

Biography of
THE HONORABLE BOB JOHNSON
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE
87TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY



SENATE DISTRICT 18

Senator Bob Johnson of Bigelow serves as State Senator for District 18, which is composed of Conway, Perry and Van Buren counties and parts of Cleburne, Faulkner, Pope and Saline Counties. He is the President Pro Tempore of the Arkansas Senate for the 87th General Assembly. The 87th General Assembly convened on January 12, 2009, and sine died on May 1, 2009. The historic first fiscal session convened on Monday, February 8, 2010, and sine died on Thursday, March 4, 2010.

During the 87th General Assembly he serves on the Senate Insurance and Commerce Committee; Senate Transportation, Technology and Legislative Affairs Committee; and Senate Efficiency Committee. He also serves on several other committees and subcommittees, including Arkansas Legislative Council (ALC), Joint Budget, Legislative Joint Auditing, Joint Performance Review and ALC-Executive Subcommittee.

On national issues, Senator Johnson works with legislators from other states as a member of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the Executive Committee of the Southern Legislative Conference (SLC) and the Executive Committee of the Energy Council. He also serves on the NCSL Labor and Economic Development Standing Committee. In past years he has served on NCSL's Federal Budget and Taxation Committee, Legislative Effectiveness Committee and the Financial Services Committee.

Senator Johnson came to the Senate with a wealth of legislative experience. He was Speaker of the House for the 82nd General Assembly while serving his third term as State Representative for Perry, Conway and Pope Counties. He was 35, at the time the youngest Speaker of the House in Arkansas history. Johnson is one of only a handful of Arkansas elected officials who has been elected Speaker of the House as well as President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

In 2000, Johnson was elected to the Senate, succeeding his friend and colleague Senator Allen Gordon of Morrilton. His legislative experience includes serving as vice chairman of Senate Efficiency, vice chairman of the Senate Committee on Revenue and Taxation, and vice chairman of Legislative Printing Requirements and Specifications. He held membership on other committees including Senate Insurance and Commerce; Senate Public Health, Welfare and Labor; and Senate Agriculture, Forestry and Economic Development. He served on the following joint committees: Advanced Communications and Information Technology, Arkansas Legislative Council, Joint Budget, Joint Performance Review, Joint Energy, Educational Facilities and the Legislative Joint Auditing. Before his election to the General Assembly in 1994, he worked for five years as a staff member for U.S. Congressman Ray Thornton.

In 1999, Senator Johnson was named one of the state's most prominent people under age 40 in *Arkansas Business*' "Forty Under Forty" report. The same year, he was selected by the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* newspaper as one of the Top 10 legislators of the 82nd General Assembly. In 2003, he was selected again as one of the Top 10 for the 84th General Assembly.

His legislative achievements include tort reform, which was approved in Arkansas during the 84th General Assembly. Senator Johnson was lead sponsor for Act 649 of 2003, known as the Civil Justice Reform Act. Act 649 was supported by several entities including the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). Until then, Arkansas was one of three states that had not enacted any type of tort reform. Act 649 has helped improve the business climate in Arkansas and protect access to health care for all Arkansans.

Senator Johnson has been commended for his leadership by several organizations. He received the Statesmanship Award from the Arkansas Hospital Association for his work on health care issues and as lead sponsor for The Civil Justice Reform Act of 2003. He was also awarded the National Federation of Independent Business' Guardian of Small Business Award for his outstanding voting record and leadership on behalf of small-business owners during the 84th General Assembly.

Apart from his work in the legislature Johnson has been active with the Arkansas Advisory Council of Winrock International and has served on the Executive Board of the Quapaw Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

Senator Johnson and his two brothers are partners in family businesses, including a construction firm. A native of Perry County, Senator Johnson grew up in Bigelow and graduated from Bigelow High School. He holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. He and his wife, Tracie, live in Bigelow. They have three children.