




Hon. Maxine Waters
Member, U.S. House of Representatives
100th Woman

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 Congresswoman Maxine Waters was born in St. Louis, Missouri, the fifth of thirteen children reared by a single mother. She attended California State University at Los Angeles, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree and began her career in public service as a teacher and a volunteer coordinator in the Head Start program. She is married to Sidney Williams, the former U.S. Ambassador to the Commonwealth of the Bahamas and is the mother of two adult children, Edward and Karen, and the grandmother of two.

Congresswoman Maxine Waters is considered by many to be one of the most powerful women in American politics today. She has gained a reputation as a fearless and outspoken advocate for women, children, people of color and the poor. Elected in November 2002 to her seventh term in the House of Representatives with an overwhelming 77.6 percent of the votes in the 35th District of California, Congresswoman Waters represents a large part of South Central Los Angeles, the Westchester community and the diverse cities of Gardena, Hawthorne, Inglewood and Lawndale.

Prior to her election to the House of Representatives in 1990, Congresswoman Waters had already attracted national attention for her no-nonsense, no-holds-barred style of politics. She was elected to the California State Assembly and rose to the powerful position of Democratic Caucus Chair. She was responsible for some of the boldest legislation California has ever seen: the largest divestment of state pension funds from South Africa; landmark affirmative action legislation; the nation's first statewide Child Abuse Prevention Training Program; the prohibition of police strip searches for nonviolent misdemeanors; and the introduction of the nation's first Plant Closure Law.

Congresswoman Maxine Waters has been on the cutting edge of public service for 25 years. As an advocate for human rights, Congresswoman Waters was a leader in the movement to end Apartheid. She founded the Los Angeles Free South Africa Movement and continues to be an advisor to TransAfrica. In 1994, she was on the official U.S. delegation to Nelson Mandela's inauguration as President of a free South Africa.

Congresswoman Maxine Waters used her skills to shape public policy and deliver the goods: \$10 billion in Section 108 loan guarantees to cities for economic and infrastructure development, housing and small business expansion; \$50 million appropriation for the "Youth Fair Chance" program which established an intensive job and life skills training program for unskilled, unemployed youth. She is lauded by African American entrepreneurs for her work to expand contracting and procurement opportunities and to strengthen businesses.

Congresswoman Waters is highly visible in Democratic Party politics and has served on the Democratic National Committee since 1980. She was a key leader in five Presidential Campaigns. One of the many testaments to Congresswoman Waters work is the Maxine Waters Employment Preparation Center, a multimillion dollar campus providing education and employment opportunities to residents of the Watts area. She continues to be a member of the House Committee on Financial Services and the ranking member of its Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity. Congresswoman Maxine Waters continues to be a strong political voice in the National and International Communities.