California at (800) 843-9053, or online at [www.calbar.ca.gov/Attorneys/LawyerRegulation.aspx](http://www.calbar.ca.gov/Attorneys/LawyerRegulation.aspx). If you have a complaint about the conduct of a judge, you should direct your concerns to the appropriate supervisory board. The conduct of federal judges is reviewed by the US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit at [www.ce9.uscourts.gov/misconduct/judicial\\_misconduct.html](http://www.ce9.uscourts.gov/misconduct/judicial_misconduct.html). The conduct of California State judges is reviewed by the California Commission on Judicial Performance at [www.cjp.ca.gov](http://www.cjp.ca.gov). You should bear in mind that dissatisfaction with the outcome of a legal case is not in itself grounds for an allegation of misconduct.

### **Why is a privacy waiver required?**

The Privacy Act of 1974 requires that my office obtain your formal, written authorization before receiving access to your personal information. For more information about the Privacy Act of 1974, visit the Department of Justice website at [www.justice.gov/opcl/privacyact1974.htm](http://www.justice.gov/opcl/privacyact1974.htm).