

REPUBLICAN MAIN STREET PARTNERSHIP



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Member Profile -- Congresswoman Lynn Jenkins

Rep. Lynn Jenkins was elected to represent the 2nd district of Kansas in 2008, defeating then Congresswoman Nancy Boyda. Earlier in her political career she served in both the Kansas House of Representatives and the Kansas State Senate. Just prior to her election to Congress, Rep. Jenkins was in her second term as Kansas State Treasurer.

In order to win election to Congress, Rep. Jenkins first had to defeat former U.S. Representative Jim Ryun in a primary. Ryun had served five terms before being defeated in 2006 by Democrat Nancy Boyda. Jenkins made wasteful "earmark" spending a key principle of that campaign, helping to lead her to a close electoral victory. Spending reform has continued to be a key priority for Rep. Jenkins.

A native of Holton, Kansas, Rep. Jenkins lives in Topeka with her two young children. She graduated from Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas and Weber State College in Ogden, Utah, earning a degree in Accounting with a minor in economics. Following graduation, Rep. Jenkins became a Certified Public Accountant and practiced public accounting in the private sector. During her tenure as State Treasurer, Rep. Jenkins promoted and enhanced the Learning Quest College Savings Program, which grew to more than 200,000 accounts with total assets over \$2 billion.

On May 2, Rep. Jenkins was honored by being selected to deliver the Republican response to President Obama's weekly radio address. She was the first newly elected Member to be given this important role.

In her remarks, Rep. Jenkins said, "In the last few weeks, we've heard about plenty of 'stimulus' waste. Taxpayer dollars earmarked for a homeless program in a town with no homeless problem. Millions to extend an 'Artwalk' in New York. And more than a million dollars for sidewalks and trash cans outside a casino in Michigan. This bill was supposed to be about jobs, but it's gone off the rails in practically no time at all and millions of your tax dollars are being wasted. It's quickly turning into a symbol of everything wrong with Washington, D.C. -- unchecked spending, no accountability and oversight, and more and more debt piled onto our children and grandchildren." Jenkins went on to talk about how Obama's first 100 days have been full of "spending, taxing, and borrowing" and how Republicans want to fight for the middle class and small businesses.

Rep. Jenkins serves on the Financial Services Committee, which has oversight of banking, insurance, real estate, public and assisted housing, and securities matters.

Member Profile – Congresswoman Mary Bono Mack

In 1998, Congresswoman Mary Bono Mack was first elected to serve the people of California's 45th District through a special election held to fill the seat left vacant by her late husband, Rep. Sonny Bono. Since then, Bono Mack has established herself as a leader on such issues as clean alternative energy, protecting the environment, improving health care, and protecting consumers.

California's 45th Congressional District is located in southeastern California's Coachella Valley region. Encompassing a diverse geography, the 45th District includes deserts, mountains and agricultural regions, as well as the Colorado River and the Salton Sea.

Rep. Bono Mack has passed landmark legislation that calls for country-of-origin labeling for fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as several energy-saving bills to reward companies for utilizing clean burning fuel technologies and to increase the energy-efficiency of federal buildings. The House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed Bono Mack's Protect Yourself Against Cyber Trespass Act (SPY Act), which would protect an individual's personal information on the Web. Also, Bono Mack has sponsored legislation that provides funding for obesity studies and improved nutrition programs nationwide, autism research, and Federal funding under the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Act.

Most recently, Rep. Bono Mack joined with Congresswoman Nita Lowey (D-NY) to reintroduce the Improved Nutrition and Physical Activity Act (IMPACT Act). The bipartisan legislation, broadly supported by such organizations as the Girl Scouts of the USA, encourages cross-sector collaboration for improving the health of young people, and ensures that community partnerships approach youth health comprehensively by addressing physical activity, nutrition and emotional wellness.

"Together, we can help our young people understand the importance of eating well and exercising and put them on track to live healthier lives," said Rep. Bono Mack. "Childhood obesity in the U.S. is increasing at an alarming rate, reaching epidemic levels. This is a health crisis that threatens the life and well-being of Americans, and costs our nation billions of dollars in associated health care expenses each year. It is clear that we need to work on all levels to address this serious issue -- in our homes, communities and in Congress."

Rep. Bono Mack sits on the Energy and Commerce Committee, which has jurisdiction over issues such as energy, telecommunications, health care and the environment. She is married to U.S. Congressman Connie Mack (R-FL).

Senator Olympia Snowe Comments on the Party Change of Senator Arlen Specter

After Senator Arlen Specter's recent party change announcement, Senator Olympia Snowe provided a very thoughtful perspective in a New York Times op-ed entitled, "We Didn't Have to Lose Arlen Specter." Excerpts follow.

“It is disheartening and disconcerting, at the very least, that here we are today — almost exactly eight years after Senator Jim Jeffords left the Republican Party — witnessing the departure of my good friend and fellow moderate Republican, Senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, for the Democratic Party. And the announcement of his switch was all the more painful because I believe it didn’t have to be this way.

When Senator Jeffords became an independent in 2001, I said it was a sad day for the Republicans, but it would be even sadder if we failed to confront and learn from the devaluation of diversity within the party that contributed to his defection. I also noted that we were far from the heady days of 1998, when Republicans were envisioning the possibility of a filibuster-proof 60-vote margin. I could have hardly imagined then that, in 2009, we would fondly reminisce about the time when we were disappointed to fall short of 60 votes in the Senate. Regrettably, we failed to learn the lessons of Jim Jeffords’s defection in 2001.

It was as though beginning with Senator Jeffords’s decision, Republicans turned a blind eye to the iceberg under the surface, failing to undertake the re-evaluation of our inclusiveness as a party that could have forestalled many of the losses we have suffered. In my view, the political environment that has made it inhospitable for a moderate Republican in Pennsylvania is a microcosm of a deeper, more pervasive problem that places our party in jeopardy nationwide.

I have said that, without question, we cannot prevail as a party without conservatives. But it is equally certain we cannot prevail in the future without moderates. In that same vein, I am reminded of a briefing by a prominent Republican pollster after the 2004 election. He was asked what voter groups Republicans might be able to win over. He responded: women in general, married women with children, Hispanics, the middle class in general, and independents.

How well have we done as a party with these groups? Unfortunately, the answer is obvious from the results of the last two elections. We should be reaching out to these segments of our population — not de facto ceding them to the opposing party. There is no plausible scenario under which Republicans can grow into a majority while shrinking our ideological confines and continuing to retract into a regional party. Ideological purity is not the ticket back to the promised land of governing majorities — indeed, it was when we began to emphasize social issues to the detriment of some of our basic tenets as a party that we encountered an electoral backlash.

It is for this reason that we should heed the words of President Ronald Reagan, who urged, “We should emphasize the things that unite us and make these the only ‘litmus test’ of what constitutes a Republican: our belief in restraining government spending, pro-growth policies, tax reduction, sound national defense, and maximum individual liberty.” He continued, “As to the other issues that draw on the deep springs of morality and emotion, let us decide that we can disagree among ourselves as Republicans and tolerate the disagreement.”

We can’t continue to fold our philosophical tent into an umbrella under which only a select few are worthy to stand. We should view an expansion of diversity within the party as a triumph that will broaden our appeal. That is the political road map we must follow to victory.”