

Biography of
THE HONORABLE STEVE FARIS
ARKANSAS STATE SENATOR



SENATE MAJORITY WHIP
SENATE DISTRICT 27

Senator Steve Faris serves District 27, which is comprised of Hot Spring and Montgomery counties and parts of Garland, Grant and Saline counties. Senator Faris began his tenure in the Senate in 2001 during the 83rd General Assembly and is currently serving his fifth and final term due to term limits.

During the 87th General Assembly, Senator Faris serves as Senate Majority Whip, chairman of State Agencies and Governmental Affairs and chairman of the Arkansas Legislative Council (ALC) Personnel Subcommittee. He is vice chairman of Arkansas Legislative Council and the ALC Executive Subcommittee. He is a member of several other committees including Joint Budget, Senate Revenue and Tax, Joint Public Retirement and Social Security Programs, Legislative Facilities, Legislative Joint Audit, Senate Efficiency, and the Governor's Emergency Fund Review Committee. He serves as ex officio on ALC Review, Peer, Administrative Rules and Regulations, and Charitable, Penal and Correctional Institutions. He also serves on the following ALC committees: Claims Review, Game & Fish/State Police, Higher Education Subcommittee, Policy Making, Hospital and Medicaid Study Subcommittee, Litigation and Reports. Additionally, he serves on the Joint Budget Personnel Subcommittee and the Joint Budget Special Language Subcommittee.

During the 87th General Assembly he successfully passed Act 963 of 2009 to amend Arkansas law concerning ethics requirements for lobbyists and public officials. He was also responsible for enacting Act 693 of 2009, known as "Rachel's Bill," to improve personal watercraft safety. This legislation is in memory of Rachel Rutherford, a 15-year-old killed while riding a personal watercraft on Lake Hamilton in 2007.

Senator Faris is also involved in several national organizations including the Energy Council, the Southern States Energy Board, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), Council of State Governments (CSG), the Southern Legislative Conference (SLC), and the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). He serves on the Redistricting and Elections Committee of NCSL, the Governing Board of CSG, the Executive Committee of SLC and the Telecommunications and Information Technology Task Force of ALEC. In 2008 he served as the National Chairman of the ALEC.

Senator Faris began his public service career 1995. He served two terms in the House of Representatives in 1997 and 1999, where he was the youngest member to serve as Assistant Speaker Pro Tempore, Majority Leader and chairman of a committee. In his first legislative session, he became the first freshman legislator to serve on the Joint Budget Committee.

During his political career he has been recognized by many organizations and groups including:

- Distinguished Service Award, Arkansas Deaf and Hearing-Impaired Community
- Named one of 10 Outstanding Young Arkansans, Arkansas Jaycees
- Outstanding legislative contributions, Arkansas Veterans Coalition
- Outstanding leadership on behalf of rural Arkansas, Office of Rural Services
- Recognized for legislative contributions to the county and district fairs of Arkansas, Arkansas Fair Managers Association
- Outstanding Contributions, the Arkansas Firefighters Association
- Distinguished Service Award for outstanding legislative contributions to cities and towns, Arkansas Municipal League
- Legislator of the Year, First Branch Award, Arkansas Judicial Council
- Legislator of the Year, Arkansas Chiefs of Police Association
- Legislator of the Year, Arkansas Municipal Police Association
- Legislator of the Year, Arkansas State Employees Association
- "Class" Award, Arkansas Broadcasters Association
- Distinguished Service Award, Arkansas State Police Association

In September 2009, he was named Outstanding State Senator by the Arkansas State Employees Association and appointed by the Senate President Pro-Tempore to serve as co-chairman of the Legislative Task Force on Water Quality, a newly created task force charged with protecting the quality of drinking water.

He is a former chairman of the Hot Spring County Democratic Central Committee, chairman of the Hot Spring County Election Commission (1990-1997) and chairman of the Hot Spring County United Way (1987). He has served on the Arkansas State Fair and Livestock Association Board of Governors since 1991. In addition, he is a charter member and former chairman of the Ouachita Technical College Board of Trustees (1991-1997).

In his professional life, Senator Faris is a manager for the Central Arkansas Telephone Cooperative, Inc. He served in the Arkansas Army National Guard from 1983-1989 and graduated from the Army School of Finance and Administration in 1984 at Fort Benjamin in Harrison, Indiana. He is an avid country music historian and former host of a classic country radio show in his hometown of Malvern.

A graduate of Malvern High School, Senator Faris has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Henderson State University. In 1993, he completed the Senior Executives in State Government program offered by the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.