

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

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Women's Perspectives and Committee Service

Representative Johnson discusses the ways women gained influence in Congress.
Interview recorded December 3, 2015

But women were often very well informed, had generally done their homework. So, they had a lot of influence. And on the committees, for instance, on Ways and Means, most of the men didn't have much experience on the kinds of things that the Human Resources Subcommittee dealt with. And, so, whether you were a man or a woman chairing that committee—Tom Downey chaired it for quite a while and was a very, very good chair. I chaired it, others. And, but you often had a lot of input into those things if you'd known about—if you knew about it all the way down to the state and local level. And most men hadn't because you learn that information as a volunteer in your community. And, you know, I chaired the child guidance clinic board for many years so you see the relationship between state, and federal, and local effort in mental health issues for children. So, I would say women had no trouble gaining influence.