

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

**Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress**

**Attracting the Interest of the Press**

Representative Johnson recalls the limited interests of the Washington press corps.  
*Interview recorded December 3, 2015*

Neglect. You know, for a while, sort of celebrity status, but there was a level at which they didn't take us seriously. But I'm not sure it was us because we were very policy oriented. Because at one time, after this young woman who had worked for Trent Lott on the floor, and she retired, and she said, "But I have friends in the media. I thought it'd be fun to get together for dinner once a month or so and just get acquainted with the people in the media, see if we can get, can't get more media directed at Republican women." So, we did that. And one of them said to us, finally, well—because we were introducing really thoughtful bills on welfare, social policy in various areas, environmental issues, education, and economics. And, so, I lost my train of thought. So, he looked at us and he said, "Well, are you going to overthrow Newt?" I said, "No, we're not going to overthrow Newt." He said, "Well, that's all we're interested in—you're going to overthrow Newt, you're going to attack DeLay," this or that. So, it was very hard to get attention to substantive issues, except in your home state, and you could get attention to those things at home. And I always had a lot of substantive stuff that was directly related to the district I represented so, you know, I got all the press I needed.