



THE POWER OF
MAXINE WATERS

HELENA ANDREWS-DYER AND R. ERIC THOMAS
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY SABRINA DORSAINVIL

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Description: First edition. | New York : Dey Street, [2020] | Includes bibliographical references and index. | Summary: "In the tradition of Notorious RBG, a lively, beautifully designed, full-color illustrated celebration of the life, wisdom, wit, legacy, and fearless style of iconic American Congresswoman Maxine Waters. "Let me just say this: I'm a strong black woman, and I cannot be intimidated. I cannot be undermined. I cannot be thought to be afraid of Bill O'Reilly or anyone."-Maxine Waters To millions nationwide, Congresswoman Maxine Waters is a hero of the resistance and an icon, serving eye rolls, withering looks, and sharp retorts to any who dare waste her time on nonsense. But behind the Auntie Maxine meme is a seasoned public servant and she's not here to play. Throughout her forty years in public service and eighty years on earth, U.S. Representative for California's 43rd district has been a role model, a crusader for justice, a game-changer, a trailblazer, and an advocate for the marginalized who has long defied her critics, including her most vocal detractor, Donald J. Trump. And she's just getting started. From her anti-apartheid work and support of affirmative action to her passionate opposition to the Iraq War and calls to hold Trump to account, you can count on Auntie Maxine to speak truth to power and do it with grace and, sometimes, sass. As ranking member of the House Financial Services Committee and one of the most powerful black women in America, she is the strong, ethical voice the country has always needed, especially right now. Reclaiming Her Time pays tribute to all things Maxine Waters, from growing up in St. Louis "too skinny" and "too black," to taking on Wall Street during the financial crisis and coming out on top in her legendary showdowns with Trump and his cronies. Featuring inspiring highlights from her personal life and political career, beloved memes, and testimonies from her many friends and fans, Reclaiming Her Time is a funny, warm, and admiring portrait of a champion who refuses to stay silent in the face of corruption and injustice; a powerful woman who is an inspiration to us all."—Provided by publisher.

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THE TIMELINE

1863

January 1: Three years into the American Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring “all persons held as slaves within [any rebel state] shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free.”



Emancipation Proclamation (del., lith. and print. by L. Lipman, Milwaukee, Wisconsin).

1865

The Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution seals the deal and abolishes slavery and involuntary servitude, except as punishment for a crime.

1868

The Fourteenth Amendment grants all U.S. citizens, including the formerly enslaved, “equal protection of the laws.”

1870

Senator Hiram Revels of Mississippi and Representative Joseph Rainey of South Carolina become the first



Senator Hiram R. Revels of Mississippi.

African Americans elected to Congress.

Mr. Revels showed no embarrassment whatever, and his demeanor was as dignified as could be expected under the circumstances. The abuse which had been poured upon him and on his race during the last two days might well have shaken the nerves of any one.

—*New York Times*

1896

May 18: The Supreme Court legalizes racial segregation by sanctioning what came to be known as the “separate but equal” doctrine in *Plessy v. Ferguson*.

1916

December 14: Velma Lee, Maxine’s mother, is born in Cotton Plant, Arkansas, to Jack and Annie Mae Thomas.

1930s

Velma Lee marries Remus Carr Sr. The couple settles in St. Louis.

August 15, 1938: Maxine Carr is born, the fifth

of her mother’s thirteen children. Before Maxine’s second birthday her father, Remus Sr., leaves the family.

My mother had a sixth-grade education, and she didn’t always understand the needs of her children, necessarily. She often didn’t understand me.

—Waters

1950

Apartheid, a system of institutional racism and oppression, becomes the law of the land in South Africa with the passing of the Population Registration Act, requiring all the country’s citizens to be categorized by race.

1951

Maxine takes a job cleaning tables at Thompson’s lunch counter in order to earn enough money to buy her own clothes. The thirteen-year-old is forced to eat her meals in the restaurant’s basement.

1956

Maxine graduates from Vashon High School. The yearbook predicts that she will one day be Speaker of the House.

I think they saw Speaker as speaker.
—Waters

Maxine Carr marries GI Edward Waters.

1958

Edward Waters is born.

1961

Karen Waters is born.

Seeking new opportunities, the Waterses go west and settle in Southern California.

1965

As part of his War on Poverty, President Lyndon B. Johnson creates the Head Start program to aid underserved preschool children.

August 11: Racial tensions explode on a hot summer night after a white Highway Patrol officer arrests

a black man in South Central Los Angeles. The ensuing six-day rebellion left thirty-four people dead and tens of millions of dollars in property damage.

