

Rep. Henry A. Waxman (D)



Elected 1974; 14th term

He has seen the fortunes of liberalism rise and fall during his quarter-century in Washington. But no matter which party holds Congress or the presidency, Waxman always seems to find a way to advance his agenda, which includes protecting the environment, expanding access to health care and putting the screws to tobacco manufacturers.

Born in Los Angeles during the Depression, Waxman grew up in an apartment above the family grocery store. His Russian immigrant father passed on his appreciation of the New Deal aspirations of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In the House, Waxman can set some similarly ambitious policy goals, but more often he is maneuvering persistently to secure one small objective at a time.

He is among Congress' most adroit political practitioners. He brings extensive policy knowledge into behind-the-scenes negotiations and can be a forceful presence in front of the television cameras. Most of all, he is patient and willing to settle for half a loaf when necessary. Contrasting his legislative philosophy with that of the Republicans who charged into control of the House in 1995, Waxman said, "They think compromise is a dirty word, even though compromise can further your ideas and even help you improve your ideas."

Waxman is aggressive but usually controlled, a style that can bedevil adversaries. And he is a precise, persistent questioner. "Even when Henry Waxman is being unreasonable, he comes across as reasonable," says Mark Souder of Indiana, a senior Republican on the Government Reform Committee, where Waxman has been the ranking Democrat since 1997.

It is Waxman's Government Reform post that has put him in the national spotlight most often during the years of GOP control. In a series of inquiries into alleged Clinton administration malfeasance, he served as the chief foil to the committee's often histrionic chairman, Republican Dan Burton of Indiana.

Calling the panel's investigation into Democratic fundraising in the 1996 election cycle a "subpoena party," Waxman urged that the committee look into the fundraising practices of both parties, not just the Democrats. He said later that the two-year inquiry was "the most partisan, unfair and abusive investigation since the McCarthy hearings in the 1950s."

But even Waxman allowed some exasperation with Bill Clinton's behavior to show through in 2001, when the panel held hearings on the departing president's last-minute pardon of fugitive financier Marc Rich. In the 107th Congress, Waxman has continued to battle the GOP majority, objecting when the committee approved continued broad subpoena powers for Burton and when Burton eliminated the Postal Service Subcommittee without Democratic consultation.

Waxman's chief base of operations for pursuing his progressive agenda has been the Energy and Commerce Committee, where he is the No. 2 Democrat and where he chaired the Health and the Environment Subcommittee from 1979 to 1995. He compiled an impressive record of legislative victories by going after problems bit by bit, year after year, rather than launching a broad frontal assault.

One of his most significant accomplishments came in 1990 with enactment of clean air legislation. For nearly a decade, Waxman had battled fellow Democrat John D. Dingell of Michigan (then chairman of the committee) and the Reagan administration over air pollution standards. Waxman

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COMMITTEES
Energy & Commerce
Government Reform - ranking member

HOMETOWN
Los Angeles

BORN
Sept. 12, 1939, Los Angeles, Calif.

RELIGION
Jewish

FAMILY
Wife, Janet Waxman; two children

EDUCATION
U. of California, Los Angeles, B.A. 1961, J.D. 1964

CAREER
Lawyer

POLITICAL HIGHLIGHTS
Calif. Assembly, 1969-75

ELECTION RESULTS

2000 GENERAL

Henry A. Waxman (D)	180,295	75.7%
Jim Scileppi (R)	45,784	19.2%
J. C. Anderson (LIBERT)	7,944	3.3%
Bruce Currivan (NL)	4,178	1.8%

2000 PRIMARY (OPEN)

Henry A. Waxman (D)	114,147	76.3%
Jim Scileppi (R)	27,870	18.6%
J. C. Anderson (LIBERT)	5,419	3.6%
Bruce Currivan (NL)	2,135	1.4%

1998 GENERAL

Henry A. Waxman (D)	131,561	73.9%
Mike Gottlieb (R)	40,282	22.6%
Mike Binkley (LIBERT)	3,534	2.0%
Karen Blasdell-Wilkinson (NL)	2,717	1.5%

PREVIOUS WINNING PERCENTAGES

1996 (68%); 1994 (68%); 1992 (61%); 1990 (69%);
1988 (72%); 1986 (88%); 1984 (63%); 1982 (65%);
1980 (64%); 1978 (63%); 1976 (68%); 1974 (64%)

sought tougher measures against acid rain and smog, and Dingell fought to protect Detroit's auto industry and the interests of Midwestern states with coal-burning power plants.

