

SBWPC Legislation and Advocacy Committee Report to membership
Lois Capps (December 2015)

Congresswoman Capps was unavailable for the Legislation and Advocacy Committee's interview. Her staff referred SBWPC to her web site (link below) for a list of Congresswoman's Capps' sponsored and cosponsored legislation.

<http://capps.house.gov/legislative-work/sponsored-legislation>

It should be noted that legislation sponsored by Democrats has been extraordinarily difficult to pass in the 114th Congress, as the 2014 elections gave the Republicans control of the Senate (and control of both houses of Congress) for the first time since the 109th Congress and that this Congress began with the largest Republican majority since the 71st Congress of 1929–1931.

Congresswoman Capps' staff also referred SBWPC to her pre-2014 election interview for some of her views, which are summarized in the following paragraphs.

Regarding sexual harassment and rape in the military, Congresswoman Capps said that this is one of the more bipartisan issues in the House. It has been a part of military culture and has been "buried" in the past; awareness is finally coming to the forefront. A significant challenge is that the nearly overwhelming military power structure. In part it should be addressed by a third party but can't be handled entirely within the command structure of the military.

Congresswoman Capps characterizes the current minimum wage as an embarrassment. It represents a punishment to poor people and should be tied with the cost of living. Federal minimum wage may need to vary in different sections of the country depending on cost of living. She feels that much of the opposition represents a mean spirited stance. As opposed to previous times in history, for example In the Great Depression when the government put people to work.

Congresswoman Capps stated that she has mentored many women. She has always had interns from a variety of colleges. She believes that campaign skills are learned mainly through campaigning. Information was not available on the numbers of women and minorities on her staff, and it should be noted that the staff is changing as some move to other jobs in anticipation of Congresswoman Capps' retirement at the end of the 114th Congress.

Congresswoman Capps said that even though the Affordable Care Act is very complicated and can be confusing, it is already working. For example, coverage of those under 26 was described by Capps as a huge positive step. She expressed frustration with opposition who wish only to destroy health care at the Federal level. She cited CA Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson as a great resource for gaining and extending health insurance at the state level.