

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

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Ways and Means Subcommittee Chair

Representative Johnson emphasizes the value of debate and input from others when considering amendments and drafting legislation.

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I chaired almost every subcommittee of Ways and Means. Well, it was inclusive. I was always interested in people's input—always open to their amendments and what they were interested in. It was, on the whole, I think, pretty non-partisan. But we kept things moving. If people were questioning just to make a political point, you know, I didn't—if they were in there five minutes, you don't disturb them. But I tried to question myself and I encouraged others to get the information out so we could make the decisions, which was hard. And there was a lot of manipulation of the hearing panels that I wasn't able to overcome. It was hard to just get "Joe Blow" out there. First of all, he didn't have enough knowledge. So, how you got past the experts and how you balance the experts was really hard. So, I don't know that we always succeeded. But if people had a good idea it didn't matter to me whether they were a Republican or a Democrat.