

Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz

For more than seventeen years, Debbie Wasserman Schultz has dedicated her public life to working on behalf of the people of South Florida. On January 4, 2005, she was sworn in as a Member of the United States House of Representatives to continue this fight as the Congresswoman from Florida's 20th Congressional District.

The first Jewish Congresswoman ever elected from Florida, Representative Wasserman Schultz brings to Congress her many years of service in the Florida Legislature and the kind of grassroots knowledge of the people of South Florida that can only be known through countless interactions with the families, businesses and organizations that make up the fabric of our community.

Beginnings

Debbie Wasserman Schultz was born in 1966 on Long Island, NY. She attended the University of Florida and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science in 1988 and with a Master's Degree in 1990. She has been married to Steve Schultz for 19 years and together they have three children. The Congresswoman is proud to call South Florida home where she resides with her family in Weston.

Start in Politics

Debbie Wasserman Schultz's concern for children and working families first motivated her to run for office in 1992, where she made history as the youngest woman ever elected to the Florida State Legislature at the age of only 26. Her enthusiasm and vision for the people of South Florida was evident in her first campaign when she won her seat with 53% of the vote in a six-way race –this despite the fact that she'd only been a resident of Broward County for three years. Since then she hasn't looked back, serving in the Florida House of Representatives from 1992-2000 and in the State Senate from 2000-2004.



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During her tenure in the Florida State Legislature, Wasserman Schultz made a name for herself as a fighter for South Florida families. As a Member of the Florida House, she authored the "Drive Thru Baby Bill" and the "Drive Thru Mastectomy Bill" both of which passed and helped women by mandating that they get the care they needed rather than the limited amount of care that the insurance companies were willing to pay for. As a State Senator, another significant piece of her legislation passed, outlawing human and sexual trafficking in the State of Florida. Her tireless work on behalf of the Florida Residential Swimming Pool Safety Act helped to ensure its passage and has saved the lives of unknown numbers of toddlers from accidental drowning in Florida pools. While serving in the state House, Wasserman Schultz fought to increase funding to public schools to solve school overcrowding problems. She also was recognized repeatedly as an environmental champion for her strong advocacy on environmental protection issues.

Her dedication to the people of Florida was well recognized by her colleagues in the Florida Legislature where she held several influential leadership positions. Wasserman Schultz's service in the House included a term as House Democratic Leader Pro Tempore, House Democratic Floor Leader and Chair of the Broward Legislative Delegation. She chaired the House Committee on Higher Education from 1994-1996.

In the U.S. House of Representatives

Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz serves on the [House Committee on Appropriations](#), which, in conjunction with the Senate Committee on Appropriations, makes funding decisions on every discretionary program in the federal budget. On the first day of the 110th Congress, the House Committee on Appropriations recommended that Rep. Wasserman Schultz serve as a "Cardinal," or chair, of the [Legislative Branch Subcommittee](#). As the subcommittee Chair, Rep. Wasserman Schultz oversees the subcommittee that determines the funding level for the entire legislative branch, which includes the Library of Congress. She also serves as the vice-chair of the Financial Services Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations.

Rep. Wasserman Schultz also serves on the [Committee on the Judiciary](#), which maintains jurisdiction over matters relating to the administration of justice in Federal courts, administrative bodies, and law enforcement agencies. It also handles issues relating to bankruptcy, espionage, terrorism, antitrust laws, and the protection of civil liberties. Particularly important in our time is the Committee's oversight responsibility for the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security.

House Majority Whip James Clyburn of South Carolina selected and Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California appointed her to serve as a Chief Deputy Whip. In this position she works to advance legislation that meets the needs of the American people, helps to maintain unity within the Democratic Caucus, and sustains their majority. This role places her on the leadership team of the House of Representatives. In her first term, Rep. Wasserman Schultz served as a Senior Whip, the only freshman chosen to serve on the Whip team.

Her first term was marked with remarkable success for a freshman member then serving in the minority. She was one of the key leaders in the Terri Schiavo debate, [challenging President Bush](#) and arguing forcefully that the courts had ruled in this case on multiple occasions and Congress would set a dangerous, and likely unconstitutional, precedent if the Legislative Branch attempted to circumvent the courts' decisions. Because of her role outlining these issues surrounding the Terri Schiavo debate, Rep. Wasserman Schultz was asked by the Senate Judiciary Committee to testify at the [confirmation hearing of Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito](#).

Legislation

Rep. Wasserman Schultz continues to expand on her reputation as a fighter for South Florida families, a person respected by her colleagues for her tenacity and her hard work for the rights and protection of children. Some of her accomplishments in the field include the passage of the PROTECT Our Children Act, which creates the largest law enforcement effort ever formed for the protection of children ([H.R. 3845](#)), and, the passage the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act ([H.R. 1721](#)) to combat childhood drowning.

Rep. Wasserman Schultz introduced a resolution, passed unanimously by the House of Representatives, calling on the President to declare a [Jewish American Heritage Month](#). The President subsequently did so, with the inaugural month in May, 2006.

In response to the growing foreclosure crisis, which had a particularly strong effect in Florida, Rep. Wasserman Schultz was one of 19 original cosponsors of the Helping Americans Save Their Homes Act ([H.R. 1106](#)) which was designed to offer new incentives for lenders and to negotiate loans.

In March 2009, after she announced her own battle with breast cancer, Rep. Wasserman Schultz introduced the Education and Awareness Requires Learning Young Act, or EARLY Act ([H.R. 1740](#)), a piece of legislation that directs the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to develop and implement a national education campaign about the threat breast cancer poses to all young women, and the particular heightened risks of certain ethnic, cultural and racial groups.

In the Media

Rep. Wasserman Schultz has been recognized by numerous publications for her work in Congress. *Campaigns and Elections Magazine* named her one of "Five Women to Watch in Congress." *Congressional Quarterly* called her "a rising star in House Democratic ranks." For her work on raising young women's awareness of breast cancer, *FOX News Sunday* named her as the "Power Player of the Week" and *Lifetime networks* named her as one of their "Remarkable Women." For two consecutive years, *The Forward Newspaper* named her as one of the "Forward Fifty" (fifty most influential members of the Jewish Community). *Florida International Magazine* named her one of the 100 most influential Floridians. *South Florida Business Journal* named her one of the "Top 20 Business Leaders in South Florida." *Roll Call* newspaper identified her as one of six members of the House of Representatives worth watching. *Politico* newspaper identified her as one of "Six Women in the House Worth Watching." Rep. Wasserman Schultz's work has been featured nationally in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *USA Today*, among others. She is a frequent guest on national television shows, including CBS's *Face the Nation*, CBS's *Evening News*, NBC's *Today Show*, ABC's *Good Morning America*, MSNBC's *Hardball*, CNN's *The Situation Room* and *State of the Union*, and MTV *News*.