1966

A friend tells Maxine about a new federal program called Head Start. Maxine quits her job as a telephone operator and becomes an assistant Head Start teacher in Watts.

Head Start changed my life. Through Head Start I discovered me.

—Waters

At that point in my life I really began to examine where I was and what I really believed in.

—Waters

Waters enrolls at California State University, Los Angeles. She majors in sociology because as a child growing up poor in Missouri, it was the social workers who had all the power.

1968

Shirley Chisholm of New York breaks the race and gender barrier and wins a seat in Congress. Six years later she runs for president of the United States.

1972

Maxine divorces Ed Waters.

Barbara Jordan of Texas becomes the first African American woman elected to Congress from the Deep South.

All blacks are militant in their guts. But militancy is expressed in different ways.

—Barbara Jordan



Poster for presidential candidate Shirley Chisholm, 1972.



Keynote address by Representative Barbara Jordan, Democratic National Convention, July 12, 1976.

1973

Maxine joins Tom Bradley's campaign to become the first black mayor of Los Angeles.

Maxine becomes Los Angeles councilman David Cunningham's chief deputy—her first official job in politics.



Pin-back button for women's equality.

1976

Maxine is elected to the California State Assembly.

1977

Maxine marries Sidney Williams, a former linebacker for the Cleveland Browns who worked as an aide and chief of staff to Councilman Cunningham.

November:
The young assemblywoman

attends the first National Women's Conference in Houston, at which she helps lead the Black Women's Caucus.

1978

Maxine cofounds the Black Women's Forum, a nonprofit organization of more than 1,200 African American women in the Los Angeles area.

1984

Maxine becomes the first woman to chair the California Assembly's Democratic Caucus.

Jesse Jackson runs for president and Maxine serves as his national cochair and the chair of

Jackson's California campaign.

Jesse Jackson, thank you for the leadership that you provided. It is because of you, and the hope that you created, that has caused Barack Obama to be the president today.

—Waters

1986

After a seven-year fight, Waters gets California to divest billions in pension funds connected to South African business interests, a colossal victory in the anti-apartheid divestment movement.

1990

November: With 79 percent of the vote, Maxine becomes the second African American woman to represent California's 29th District in the U.S. Congress and the sixth black woman elected to the House.

1991

Waters is appointed to the Financial Services Committee.

1992

April 29: The Los Angeles insurrection ignites in South Central Los Angeles after four LAPD officers are acquitted of assault, after being

caught on camera brutally beating Rodney King.

May: Waters shows up uninvited to a White House meeting about “urban issues” in the wake of the Los Angeles uprising.

I don't intend to be excluded or dismissed.

—Waters



Placard from March on Washington, August 28, 1963.

At a panel discussion about black civic engagement, Waters calls President George H. W. Bush a “racist.”

July 15: Maxine seconds the nomination of Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton.

1994

Sidney Williams is appointed as the U.S. ambassador to the Bahamas under President Clinton.

July 30: After a heated exchange with Republican congressman Peter King on the House floor about the treatment

of women in Congress, Waters is threatened with “the presentation of the Mace.”

We are now in this House. We are members of this House. We will not allow men to intimidate us and to keep us from participating.

—Waters

August: Waters votes against President Clinton’s infamous federal crime bill.

1997

Maxine becomes chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.

1998

Waters helps create the Minority

AIDS Initiative, establishing \$156 million in funds to combat the spread of the disease in minority communities.

2002

October 10: Maxine votes against the Iraq War.

We are going to be criticized, and there will be those who even call us unpatriotic.

—Waters

2008

Waters introduces the Stop Very Unscrupulous Loan Transfers from Underprivileged countries to Rich, Exploitive Funds (Stop VULTURE) Act.

2009

The House Ethics Committee opens an investigation into whether Maxine sought bailout funds for a bank that her husband, Sidney Williams, held stock in.

2011

At a community event in her district, Waters says, “The Tea Party can go straight to hell.”

2012

Waters is cleared in the House Ethics Committee investigation.

2014

With bipartisan support between coastal Democrats and Republicans, Waters gets the Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act passed.

2017

January: After a classified hearing, Waters declares during a thirty-second press conference that FBI director James Comey “has no credibility,” then she exits stage left.

February: Waters becomes one of the first members of Congress to call for President Trump’s impeachment.

He’s a liar! He’s a cheat! He’s a con man. We’ve got to stop his ass!

—Waters

March 28: Fox News host Bill O’Reilly insults Waters by calling her hair a “James Brown wig.” Waters responds to O’Reilly, “I’m a strong black woman and I cannot be intimidated.”

April 19: O’Reilly is fired amid sexual harassment allegations.

