

Sen. Joyce Cohen



- Oregon State Representative, 1979-1983.
- Oregon State Senator, 1983-1995.

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About Sen. Cohen

Raised on a ranch in rural South Dakota, Joyce Cohen understood the importance of self-reliance and solving problems. When Cohen became involved in Oregon politics in the 1970s, she brought those perspectives along with investigative skills she honed during her career in medical research.

She joined Lake Oswego citizen activists working to pass open meeting laws and then delved into land use planning. After a few years of volunteer advocacy Cohen's husband suggested "Since you're down in Salem all the time anyway, why don't you just run?"

Cohen did just that, serving as the representative of House District 24 from 1979-1983, and then as senator for District 13 from 1983-1995. Her constituents included wealthy Lake Oswegans and working class residents of Oregon City and Milwaukie. Cohen worked diligently to represent all of her constituents.

As one of the few female elected officials in the House of Representatives at that time, she served on the prominent Judiciary, House and Urban Development and Revenue Committees, and more than held her own with senior male committee members. As a senator Cohen was at the forefront of Oregon's most ground breaking legislation: the Oregon Health Care Plan, Death with Dignity and guiding the dispensation of the first Oregon Lottery funds.

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