Inventory of the Diane Watson Papers

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Inventory of the Diane Watson Papers

Collection number: LP374

California State Archives
Office of the Secretary of State
Sacramento, California

Processed by:
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Sara Roberson

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Diane Watson Papers
Dates: 1979-1998
Collection number: LP374
Creator: Diane Watson, California Legislator
Collection Size: 25 cubic feet
Repository: California State Archives
Sacramento, California


Physical location: California State Archives
Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English
Access
Collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Diane Watson Papers, LP374:[folder number], California State Archives, Office of the Secretary of State, Sacramento, California.

Acquisition and Custodial History
The California State Archives acquired the Diane Watson Papers following her final term in the State Legislature.

Biography
Diane Watson, Democrat was elected to represent California's 30th Senatorial District (Los Angeles) in 1978. Redistricting in 1982 relocated Senator Watson in the 28th district where she remained until redistricting in 1994 moved her to the 26th district. A native Californian, Watson earned a B.A. degree in education from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1956. Watson went on to earn an M.S. degree in psychology from California State University, Los Angeles in 1967. Diane Watson also received a Ph.D. in educational administration from Claremont Graduate School in 1987.

Diane Watson began her professional career in 1956 as a teacher at the Coeur D'Alene Avenue Elementary School. Following several years of teaching Watson became the acting principal of Selma Avenue School, Assistant Supervisor in Child Welfare and Attendance and a School Psychologist. A fluent speaker of several languages, she then taught gifted
children in Okinawa and France. Upon her return to the United States, Watson took on the role of Associate Professor of Education, Department of Guidance, California State University, Los Angeles. Watson went on to serve as Deputy Director of the Secondary Schools Allied Health Professions Project, a program at UCLA. Watson was then appointed to the State Department of Education as a Health Occupation Specialist. In 1975, Watson was elected to the Los Angeles City Board of Education where she worked to desegregate the school district. In taking her senatorial oath on December 4, 1978, Diane Watson became just the second woman and the first African American woman elected to the California State Senate.

As chairperson of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee for seventeen years, Watson authored many laws dealing with health care related issues. Diane Watson staunchly opposed plans to cut welfare and Medi-Cal benefits for low-income residents. In 1992, Watson authored legislation to regulate surrogate parenting, and a bill to make it a crime for a peace officer to allow unlawful violence committed by another peace officer to go unreported. Watson also introduced bills to allow needle exchange programs to control the spread of AIDS, although these bills were vetoed.

According to the California Legislature at Sacramento (Handbooks), Watson served on the following committees:

**State Senate, 1979-1998**

*Standing and Interim Committees*
- Business and Professions, 1981-1988
- Constitutional Amendments, 1981-1982
- Criminal Procedure, 1995-1996
- Health and Human Services, 1979-1998
  *Vice Chair, 1979-1980
  *Chair, 1981-1998
- Housing and Land Use, 1997-1998
- Industrial Relations, 1983
- Judiciary, 1983-1994
- Natural Resources and Wildlife, 1979-1982
- Public Employment and Retirement, 1987-1990
- Public Safety, 1997-1998

*Select Committees*
- Select Committee on Children and Youth, 1987-1992

Diane Watson could not run for re-election to the State Senate in 1998 due to term limits. In 2001, however, Diane Watson was elected to the United States House of Representatives.

**Scope and Content**

The Diane Watson Papers consist of 25 cubic feet of records reflecting Watson's activities during her Senatorial career. The records contain Bill Files, 1979-1998; Subject Files, 1977-1986; Chronological Correspondence, 1979-1991; Constituent Correspondence, 1989-1994; Correspondence of Jane Uitti, 1985-1991; and Legislative Black Caucus Files, 1981-1983. The bill files document her legislative activity during her term as a member of the California State Legislature. The bills introduced by Diane Watson include a wide array of subjects but she consistently legislated for publicly funded programs to help the economically or socially challenged. Senator Watson was an advocate for greater restrictions on firearm possession, protecting the rights of sexual assault victims, and protecting women's rights to obtain an abortion.

**Related Collections at the California State Archives**

- Senate Health and Welfare Committee and Senate Health and Human Services Committee Records
- Legislative Black Caucus Records

**Oral History**


**Indexing Terms**
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Watson, Diane
Discrimination Law and legislation
Gun control

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<th>Series 1 Bill Files 1979-1998</th>
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<td>Physical Description: 364 file folders</td>
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<td>Arrangement</td>
<td>Bill files are arranged chronologically by legislative session and then numerically by bill number.</td>
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<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
<td>Bill files created by Diane Watson document legislation she authored while serving as a member of the State Senate. Bill files may contain bill drafts, committee analyses, veto messages, correspondence in support of or opposed to legislation, and comments from organizations and constituents. Additionally, bill files may include notes, reports, newspaper articles, bill amendments, and other documents relevant to each individual bill. Bill files typically reveal the legislator's intent for the measure.</td>
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<td>1983-1984: SB63-SB2308; SCA29; SCR6-SCR77; SR35; Prop. Leg. (31ff) LP374:52-82</td>
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<td>1985-1986: SB4-SB2372; SCR20; SJR10-SJR36, SR8-SR24 (39ff) LP374:83-121</td>
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<td>1987-1988: SB13-SB2854; SCR20; SJR27 (40ff) LP374:122-161</td>
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<td>1989-1990: SB19-SB2721; SCA26; SCR18-SCR106; SJR21; SR27 (48ff) LP374:162-209</td>
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<td>1995-1996: SB227-SB2141; SCR27-SCR69; SJR52-SJR56; SB23XX-SB25XX (31ff) LP374:298-328</td>
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<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
<td>Subject files contain newspaper clippings, correspondence, reports, and other materials. The subject files include documents gathered by Watson throughout her career in the State Senate and demonstrate her areas of legislative activism. Many of the subject files contain information concerning children, women, and public education. The subject files also provide more detail into Watson's health and welfare concerns. Specifically, Watson maintained subject files dealing with issues such as abortion, domestic violence, childcare, and the California Youth Authority. A complete list of subject headings can be found in Appendix A of the master finding aid at the California State Archives.</td>
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<td>Series 3 Chronological Correspondence 1979-1991</td>
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<td>LP374:457-461</td>
<td>Series 4 Constituent Correspondence 1989-1994</td>
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<td>LP374:462-463</td>
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<td>LP374:464-465</td>
<td>Series 6 Legislative Black Caucus Files 1981-1983</td>
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