July 27: While questioning Treasury secretary Steve Mnuchin during a House Financial Services Committee hearing, Waters utters her most famous three

words to date—
“Reclaiming my time.”

2019

Three decades after joining, Waters becomes chair of the House Financial Services Committee.

I have the gavel.
—Waters

November 13: The House conducts its first public hearing in the formal impeachment inquiry against President Donald J. Trump.

December 18: The House votes to impeach President Donald J. Trump.

The Work



Congressional legislation runs the gamut from resolutions designating awareness days and weeks or expressing sentiments or positions, to bills naming post offices and creating acts. Unless you're glued to C-SPAN, you probably miss a large portion of the legislative business that happens day in and day out. If you watched *Schoolhouse Rock* you know the process by which a bill becomes a law, and that most bills die in committee (dark for a cartoon, when you think about it). So, while the laws that do reach the president's desk can make dramatic differences in the lives of millions of Americans, they only make up a portion of the work of a U.S. representative. Additionally, as you'll see below, you're far more likely to see a given legislator's name as a cosponsor for a bill than as sponsor due to the sheer number of representatives in the House. According to a 2014 study by the Brookings Institution, for instance, in the 114th Congress, the average number of bills introduced per representative was 15.3. So, while these enacted pieces of legislation are the ones that Waters originated, she has cosponsored and helped to shepherd hundreds more into laws.

ENACTED SPONSORED LEGISLATION

BILL NUMBER: H.R. 289

INTRODUCED: January 6, 2005

CONGRESS: 109th

TIMELINE: Passed the House by voice vote on February 1, 2005; passed the Senate by unanimous consent on June 29, 2005; signed into law by President George W. Bush on July 12, 2005

COSPONSORS: 49 cosponsors (33 Democrat, 16 Republican)

PURPOSE: To designate the facility of the U.S. Postal Service located at 8200 South Vermont Avenue in Los Angeles, California, as the "Sergeant First Class John Marshall Post Office Building."

TIME OUT

NOTES: Army Sergeant First Class John W. Marshall was struck and killed by a grenade on April 8, 2003, in Baghdad, Iraq. At fifty, he was the oldest soldier in his brigade and one of the soldiers killed in the war in Iraq. He joined the army at eighteen and had served all of his adult life, save for a four-year leave of absence during which he battled Hodgkin's lymphoma.

BILL NUMBER: H.R. 1116

SHORT TITLE: Honest FHA Originator Act of 2009

INTRODUCED: February 23, 2009

CONGRESS: 111th

TIMELINE: See notes.

COSPONSORS: Steve Driehaus (D-OH), Jackie Speier (D-CA)

PURPOSE: To improve the process through which loan originators participate in Federal Housing Administration (FHA) mortgage programs, and for other purposes.

IN OTHER WORDS: This bill and the law that it eventually became a part of are intended to help home owners avoid predatory lending practices by barring lenders with a history of predatory practices from participating in FHA programs.

NOTES: Parts of this bill were incorporated into S. 896–111th Congress: Helping Families Save Their Homes Act of 2009. It was introduced on April 24, 2009;

passed the Senate 91–5 on May 6, 2009; passed the House 367–54 with changes on May 19, 2009; the Senate agreed to the changes on May 19, 2009; signed into law by President Obama on May 20, 2009.

BILL NUMBER: H.R. 4573

SHORT TITLE: Haiti Debt Relief and Earthquake Recovery Act of 2010

INTRODUCED: February 2, 2010

CONGRESS: 111th

TIMELINE: Passed the House by voice vote on March 10, 2010; passed the Senate by unanimous consent with changes on June 30, 2010; House agreed to the changes on April 14, 2010; signed into law by President Obama on April 26, 2010.

COSPONSORS: 69 cosponsors (66 Democrat, 3 Republican)

PURPOSE: To urge the secretary of the Treasury to instruct the U.S. executive directors at the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and other multilateral development institutions to use the voice, vote, and influence of the United States to cancel immediately and completely Haiti's debts to such institutions, and for other purposes.



Waters and Representative Barney Frank, former chair of the House Financial Services Committee, make calls in 1998.

NOTES: Waters said, “I authored this legislation because Haiti’s immense debt burden would have severely impeded the country’s recovery efforts. . . . To help Haiti move forward, I am focused on making sure that durable forms of shelter continue to be delivered and distributed to the millions of survivors living in the camps for the displaced, so that they stay dry and protected from disease during the impending rainy season. Additionally, I will be assisting Haitian small business people and nongovernmental organizations in forming partnerships with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) so that they have a substantive role in the rebuilding of their country.”

