

The Honorable Nancy Lee Johnson
U.S. Representative of Connecticut (1983–2007)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Balancing Family and Congress

Representative Johnson recalls the importance of balancing family responsibilities and her work as a Member of Congress.

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I had been lucky. I had a very independent and self-sufficient husband. But, you know, when you're gone every single week, at least three days a week, and then, when you're home—and this is, I guess, the biggest surprise to us was when you're home your time is not your own. So, it got to a point where if I could carve out Sunday afternoon or Sunday, that was a good thing. That's—you can do that with an adult that you've known well and, you know, you have a lot of common memories with, but you can't do that with kids. You have to be there. And you have to be there—I remember getting on the plane with John Rowland one day and he had just this brown folder. I said, "John." I'm pulling a briefcase, you know. "Is that what you're, all you're taking home?" He said, "Yes." He said, "Now the kids not only are saying, 'Daddy, will you watch television with us this morning,' but now they say, 'and don't bring your work.'" So, you know, human beings take a lot of input and to raise a child up with good character, you not only have to be present a good amount of the time, but you have to be doing things with them, taking them places, exposing them to things, talking about things, open and ready to talk whenever they open up.