

# Congresswoman Lois Capps

## California – 23rd District

### Biography



Congresswoman Lois Capps was sworn in as a Freshman Member of the 105th Congress on March 17, 1998, succeeding her late husband, Congressman Walter Capps. She was the Representative of California's 22nd District from 1998 to 2002.

Since January, 2003, Capps has served as the Representative of the 23rd District. Her district includes portions of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties.

Lois Capps is committed to helping people improve their daily lives through better schools, quality health care, and a cleaner environment. Capps is a respected leader in Congress on issues of public health, passing legislation to address the national nursing shortage, detect and prevent domestic violence against women, curb underage drinking, improve mental health services, provide emergency defibrillators to local

communities, bring CPR instruction to schools, and provide immediate Medicare coverage to patients suffering from Lou Gehrig's disease.

Capps has also been at the forefront of efforts to protect the environment. She led efforts to stop new oil and gas drilling off of our coasts, reduced the amount of new oil drilling in Los Padres National Park, and protected consumers from shouldering the financial burden of cleaning up MTBE contamination in their water supplies.

Capps serves on the powerful [Committee on Energy and Commerce](#) and its Subcommittees on Health, Energy and Air Quality, and Environment and Hazardous Materials. From these posts, Capps continues to focus on Medicare reform, the nursing shortage, cancer, mental health, energy policy, the environment and telecommunications issues. She also serves on the influential [House Budget Committee](#) where she takes an active role in promoting fiscally responsible spending priorities for the annual federal budget.

During her 20-year tenure as a nurse and health advocate for the Santa Barbara School District, thousands of Santa Barbara's children and families benefited from Capps' personal care and leadership. As director of Santa Barbara County's Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Project and the Parent and Child Enrichment Center, Capps gave countless young parents the support and encouragement to stay in school while providing them with critical child development skills to ensure their children grow up in healthy, loving environments. Capps also taught for 10 years as a part-time instructor of Early Childhood Education at Santa Barbara City College.

Capps now draws on this extensive healthcare background as founder and co-chair of the [House Nursing Caucus](#). She is the Democratic Vice Chair of the Congressional [Caucus for Women's Issues](#). She also serves as co-chair of the [Congressional Heart and Stroke Coalition](#), [the House Cancer Caucus](#), [the Congressional Biomedical Research Caucus](#), [the Congressional School Health and Safety Caucus](#), [the Congressional Hearing Health Caucus](#), and [the House Democratic Task Force on Health](#).

Capps was born in Ladysmith, Wisconsin on January 10, 1938. After graduating with honors from Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington with a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing, she worked as a nursing instructor in Portland, Oregon. Capps earned a Master of Arts degree in Religion from Yale University while working as Head Nurse at Yale New Haven Hospital. In addition, she earned a Master of Arts degree in Education from the University of California, Santa Barbara and received honorary doctorates from Pacific Lutheran University and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary. The daughter of a Lutheran minister, Capps has been an active member of Grace Lutheran Church since 1964.

Capps was married to Walter Capps for 37 years. Their immediate family includes: daughter Laura; son Todd, his wife Julie and their son Aden; daughter Lisa, who passed away February of 2000; Lisa's husband, Nathan, their sons David and Walter, and Nathan's wife Caitlin.