



### **Official Biography**

Bonnie Watson Coleman, a long-time and influential advocate for the people of New Jersey, is currently serving her sophomore term in the United States Congress. Prior to her election as Representative for New Jersey's 12th Congressional District, Watson Coleman served eight consecutive terms in the New Jersey General Assembly.

The daughter of legendary state legislator John S. Watson, Watson Coleman has continued a family legacy of public service fighting for women, economically and socially disadvantaged populations, and other vulnerable groups in our society. Watson Coleman shattered racial and gender barriers to become the first African American woman to serve as Majority Leader of the New Jersey General Assembly, and as the Chair of the New Jersey Democratic State Committee. Her election to the House of Representatives makes her the first African American woman to represent New Jersey in Congress.

Watson Coleman has led the call for reforms to prisoner re-entry programs, fighting tirelessly to shut the revolving door of recidivism for individuals who have returned from incarceration. During her time as Majority Leader, Watson Coleman convened a year-long series of public hearings on the topic while shepherding legislation through the New Jersey Assembly that *The New York Times* called "a model for the rest of the nation," on prisoner rehabilitation and release.

For her second term, as a member of the 115th Congress, Watson Coleman was recently selected by her colleagues as the Vice Ranking Member of the House Homeland Security Committee, where she is also Ranking Member on both the Subcommittee on Transportation and Protective Security, and the Task Force on Denying Terrorist Entry into the United States. She also serves on the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

In 2016, Watson Coleman was a founder of the Congressional Caucus on Black Women and Girls, the first House caucus to study policy issues related to the continued success and accomplishments of that population. Watson Coleman is an active member of the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressional Progressive Caucus, the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, and the Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus. Watson Coleman has championed legislation to protect vulnerable Americans and communities related to gun safety, environmental protection, and long-term unemployment. Watson Coleman is also the author of the Healthy MOM Act, which would allow women to enroll in, or change their health coverage if they become pregnant, and the End For-Profit Prisons Act, which would prohibit the federal government from contracting with for-profit prison corporations.

Watson Coleman graduated from Thomas Edison State College. She is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and an honorary member of the Girl Scouts of America. She is also a Deaconess at Shiloh Baptist Church in Trenton, N.J.



Watson Coleman and her husband William reside in Ewing Township and are blessed to have three sons; William, Troy, and Jared and two grandchildren; William and Kamryn.