Waxman did not hesitate to go up against Dingell on the powerful chairman's own turf. While many Democrats walked on eggshells around Dingell, Waxman would gavel him down if, during subcommittee deliberations, Dingell spoke beyond the fixed time limit. Waxman skillfully targeted members to build winning coalitions on several motor vehicle pollution provisions Dingell opposed. The compromise ultimately enacted in 1990 was not as tough on pollution as Waxman would have liked but was still considered landmark environmental legislation, more stringent than the GOP administration had proposed.

A one-time smoker, Waxman has persistently pressed on with his crusade to discourage smoking, most memorably during his inquiry into allegations of manipulation of nicotine levels in cigarettes. He convened the unprecedented 1994 hearing during which the chief executives of the nation's seven largest tobacco companies testified, under oath, that they did not believe nicotine was addictive. In 1995, he devoted 36 pages of the Congressional Record to a reprint of apparent Philip Morris research on the addictive effects of nicotine on third-graders, college students and others.

Waxman's political career began at UCLA in the 1960s, when he and fellow student Howard L. Berman became active in California's Federation of Young Democrats. In 1968, after a term as chairman of the state federation, Waxman, with Berman's support, challenged Democratic state Assemblyman Lester McMillan in a primary. McMillan had been in office 26 years and was nearing retirement. Waxman beat him with 64 percent of the vote.

It was the beginning of the so-called Waxman-Berman machine, an informal network of like-minded politicians who pooled their resources to back candidates, with money, organization, computerized mailings and political savvy.

The "machine" was functioning so smoothly in 1974 that Waxman had little trouble winning a new House seat created with him in mind. Not only are his constituents politically involved, no small number of them also are wealthy, giving him the campaign treasury with which to expand his political influence. With his own re-election campaigns mere formalities since then — he has never captured less than 61 percent of the vote — Waxman has helped others win elections, notably Berman, who joined him in the House in 1983.

CALIFORNIA 29

West Los Angeles County; Santa Monica; West Hollywood

The 29th lays claim to the real-life Beverly Hills, 90210. More than just entertainment glitz and coastal affluence, the district is home of the second-largest Jewish population in the nation, the University of California, Los Angeles and the activist gay community of West Hollywood.

Eclectic, wealthy and Democratic describe many of the district's residents. In elections at all levels, the district has rewarded Democratic candidates, usually with more than 60 percent of the vote.

The urban district stretches northeast from Santa Monica and Malibu beaches to the Hollywood Hills and the Los Angeles River. It takes in the suburban southern edges of the San Fernando Valley, on the northern side of the Santa Monica Mountains.

KEY VOTES

2000

- Yes Raise hourly minimum wage by \$1 over two years
- No Halt funding for U.S. mission in Kosovo unless European nations pay more
- Yes Provide Medicare benefits to military retirees and their dependents
- Yes Grant China permanent normal trade status
- No Phase out estate, gift and trust taxes
- No Prohibit implementation of president's national monument designations
- No Approve GOP plan to provide prescription drug coverage for Medicare beneficiaries
- Yes Increase help for poor nations indebted to international financial institutions

1999

- Yes Impose steel import quotas
- Yes Kill proposal to take aviation trust funds off budget
- No Require background checks on buyers only at gun shows with 10 or more vendors
- No Remove barriers among banking, securities and insurance companies
- Yes Authorize state grants to hire teachers and reduce class size
- Yes Overhaul campaign finance law; ban "soft money" and restrict advocacy advertising
- Yes Approve bipartisan plan to increase rights of patients in managed-care health plans

INTEREST GROUPS

	AFL-CIO	ADA	CCUS	ACU
2000	89%	90%	45%	4%
1999	88%	95%	17%	0%
1998	100%	100%	18%	4%
1997	100%	95%	20%	0%

CQ VOTE STUDIES

	PARTY UNITY		PRESIDENTIAL SUPPORT	
	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose
2000	98%	2%	87%	13%
1999	96%	4%	86%	14%
1998	97%	3%	85%	15%
1997	97%	3%	86%	14%

The district's borders edge out many of the Hispanic, Asian and black communities to the east and south, leaving the 29th the "whitest" of the Los Angeles City districts. The economy is overwhelmingly white-collar. Entertainment executives lunch with financial advisers and real estate developers. Tourism brings in copious dollars. A robust health services community is based on the area's seven medical centers. The district also has several successful commercial-industrial parks and shopping malls.

MAJOR INDUSTRY

Entertainment, higher education, health care

CITIES

Los Angeles (pt.), 415,442 (1990); Santa Monica, 91,084; West Hollywood, 38,294

UNUSUAL FEATURES

Former President Ronald Reagan's retirement home in Bel Air.