BILL NUMBER: H.R. 5569

SHORT TITLE: National Flood Insurance Program Extension Act of 2010

INTRODUCED: June 22, 2010

CONGRESS: 111th

TIMELINE: Passed the House by voice vote on June 23, 2010; passed the Senate by unanimous consent on June 30, 2010; signed into law by President Obama on July 2, 2010.

COSPONSORS: Barney Frank (D-MA), Walter Jones (R-NC), Paul Kanjorski (D-PA), Virginia Brown-Wait (R-FL), Jim Cooper (D-TN), Alcee Hastings (D-FL), Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX)

PURPOSE: To extend the National Flood Insurance Program until September 30, 2010.

NOTES: At the time, Waters said, “This legislation addresses the challenges posed to communities nationwide by the imposition of new flood maps. I saw these challenges in my home city of Los Angeles, and earlier this year, I was able to assist homeowners in the Park Mesa Heights area of Los Angeles who had been mistakenly placed in a flood zone. In this case, FEMA acted quickly to respond to new data and correct the mistake. However, there are thousands of homeowners nationwide who now find themselves in flood zones and subject to mandatory purchase requirements. H.R. 5114 will protect them.”

BILL NUMBER: H.R. 3827

SHORT TITLE: Project-Based Voucher Improvement Act of 2015

INTRODUCED: October 23, 2015

CONGRESS: 114th

TIMELINE: See notes.

COSPONSORS: N/A

PURPOSE: To improve the program under section 8 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 for using amounts of rental voucher assistance for project-based rental assistance, and for other purposes.

NOTES: This bill was incorporated into H.R. 3700: Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act of 2016, which

was introduced on October 7, 2015; passed the House on February 2, 2016; passed the

Senate on July 14, 2016; signed into law by President Obama on July 29, 2016.

BY THE NUMBERS

TOTAL # OF SPONSORED PIECES OF LEGISLATION: 488

TOTAL # OF COSPONSORED BILLS OR RESOLUTIONS: 3,847

TOTAL # OF BILLS SPONSORED: 318

TOTAL # OF AMENDMENTS SPONSORED: 88

TOTAL # OF RESOLUTIONS SPONSORED: 64

TOTAL # OF SPONSORED BILLS THAT WERE SIGNED INTO LAW: 5

TOTAL # OF COSPONSORED BILLS THAT WERE SIGNED INTO LAW: 256

AVERAGE NUMBER OF PIECES OF LEGISLATION WATERS SPONSORED PER MEETING OF CONGRESS: 33

MOST PIECES OF LEGISLATION WATERS SPONSORED IN A MEETING OF CONGRESS: 48, 115th Congress (2017–18)

FEWEST PIECES OF LEGISLATION WATERS SPONSORED IN A MEETING OF CONGRESS: 15, 103rd Congress (1993–94)

AVERAGE NUMBER OF BILLS OR RESOLUTIONS WATERS COSPONSORED PER CONGRESS: 256

MOST BILLS OR RESOLUTIONS WATERS COSPONSORED IN A

MEETING OF CONGRESS: 376, 110th Congress (2007–2008)

FEWEST BILLS OR RESOLUTIONS WATERS COSPONSORED IN A MEETING OF CONGRESS: 134, 104th Congress (1995–96)

TOP FIVE SUBJECT AREAS COVERED BY LEGISLATION SPONSORED BY WATERS: Housing and Community Development (56 bills or resolutions)
Health (51)
Finance and Financial Sector (46)
Crime and Law Enforcement (38)
Internal Affairs (34)

TIME OUT



Waters in 1998, during a House Judiciary Committee hearing.

“RECLAIMING MY TIME: GOSPEL REMIX” BY MYKAL KILGORE

You want to talk about the things I’ve done but
I’m reclaiming my time!
You want to speak on the battles I’ve won but
I’m reclaiming my time!
That’s not why I brought you here to share and
I’m reclaiming my time!
Don’t read my resume cuz I was there
I’m reclaiming my time!

Oooo

I’m reclaiming
My time!
Yes I am!
My time!
Every minute!
My time!
Every second!
My time!
Stop talking,
My time!
You know the rules,
My time!
When it’s my time,
My time!
I can take it back,

Oooooo

What about the letter
Reclaiming my time!
That I sent you way back when
Reclaiming my time!
Give me the answer to the question
Reclaiming my time!
Or don’t open your mouth again
Reclaiming my time!
Reclaiming, Reclaiming, Reclaiming

Ooooo

I’m reclaiming my time!

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER ONE: THE MEME

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CHAPTER TWO: MAXINE IN THE MAKING

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