

★ CURRENT MEMBERS ★

*Barbara Lee*  
1946–

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE  
DEMOCRAT FROM CALIFORNIA

1998–



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE MEMBER

Representative Barbara Lee was first elected to represent California's 9th Congressional District in 1998, in a special election to fill the seat of retiring Representative Ronald Dellums. After serving on the International Relations and Financial Services committees, in 2007 she joined the House Appropriations Committee, which controls the federal purse strings and is widely viewed as one of the most powerful committees in Congress. On that committee, she serves on the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee and the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Subcommittee, and is Vice Chair of the Legislative Branch Subcommittee.

She also serves as the Co-Chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus and is a cofounder of the Out of Iraq and Out of Poverty caucuses, a Senior Democratic Whip, and First Vice Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), where she serves as Co-Chair of the CBC Outreach Task Force and Chair of the CBC Task Force on HIV/AIDS.

Among her many legislative victories, Representative Lee's Darfur divestment bill passed Congress in late 2007 and was subsequently signed into law. She has been a leader in the bipartisan effort in Congress to end the ongoing genocide in Darfur, Sudan. She was arrested for protesting the genocide in front of the Sudanese Embassy in Washington in June 2006 and has traveled to the Darfur region several times.

Representative Lee's accomplishments in promoting effective bipartisan legislation to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS and make treatment available for those who are infected have earned her international recognition as a leader in the global

fight against HIV/AIDS. Her bills to create the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, to protect AIDS orphans, and to create a \$15 billion fund to fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria were all signed into law. She has also been a leader in the fight to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS in the United States, particularly in the African-American community. In 1998, she helped declare a state of emergency in Alameda County in order to secure more funds to fight the disease, and the House has passed her resolution recognizing the goals of National Black AIDS Awareness Day every year since 2005.

Representative Lee's willingness to stand on principle earned her international acclaim when she was the only Member of Congress to vote against giving President George W. Bush a blank check to wage war after the horrific September 11 attacks. In addition to being one of Congress's most vocal opponents of the war in Iraq, Representative Lee has been a leader in promoting policies that foster international peace, security, and human rights. She successfully blocked funds from being used to establish permanent military bases in Iraq during the 109th Congress (2005–2007). She sponsored legislation disavowing the doctrine of preemptive war.

Representative Lee is committed to eradicating poverty, fostering opportunity, and protecting the most vulnerable in our society. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, she authored the poverty section of the CBC's Gulf Coast reconstruction legislation and introduced a package of bills designed to make the eradication of poverty a priority for Congress.

California's 9th Congressional District encompasses most of Alameda County, including the cities of Albany, Ashland, Berkeley, Castro Valley, Cherryville, Emeryville, Fairview, Oakland, and Piedmont.

Born in El Paso, Texas, Representative Lee graduated from Mills College in Oakland and received her M.S.W. from the University of California in Berkeley. She began her political career as an intern in the office of her predecessor, then-Representative Ronald Dellums, currently the mayor of Oakland, where she eventually became his chief of staff. Before being elected to Congress, she served in the California state assembly from 1990 to 1996 and in the California state senate from 1996 to 1998.

#### **FOR FURTHER READING**

"Lee, Barbara," *Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress, 1774–Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=L000551>.